Spring 6-12-2021

Locked Out to be Locked Up, Only to Be Locked Out, Again: A Critical Analysis of Exclusionary Disciplinary Practices, and an Illinois Policy's Attempt to Eradicate the School-to-Prison Pipeline Phenomenon

Algeanna Louise Griffin

DePaul University

College of Education

Locked Out to Be Locked Up, Only to Be Locked Out, Again: A Critical Analysis of

Exclusionary Disciplinary Practices, and An Illinois Policy's Attempt to Eradicate the

School-to-Prison Pipeline Phenomenon

A Dissertation in Education
with a Concentration in Educational Leadership

by

Algeanna L. Griffin

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

June 2021

We approve the dissertation of Algeanna L. Griffin

[signature]

Dr. Horace R. Hall
DePaul University
Associate Professor, Human Development
Teacher Education/Doctoral Program
Chair of Committee

Mar 25, 2021

_____
Date

[signature: Troy Harden]

Dr. Troy Harden
Director of the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute
Professor of Practice in Sociology
Texas A&M University
Committee Member

4/15/21
_____
Date

[signature: Kennedi Strickland-Dixon]

Dr. Kennedi Strickland-Dixon
Special Education Divisional Director
Oak Park and River Forest High School
Committee Member
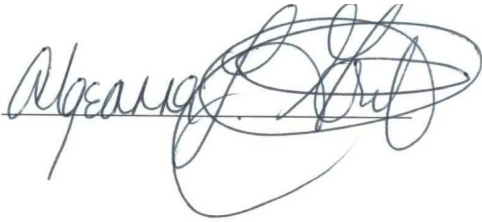
4-21-2021
_____
Date

Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance received in the preparation of this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased. have been cited.I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according to program guidelines, as directed.

Author Signature _____

Date _____ 3/17/2021 _____

ABSTRACT

African-American students have experienced the injustices of institutional racism, which has been reflected in the exclusionary discipline practices implemented within the educational system. These practices, including the excessive use of suspensions and expulsions, have victimized African American youth at higher levels than their White peers. This overrepresentation of discipline in the educational system has mirrored the U.S. penal system's practices, creating the phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline.

To eradicate these practices, Illinois legislator Kimberly Lightford, in collaboration with VOYCE (Voices of Youth in Chicago Education), created Senate Bill 100, which is now Public Act 99-0456. This policy is designed to combat the overrepresentation of disciplinary practices with alternative interventions, eliminating the idea that suspensions and expulsions are the first line of defense for tackling disruptive behaviors. P.A 99-0456 also focuses on promoting a positive culture and climate in hopes that a safe and supported school environment will be reflective in the disciplinary practices within the educational system. Although the literature focuses on the disparities of the disciplinary practices and the overrepresentation of these results, absent from the research are stories that reflect the outcomes since the implementation of P.A. 99-0456.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of African American students, teachers, and administrators of an urban middle school that has implemented P.A. 99-0456 policy to discipline and what additional supports are needed to ensure that it eliminates the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon for the community in this study.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to give thanks to my Almighty Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for not only guiding me through this journey but providing me with the strength to complete this process.

To Dr. Horace R. Hall, I want to thank you for believing in my research. You have been beyond supportive, and I could not imagine doing this research study without your guidance and support. Your expertise with my topic significantly enhanced my experience. To Dr. Kennedi Strickland-Dixon, thank you for your encouragement and for keeping me focused, even when I wanted to give up. To Dr. Troy Harden, thank you for your feedback and support during my writing process.

To Dr. Vanessa Hein, thank you for always giving me valuable advice, lending your research expertise, and being a thought partner throughout our coursework, IRB, and writing process.

To the administrators, teachers, and student participants of my research study- thank you for trusting me with your most prized possession, your voice. There would be no dissertation without your narratives, your experiences, your time, and your perceptions. Your challenges, passion for equity in schools, and your dedication to the school community fueled this project, and I am truly grateful for your participation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, the Rev. Alghia Griffin and Diana M. Griffin. Words cannot express how grateful I am for having you as my parents. From the womb, you declared that I would make something of myself, and I live every day praying that I never let you down. Thank you for instilling in me the value of hard work and passion for everything I put my hands on and my mind to. Dad, I know you are smiling down on me from Heaven! Keep smiling! It warms my soul every minute of the day and empowers me to be better than I was yesterday!

To my mini-me, my future Morehouse Man, my son Jalen, all of this hard work is for you. I love you more than anything in this whole world, and I am the luckiest mom in the world to have a son like you. I admire the man I know that you will become. I hope you are proud of mommy!

To my entire family and friends who have sat patiently waiting on me to finish this journey, thank you for your love and support, your words of encouragement, and your prayers. I could not have done this without you all believing in me.

I want to thank all of the Washington Elementary and Irving Middle School students I have taught in my nineteen years in education. You were indeed the inspiration to my work, and you will always remain close to my heart and essential characters in my life's story.

To D.S.T.S of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. We are indeed becoming the line of Doctors! Thank you for your encouragement, love, and sisterhood.

Dr. Johnnie Thomas, thank you for exposing me to the world of extraordinary leadership. You took me under your wing and provided me with first-hand leadership experiences, and I am

forever grateful for your knowledge, wisdom, and expertise. You have no idea how you have enhanced my ability to lead while empowering my staff and uplifting my community!

Dr. David Negron, thank you for your guidance and support during my process. You met me as a young teacher and supported my journey through administration! Thank you for always giving me sound advice and sharing your wealth of knowledge with me along the way.

To Garfield Elementary, my alma mater, my first love for education, motivation, and foundation. Thank you for not only raising me academically through Kindergarten through Eighth grade but allowing me to give what you have given me as a student back to this new generation of learners. Being able to return as an Assistant Principal, walking through the halls and reminiscing on the times that I was a student, has been one of the most fulfilling moments of my educational career. To my Garfield Family, you were patient with me and cheering me along during the last leg of my writing process. Thank you for going the extra mile for our community with the discipline and academic strategies and love for our students! I wear my Purple and represent the Giants proudly! I know I was placed with you for a reason! To the Garfield Elementary students, I hope I have been an inspiration to you, as my teachers and administrators were to me. Remember, never let your process impede your progress!

Lastly, I want to give a special thank you to Dr. Mattie Robinson. I had no idea that our conversation about this doctorate's importance and my educational role would be our last. You kept saying, get it done, and I did! Your words meant the world to me. May you rest in peace!

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

To address the School to Prison Pipeline phenomenon (STPP), the state of Illinois adopted legislation designed to combat reactive disciplinary actions in schools. Student groups that are mainly affected by exclusionary practices are children of poverty, , and those with academic difficulties, which includes even special education (SPED) students (Balfanz et al., 2003; Morrison &D'Incau, 1997; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Skiba et al., 2000). Previously known as Senate Bill 100, now P.A. 99-0456, aims to"prioritize the creation of safe and orderly schools while seeking to address excessive use of the most severe forms of discipline" (VOYCE, p. 1). This new policy (as of 2017) requires schools to provide proactive consequential behavior interventions instead of the traditional, volatile, reactive exclusionary practices that tend to ignore the origins of student behavior, which caused school and classroom such disruptions. According to the Illinois Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, "Illinois students lose over one million instructional days per year as a result of suspensions, expulsions, and arrests (Wilkie, 2015).

The problem to be explored in this research study is Public Act 99-0456's effect on the exclusionary disciplinary practices at Turner-Bozeman Middle School[1]. This research claims that the problem with P.A. 99-0456 is that at Turner-Bozeman Middle School (and perhaps other state public schools), having low incidences or data shows a low suspension and infractions

---

[1] All names of participants, schools and locations will be replaced with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and protect the identity of those agreeing to be part of this research project.

provides a false interpretation of disciplinary practices. Often, students who are experiencing difficulties with discipline do not receive proper proactive disciplinary procedures and are sent back to the instructional setting, only to repeat these same infractions without appropriate consequences.

Purpose of the Study

Current research has consistently reported African American students as being overrepresented in the category of school discipline. These students are more likely to become recipients of harsher disciplinary consequences, often resulting in corporal punishment and exclusionary practices (Gregory, 1996; Skiba et al., 2002). The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of Illinois P.A. 99-0456 and its collaboration with current behavioral interventions designed to omit disruptive behaviors that occur within the school environment. It is imperative to identify how this legislation attempts to decrease the overrepresented stigma African American students have endured with school discipline and gain access to an equitable education afforded to their White peers, specifically in more affluent school districts.

This research study's primary goal is to identify factors that assist in eliminating reactive disciplinary practices against African American students in a low-socioeconomic middle school setting. I will examine the Turner-Bozeman school community's experiences—its students, teachers, and administrators who have encountered exclusionary disciplinary practices before and after Public Act 99-0456 and the effect of its implementation. Through this research, I seek to interpret this new disciplinary process and determine if this new legislation helps decrease

African American student involvement in the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon that plagues this middle school community.

Research Questions

Although Illinois P.A. 99-0456 is a statewide disciplinary policy, therefore, this case study will focus on one middle school in a suburb of a major city. This study will focus on two main research questions:

1. What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456 at Turner Bozeman Middle School?

2. What are the students' perceptions and experiences of disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456 at Turner Bozeman Middle School?

Please note that these research questions were separated due to this public act being guided by the adult rule, and the recipients of this rule are the students.

The Significance of the Study

Illinois has produced a policy that is designed to reduce these disproportionate behavioral statistics amongst African-American and Latino students by providing the necessary disciplinary interventions versus the traditional disciplinary practices, such as suspensions and expulsions. This study will examine the implementation and intervention processes of P.A. 99-0456 and offer school boards, policymakers, and educators a framework for decreasing the disproportionate statistics of African American suspension and expulsion rates. Parents and guardians will also benefit from this study as they will gain knowledge of the new policy and recognize student and parental rights and accountability of this implementation process.

For decades, researchers have analyzed school disciplinary policies, highlighting African American students' disproportionate outcomes through exclusionary practices (Skiba et al., 2002; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Townsend, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Wu et al., 1982). These exclusionary practices, which include out of school suspensions and expulsion, enhance the school to prison pipeline, increase students' chances, mainly African American, to drop out of school, and filter into the criminal justice system (Meiners, 2011). During the 2012-13 school year, Chicago Public Schools issued suspensions and expulsions to 32% of African American students compared to 5% of suspensions and expulsions given to white students (Wilkie, 2015). In 2014, 45% of African American students in Illinois faced suspension or expulsion, and in 2015, 47% of African American students faced suspension or expulsion from school (Wilkie, 2015).

This research aims to investigate the hypothesis that the problem with P.A. 99-0456 is that at Turner-Bozeman Middle School (and perhaps other state public schools) having low incidences or data that show a low number of suspension and infractions may provide a false interpretation of disciplinary practices. Students experiencing difficulties with discipline may not receive proper proactive corrective interventions and are sent back to the instructional setting to repeat these same infractions without appropriate consequences. If these inconsistencies occur at Turner-Bozeman, it may create a culture of chaos, which disregards this legislation's expectations and its professed goal in combatting the disproportionate representation of exclusionary discipline practices amongst African American students in particular.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) will be utilized as the conceptual framework to investigate this phenomenon. According to Taylor, Gillborn & Ladson & Billings (2009),

> CRT has several tenets: that racism is a permanent, normative feature of (American) society, that any apparent legal progress has been due more to interest convergence (benefits to Whites) than to genuine social justice, that racism needs to be understood historically and that the narratives of oppressed peoples stand as privileged accounts of lived experiences of racist policy and practice (p. 47).

This study utilizes this framework to analyze the meaning of this school policy from those who experience it intimately while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of P.A. 99-0456. This theoretical framework is also designed to empower Black people affected by this intervention, which was intended to combat a decades-long problem in American public schools. My use of CRT also seeks to highlight the often unheard experiences of minority school participants (teachers, parents, administrators, and students) who have been historically forced into racial subordination in a White supremacist structure (Tate IV, 1997).

My research design is blended and will utilize interviews and surveys as part of the data collection process. Creswell (2014) noted that "mixing or blending of data provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question than either by itself" (p. 45). Using interviews will emphasize students, teachers, and administrators' experiences with policies that enforced exclusionary disciplinary practices through the CRT lens. These counter-narratives will uncover the miseducation and misinterpretation of Public Act 99-0456 and its misuse in a low

socioeconomic community. Delgado & Stefancic (2017) suggests that CRT mirrors an activist stance, in which it "tries not only to understand our social situations but to change it, setting out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies but to transform it for the better (p.8).

Proactive interventions are designed to ensure that students are exposed to corrective behaviors before said behaviors escalate to higher disciplinary consequences. This research study will focus on the use of or lack thereof of interventions established by this public act, emphasizing proactive disciplinary practices that accompany the new disciplinary procedures for eliminating exclusionary policies. The participants for this study will be middle school students, teachers, and administrators who have experiences distributing or being recipients of receiving excessive suspension and expulsions. The use of these disciplinary practices focus on the voices of black youth, and these voices of subjugation should be legitimized, and the sense of self will be highlighted during this research process (Matsuda, 1989; Fine, 1994; Brown, 2011; Kastsiaficas et al.; 2011). A student survey will also be implemented to ascertain the students' needs, uncover why discipline occurs, and what support services are needed to combat their behaviors. It is my hope that the use of this survey will add to my data and inform me of how the student participants perceive this disciplinary policy.

An Educator with Questions, Concerns, Comments, and Criticisms

As an educator for seventeen years, I have encountered and educated many students, and most of this experience was in a low socioeconomic African American community. Some of these young individuals of this community have accomplished the goals they have set for

6

themselves as children, while others have veered off into unchartered waters and created adventures of their own. Sometimes, as an educator, I could see the inner fires that individual students obtained at a young age, and it was not surprising that these students accomplished and surpassed the goals they set for themselves. In my opinion, it is more gratifying to witness students who may have had challenging school experiences, yet, become successful adults despite the communal and family obstacles and odds against them because the story of redemption is more beneficial for those who share the same struggles and lack of hope.

There are also the dark times when I have learned that a former student has confronted the hardships of his or her reality, which often results in dropping out of school, drug addiction, association with gang activity, or even worse, prison or death. The difficult task of some educators is identifying the underlying causes of these behaviors. Our students come to school with so much baggage that we forget these can cause the disconnect. We fail to realize that our students come to school with traumas and family issues that can alter the learning environment. They come to the school concerned about things some educators have never fathomed. I have had students come to school, wondering if their parents are locked up before making it home from school. I have had a few students being the caregiver of their family due to an ailing parent, and have had to take on the responsibility of taking care of their younger siblings. Some students did not want to leave the building at the end of the school day because no one would be home when they got there, and would probably be home alone until the next school day. Some students would ask for extra breakfast and lunch items because there was no food in the house, or they would eat enough in school because no one was home to make a nutritious meal for dinner.

Some of my students were involved in gang activities, so thinking about doing tonight's homework did not fit their concerns. Some students left the school building and entered a house of mental and emotional abuse. Those students who experienced stable homes carried their friends' burdens, often sharing their troubles and turmoil. In all cases, these concerns monopolize our students' minds, which push the importance of academics to the bottom of the existent schooling hierarchy of needs. Unfortunately for these young people, their school experiences reflect unsatisfactory grades, reporting multiple absences, suspensions and expulsions, and dismal relationships with teachers and staff. These students are also labeled as low, achieving individuals who do not care about the educational processes and may even become identified under special education. Despite their hardships, any disruptive classroom behaviors almost always warranted a suspension, where students would be locked out of the educational experience for many days.

I often wonder if something in my instruction or personal classroom interaction may have contributed to their academic or behavior falter. I have taken my student's educational journeys personally, as I represent their community and have personally walked in the same shoes of struggle. Noguera (2008) states that many educators have preconceived notions of Black male students being associated with academic failure, getting into trouble, and eventually discontinuing their education. Their troubling reality began as early as elementary and middle school years when the word troublemaker attached to their files. Hall (2006) suggests that students of color, in particular, are equated with criminals who exhibit sexual and violent behavior and are considered a threat to themselves, the school, and their community. This

criminal comparison has caused African American students to be overrepresented nationwide, for suspensions and expulsions.

Although the child's family, community, and own motivation for success play an integral part, I cannot help but reflect on my role as an educator and the school as a whole. What could I have done differently to assist these students in reaching more successful outcomes? What role did common factors play in helping our students to the next level of their educational quest? Were there any school or district-wide academic or disciplinary policies that may have triggered students' loss of trust and become alienated from the educational system? Did the stringent requirement cover curriculum while maintaining classroom management hinder my ability to hear cries for help and accept broader stereotypes of these young individuals? Did I play a significant role in a student getting suspended for an action that only warranted a minor consequence?

As my mind ponders these questions, I am taken aback by two students I have met on this rewarding yet challenging teaching journey and who are most recently associated with my experiences' dark times. These students represent the students who have the spark for educational success, but somewhere along the way, they were deterred by familial and community influences that extinguished their light. These students represent an ignored cry for help answered by the wrong ears, which eventually led to continuous exclusionary discipline practices throughout their educational careers. These students, my students, my neighbors, and my hope for the future, represent all of the characteristics of a failed educational system that has hindered many students from reaching their full potential due to a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of policies

purposely designed to perpetuate racist ideologies. These two students, Brandon Jones* and Dominique Foster*,[2] are two students who entered Jackie Robinson Middle School in Yatesville*[3] and left me questioning our disciplinary policies and procedures. Did these discipline policies cause more harm to troubled youth, or were these policies deliberately placed in African American communities to enhance the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon?

---

[2] * Denotes pseudonyms used to secure the anonymity of the individuals referred.
[3] * Denotes pseudonym used to secure the anonymity of the community referred.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to take the reader on a journey through a segment of the traditional exclusionary disciplinary practices that have existed for Black students, including identifying the effects of overrepresentation of these students, to shifting to a more perceived equitable approach to discipline. I will present a cursory history of how we arrived at these progressive disciplinary approaches by drawing connections between the War on Drugs in the Black community and its influence and contributions to zero-tolerance policies and the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon. Our final stop focuses on analyzing current research and suggestions for future research and teaching/ policy practices.

The Purposeful Disconnect: Setting the Stage

Yatesville*[4] is where this story takes place. It is a low socioeconomic community with mostly Black and Hispanic occupants, located a few miles from the major city, saturated with churches, fast food restaurants, vacant land, and a few liquor stores, is home to gun violence and poverty. The landscape of Yatesville has changed significantly over the decades. Once a community of prosperity, cultural diversity, overloaded with businesses, economic advancement, and stability, transformed into a land that lacked opportunity and stunted growth. The late 1970s birthed an economic shift as prominent businesses and corporations abandoned Yatesville. As a result, many African American residents lost wages and benefits, while others (White Flight) fled the community searching for economic stability. Yatesville lost its prestige, and with the lack of businesses and the middle class, property taxes began to skyrocket. Property values began

---

[4] * Denotes pseudonyms used to secure the anonymity of the community referred.

to decline, causing homeowners and small business owners to either sell their property or walk away, increasing foreclosure rates. Abandoned, foreclosed, and some dilapidated buildings became prevalent throughout Yatesville, as the "downtown" area became unrecognizable, blending into the rest of the community as just "a street that once was."

Yatesville became known as a low socioeconomic community, as lower-income and unemployed residents began to funnel into the area from the major city. Now vulnerable, Yatesville became victim to gang violence and the drug war, with Crack Cocaine as the number one contender. In five years, Yatesville saw an increase in drug usage, drug trafficking, and gang activity, as more than five street gangs called this community their home away from home. The increase in drug distribution, drug abuse, and gang violence also foresaw a rise in incarceration amongst its residents, and in the late 1980s, Yatesville became known as the most dangerous community in Warren County, the largest county by population in the state*[5]. The 1990s also brought more troubles for the Yatesville police department as police corruption also plagued the community. Police officers were accused and charged for being members of the prevalent street gangs and being avid participants in the drug war. Yatesville residents lived in fear as they did not know whom to trust if they had to rely on the police department for reporting gang activity. As the decades have come and gone, Yatesville never recovered as the population faltered throughout the years. The population of Yatesville has decreased by almost 1% in the last few years. However, it is currently home to nearly 25,000 residents with a poverty rate of 20.9%.

---

[5] Denotes pseudonyms used to secure the anonymity of the county referred.

Although the crime rate has decreased, Yatesville's violent crime measures at 59%, 18% higher than the U.S. National Average.

Ogbu's cultural-ecological (C.E.) theory (1990) states that "the general idea that community forces and system forces impact students' academic success and that not enough attention has been paid to how community forces contribute to involuntary minority student failure" (p. 146). The external factors that have contributed to the overrepresentation of African American students with exclusionary disciplinary practices are not necessarily contained within the educational institution's brick walls. Scully (2002) suggests that the most protracted war in the United States history has been the war against drugs. When President Richard Nixon declared war on drugs in 1971, his policies, although punitive, primarily focused on allocating funding towards abuse prevention and treatment (Nixon, 1971; Mitchell & Caudy, 2015). Unfortunately, the advocacy for prevention spiraled into a full-blown war on drugs, criminalizing its users, and perpetuating stigma amongst targeted racial groups (Provine, 2011). Consequently, this war, which is a perpetuation of racial inequality against the black community, has plagued black existence since the post-slavery era and adversely affected students' academic experience in these low socioeconomic environments.

In 1914, Edward Huntington of the New York Times issued an article titled Negro Cocaine "Fiends" New Southern Menace. It stated that the presence of drugs in the black community portrayed African Americans as "cocaine-crazed negroes, who were running amuck in frenzies." Williams (1914) continued to address the effects of drug abuse as "hallucinations and delusions, increased courage, homicidal tendencies, and resistance to shock." Scully (2002)

suggested that the image portrayed the formerly enslaved Africans as this drug-crazed menace that was "part of a scare tactic used to win national support for programs of law and order and the suppression of Black rights" (p. 56-57). As time progressed, this same ideology of drugs' effects became stigmatized as a black problem and targeted the black community as its sole client, even though statistics conflicted with some media outlets. In fact, in 1983, U.S. News and World Report covered the article "How Drugs Sap the Nation's Strength," illustrating a white woman in full makeup and manicured nails, snorting cocaine. The article linked "drugs to a decline in worker productivity and a 40 percent decline in Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) verbal and math scores since the 1960s" (John, 2015). In response to drugs and the school-aged white student, Mrs. Nancy Reagan and the administration founded the "Just Say No" campaign, which prompted anti-drug parades, rallies, slogans, and school clubs across America for students to pledge against indulging in drug abuse (Johns, 2015). Lusane (1991) posits that "even though whites are the majority of users and traffickers, Blacks, Latinos and third world people are suffering the worst excesses of a program that violates civil rights, human rights, and national sovereignty" (p. 4).

It was not until 1985 when crack cocaine emerged, that media outlets began working diligently in reporting the drug epidemic in the black community. Crack, a form of cocaine that is cooked with water and baking soda instead of ether, is much easier and cheaper to manufacture but attacks the central nervous system causing a short-lived and potent reaction that leaves the abuser craving for more (Baum, 1996; Does this War, 1989). This cheaper form of cocaine began spreading to low socioeconomic communities across the country. The

government's focus on the war on drugs in collaboration with media coverage focused its attention on the Black community; however, in the 1990s, 12% of drug users were African Americans while over 70% of drug users were white (Chideya, 1995). However, Lusane (1991) suggests that the black community has been the drug choice market and believes that these low socioeconomic areas are susceptible to traffickers as they chase the most available profits with the least risk. Alexander (2012) stated that the rise of crack in the black community advanced Reagan's plan to build public and legislative support for the war against drugs. As a result, negative images of the black community began to surface as propaganda. Suddenly, the black community is portrayed as a drug-addicted, crime-infested, prison filling menace to the American dream (Scully, 2002; Alexander, 2012).

These negative mythical images also gave birth to the "crack baby," which suggested that an overwhelmingly amount of black women were drug-addicted and producing small victims of the crack epidemic (Elwood, 1994; Chiles, 2015; Chideya, 1995; Alexander, 2012; Scully; 2002; Okie, 2009). The war on drugs inevitably became an effort to demonize the black community, with African American men, women, and children being the central targets (Scully, 2002; Black, 2007; Sandy, 2003). Scully (2002) stated, "it is a war that is destroying our families, our communities, and our image as human beings in the American mind" (p. 36). These mythical images of the crack baby and the political and societal's negative portrayal of drug use heightened the criminalization of African- American citizens and the community as a whole. The message is given throughout the media outlets and many anti-drug programs and initiatives

resonated throughout the nation - the war on drugs was a "Black Problem" (Scully, 2010; Chideya, 1995; Alexander, 2012).

Due to these falsehoods perpetuated through these media outlets, the Reagan administration's declaration turned into a game of politics and not a call to action for communities affected by drug abuse and trafficking. Chiles (2015) stated,

> The Reagan administration was trying to make his pitch to white people, so it was easy to construct Black people as the enemy in the War on Drugs. This has led to mass incarceration that has imprisoned millions and devasted the Black communities across the U.S. The administration made crack into the monster it needed to create the modern prison industrial complex.

Elwood (1994) also added that Reagan and Bush's public notary was also enhanced as it appeared their concerns were linked to the betterment of the people in society while "relieving the federal government of responsibility for failing to address the complex social realities surrounding drug usage in the United States" (p. 84).

Is My Black Really Beautiful?

The Yatesville school system became reflective of the socioeconomic effects of its community. Once a district of choice, the Yatesville School District (YSD #98) also experienced change. Once having a staff that closely mirrored the students' ethnicity, YSD's teaching staff became younger and whiter. This predominately Black and Hispanic town has a sixty-four percent white teaching staff, with 60% of the team living more than seven miles away from the community. Although the district's Superintendent and School Board are reflective of the town's

diversity, the students are still being led in instruction from teachers who refuse to stay past certain hours in the school buildings, afraid of the community activities once the sunsets.

The school district, which is home to elementary schools and one middle school, experienced a drastic restructuring project, which rezoned the entire community. Students who once lived a couple of blocks away from their zoned school were now forced to walk almost two miles to get to their educational institutions. For Jackie Robinson Middle School students, the journey to school includes walking down some blocks of well-manicured lawns, yet other blocks include abandoned homes that fell victim to foreclosure. On the major street that leads to the middle school, some students encounter drug abusers and dealers who loiter in front of the closed businesses. Once they make their way through, the students walk past a host of low-income buildings, some abandoned, which are located directly across the street from the school.

In most cases, the culture of the community, school, and family structure are reflective in the student's behavioral and academic patterns. Let me introduce you to Brandon Jones, a thirteen-year-old eighth grader who attended Jackie Robinson Middle School in Yatesville. Brandon was a student who experienced the hardships of community and family structure. Brandon and his family moved to Yatesville when Brandon was only six months old. His parents are initially from the west side of the major city and moved to Yatesville due to obtaining low-income housing. Brandon's father and mother separated when Brandon was three years old. Brandon's father was involved in illegal drug activity and being a member of a prevalent street gang in Yatesville. Brandon's mother did not want their child exposed to this type of life and did not allow Brandon to visit with his dad. Therefore, Brandon's dad, choosing the street life, saw

him less and less, as his father was frequented jail due to illegal drugs and gun possession charges. Despite these transgressions, Brandon desired a relationship with his father and often fought with his mother, who refused to allow him to visit his father in jail. Brandon's negative behaviors increased when his mother married a man whom she secretly dated for six months. Feeling betrayed, Brandon began hanging with the same neighborhood street gang his father was affiliated. He began robbing Yatesville citizens and his friends and even broke into the local elementary school, trying to steal computers. He insisted that as soon as his father was released from jail, he would go live with him because he did not have a great relationship with his mother, and he despised his stepfather. He looked forward to that day but was highly disappointed when his father refused to have a relationship with him upon his release. The rejection he received from his father drove his behaviors to a new level at home and in school.

Dominique Foster, a five-foot-one mocha brown middle schooler, had long micro braids and a personality that did not match her twelve years on Earth. Unlike Brandon, Dominique was born and raised in Yatesville. Her grandfather migrated from the South to Yatesville in the 1960s, but the family experienced financial hardships after one of the major corporations closed down in the 1970s. Unlike other family members, Dominique's grandfather was forced to stay in Yatesville, where he raised Dominique's mother, Sandra, and her three siblings. When Sandra was thirteen, her father passed away, and the four siblings were divided amongst other family members. Sandra was forced to live with distant relatives that lived on the Southside of the major city. Coming from a structured environment, Sandra was not accustomed to the carefree life of her distant relatives. They did not force her to do school work and encouraged her to drop out of

high school, get pregnant, and obtain public assistance. Sandra's aunt took this extra money as she believed that Sandra should pay for her stay. When Sandra found out she was pregnant, she dropped out of high school and insisted on moving back to Yatesville, to escape her relatives and start a new life with her unborn child. Although Sandra moved back to Yatesville, she brought along the learned idiosyncrasies of her distant relatives.

When Sandra birthed Dominique, she obtained public assistance, which helped her in a significant way, but she refused to advance her education or find employment. She believed that this income source was enough, and finding a man who could bring in the extra income would be the answers to all of her prayers. During Dominique's toddler and childhood years, Sandra sought local drug dealers who could assist in her financial endeavors. Dominique experienced different men coming in and out of the house, and Sandra allowed men to abuse her. Most times, this abuse occurred in front of Dominique. However, despite the abuse, Sandra exposed Dominique to this lifestyle, showing her that you have to accept this treatment to get what you want, no matter how bad it could get. Sandra also exposed Dominique to street life, as most of her old friends were still affiliated with Yatesville's street gangs.

Sandra's best friend, Yolanda, was still involved with gang activity. Yolanda thought it would be a good idea to expose Dominique to this type of life as she believed this would help Dominique be independent because her niece wasn't no punk. Sandra allowed Dominique to hang around Yolanda more and more, and the negative behaviors increased. When Dominique was in Kindergarten, Sandra was sent to jail for possession and intent to distribute Marijuana. During this time, Dominique moved in with Yolanda and became even closer to her, often

calling her mommy. While staying with Yolanda, Dominique was exposed to sex, drugs, and alcohol. She was even molested at the age of seven by one of Yolanda's friends. After this incident, Dominique's behavior worsened.

While in the First Grade, she was caught trying to cut another student's ponytails off with scissors. Yolanda would report to the parent conferences, but defended Dominique's actions, often accusing the teachers of lying on Dominique. When Sandra was released from jail, she noticed the change in Dominique. She tried reprimanding Dominique, but Yolanda would insist that she was overreacting and that it was her fault that Dominique was acting in such a negative way. When Dominique was in the second grade, she refused to listen to the teachers' instructions and told her to Shut the F*** Up. Sandra was called to the school and promised the school that she would take care of it. She would try to punish Dominique, but the behaviors continued. It was not until Yolanda was killed in a drive-by shooting that paused all negative actions for Dominique. She became extremely secluded, often shutting off the world, including her mother. It took almost two years for her to recover from Yolanda's loss, but entering middle school would bring on a new set of behaviors no one saw coming.

The idea of demonizing the Black community, which dates back to American slavery era, highlighted the black body's dangers in white space. Brown Douglas (2015) asserts that the post-Reconstruction culture, which included Jim Crow and Black Codes, was designed to transform slaves, recognized as chattel, into criminals. The ideology of the black body (male and female), which is considered a threat to white space, was created to be hated and produced a social order that spread racism throughout the nation's fibers. The notion of the black body influenced the

current outcomes of the Prison Industrial complex. Alexander (2010) refers to the Prison Industrial complex as the New Jim Crow in that the system "is a well-disguised system of racialized social control" (p. 9).

Embrick (2015) posits that the regulation of black and brown bodies – once the purview of slave overseers and night patrols and racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacy units- have become primarily replaced by state agencies, such as the criminal justice system, and local and federal police (Marable, 1997; Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Feagin, 2006). Brown Douglas (2015) suggests that the purpose of the Prison Industrial complex is to return the black body to its proper place as prison is reserved to "reinstall in a more acceptable twenty-first-century manner, the same system that Jim Crow was developed to reinstate" (p. 20). Alexander (2010) also suggests that tactics including racial profiling, Stop and Frisk, and civil gang injunctions, the idea of the black body and black space has been deemed hazardous, inferior, and not worthy of assimilation and worthy of incarceration. With jails and prisons being solid representatives of the slave plantations, society protects white property, and the most dangerous black body, that is, the black male body, is adequately patrolled (p. 9).

The war on drugs perpetuated the criminalization of the black body. In American society's view on the African American community, black bodies were synonymous with drug dealers. They were often portrayed as "black, powerful and unafraid of legal authority, whereas black users were painted as hopelessly addicted, dangerous, and the bearer of the new generation of crack babies (Provine, 2011; Belenko, 1993; Chambliss, 1995; Reinarman & Levine, 1997; Steiner, 2001). African American women have also experienced hardships due to the war on

drugs. Scully (2002) posits that the presence of African American women in prison due to drug offenses increased by 888% in ten years. Davis (2003) revealed that of all the races and genders, African American women's imprisonment increased by 78%. African American women were mainly charged for drug possession and child abuse and endangerment as infants were born with illegal drugs in their system (Sandy, 2003; Scully, 2002; Provine, 2011; Mauer, 2011; Koch, Lee & Lee, 2016). African American women drug abusers were considered unworthy of treatment, while the children exposed to illegal drugs were considered permanently damaged (Scully, 2002). The African American woman who used drugs during pregnancy was also considered the "evil mother," as the illegal drug exposure leads to a variety of complications and hardships endured by the unborn fetus (McCarthy & Waters, 2003). Hollywood also joined in on the stereotypes of the African American woman, as many movies painted the users as strung out individuals who would go to significant measures to get a fix, some portrayed as pregnant, perpetuating the black woman's stigma on the continuation of the crack generation.

Rugy (2016) suggests that "nonviolent drug offenders account for about one-fourth of inmates in the United States, and despite higher usage rates amongst White Americans, African-Americans are three times more likely to be arrested for possession (p. 1). While African Americans only constitute 12% of the U.S. population and 13% of the country's total drug users, African Americans account for 33% of all drug-related arrests, 62% of drug-related convictions, and 70% of drug-related incarcerations (Black, 2007; Sandy, 2003). From 1980 to 2000, whites' national drug arrests rose from 13.5 to 4.6 per 1000 persons, while the drug arrests for African Americans rose from 6.4 to 29.1 per 1000 persons (Beckett et al. 220; Koch, Lee & Lee, 2016).

Currently, the United States is now the world's leader in incarceration with an average of 500 people incarcerated per 100,000 residents, with African Americans representing 37% of arrests, 59% of drug-related convictions, and 74% of those incarcerated (Austin et al., 2014; Karakatsanis, 2013; Tsai & Scommegna, 2012; Bowen & Redmond, 2016). Farrington et al., (2004) posits that American prisoners receive longer sentences than in most Western nations, serving twice as long as the English, three times longer than Canadians, four times longer than the Dutch, and five to ten times longer than the Swedish and French prisoners, and these countries still do not compete in violent crime statistics as the U.S.

The explanation of this reign states:

> The adoption of truth in sentencing provisions that require prisoners to serve most of their sentences in prison, a wide variety of mandatory minimum sentencing provisions that prevent judges from placing defendants on probation even when their involvement in the conduct that led to the conviction was minor, reductions in the amount of good time a prisoner can receive while imprisoned, and more conservative parole boards have significantly impacted the length of stay (Austin, et al, 2007 p. 3).

Rugy (2016) stated, "the war on drugs creates incentives for young black men to seek employment in the drug business rather than seek lower-paying legal employment" (p. 1). As a result, the cycle of drug-related arrest, convictions, and incarcerations continue to plague the black family's infrastructure, causing children to be raised in single-parent households. Cuffee (2008) adds that 60% of African American children are living in fatherless homes, enlisting African American mothers to carry the entire parenting load. Due to the war on drugs, African

Americans represented 21% of drug arrests in 1980, then rose to 36% in 1992, but declined to 34% by 2009 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009; Mauer, 2011; Mauer 2006). On a per-capita basis, 4,777 black males per 100,000 are in prison compared to 727 for white males, while black women are imprisoned 349/100,000 compared with 93/100,000 for white women (Provine, 2011). Mandatory sentencing policies also enhanced racial disparities as African Americans represented 80% of persons charged with a crack cocaine offense (Mauer, 2011). These offenses also come with an extensive price tag. On average, taxpayers in the United States spend over 42 billion dollars per year to house prisoners(Vera, 2015). In the state of Illinois, the prison system costs more than 1.5 billion dollars, with 33,507 spent per inmate (Vera, 2015). Consequently, Illinois spends only 14,180 each year per student for educational purposes, which explains that the United States penal system holds more precedence to our society than education.

The incarceration of African American men and women impacts the children involved. Fasching-Varner et al. (2014) found that between 1991 and 2007, the number of imprisoned fathers increased by 76% while the number of mothers increased by more than 120%. Therefore, African American children are nine times as likely as white children to have at least one parent in prison due to drug-related offenses (Black, 2007; Sandy, 2003 Alexander, 2011, Koch, Lee & Lee, 2016; Beckett, Nyrop & Pfingst, 2006). Cuffee (2008) stated, "the black family is being disrupted and left destitute in such vital ways that it begs the question whether it has the resilience to fully recover from such formidable odds to secure a future" (p. xix).

Lynch & Sabol's (2004) study on social control found that concentrated poverty, resident racial segregation, and targeted neighborhoods contribute to the clustering of incarcerations.

Mauer (2011) also found that these extreme penal disparities promote the ideology of "family stress and dissolution, neighborhoods experiencing high mobility of residents cycling in and out of prison and limited access to employment prospects" (p.965). Chang &Thompkins (2002) suggested, "increases in the unemployment rate, poverty, income inequality, racial conflict, and political conservatism contributes to an increase in the incarceration rate, independent of the crime rate" (p. 47). Alexander (2010) concludes that "blackness and crime, especially drug crime [has become so] conflated in the public consciousness that the construct' criminal black man' is an inevitable reality (p. 36).

The dehumanization of black men, women, and children perpetuated falsehoods that have trickled into the public school systems in low socioeconomic communities, especially the black community. These factors, which replicated the penal system's source of social control, birthed the zero-tolerance movement in the public school system while advancing schools' notion as centers of institutional racism. Keep in mind that this system, defined as "consistent allocation of resources in a way that advantages one racial group at the expense of others" (Taylor & Clark, 2009, p.114), was not introduced due to zero-tolerance policies. The ideology of such practices includes but is not limited to, the following:

- Assigning teachers with low expectations for student achievement

- Less or no cultural connection to curricular taught or tested.

- Academic Tracking

- Less or no opportunity for complex thinking skills and strategies

- A significantly disproportionate number of African American and Latino students being placed in Special Education Programs.

- The culture of the school and classrooms are not representative of the student population. (Kunjufu, 2013; Taylor & Clark, 2009)

Therefore, the emphasis on zero-tolerance policies was designed to "contribute to the existing racial and ethnic disparities in the discipline within public education. These inequalities more often than not produce lower graduation rates among minority youth, which contributed to higher rates of criminality among these youth" (Allen et al., (2015), p. 80). These influences promoted tolerance to penal system punishment policies from the community, to infiltrate the school system, purposely targeting African American youth within the school building (Bell, 2015). Hacker (1992) stresses:

> No other American race is wounding itself so fatally. Nor can it be said that black Americans chose this path for themselves. So in allocating responsibility, the response should be clear. It is white America that has made being black so disconsolate an estate. Legal slavery may be in the past, but segregation and subordination have been allowed to persist. Even today, America imposes a stigma on every black child at birth… So the question for white Americans is essentially moral; is it right to impose on members of an entire race a lesser start in life, and then to expect from them a degree of resolution that has never been demanded from your own race? (p. 218-219).

Zero Tolerance Means Zero Possibilities and Zero Expectations

Brandon would come to school every day, reeking of marijuana, and would arrive at school late. His late arrivals afforded him demerits for being tardy to school and an additional demerit for improper uniform and lack of school identification badge (three demerits in a day results in an automatic after school detention). Once Brandon arrived at his first class, he would immediately put his head down, disengage in instruction, and socialize with his peers. He would be warned several times throughout the day by the teachers to participate in class, but to no avail, he would refuse and receive demerits for insubordination. The collection of demerits eventually led Brandon to spend several days out of school for suspension.

Brandon's anti-social behavior also affected his relationships with his peers. Although he did have a small group of friends that he hung out with during and after school, Brandon consistently participated in physical altercations with his peers, especially the male students. On one occasion, Brandon fought another male student because the other student stepped on his new shoes. This led to him being suspended for five days. Another incident involved Brandon physically assaulting a female student because she did not want to share her phone number with him. This incident also warranted a five-day suspension. These behaviors would continue throughout the entire year. Brandon would face the dean of discipline with a collection of infractions, only to receive out-of-school suspensions, which spanned from three-ten days per incident. By December, Brandon was absent from school thirty-six days in which twenty-eight of those days were marked as out of school suspensions. Brandon's mother was continuously notified of his behavior, often resulting in conferences with teachers and administrators. She

even came to the school to shadow Brandon to show up and find out Brandon was not in school. However, his behavior did not improve. His grades continued to decline as he could not complete any makeup work due to the suspensions being viewed as "unexcused absences."

In middle school, Dominique hung around with the "drama queens" of her class. She and her friends were the seventh-grade bullies, taunting and stirring up trouble in and outside of the classroom. On several occasions, Dominique would yell obscenities in the hall, flash the male students, and curse teachers out regularly to garner approval and attention from her peers. She would also cause havoc inside the classroom, as well. During instruction, Dominique would put her head down in class because she did not want to participate. When she was instructed to focus, she would curse out the teacher, which caused her to be put out of class. These incidents led to her visiting the Dean's office often. Eventually, she would be suspended for her actions to return to school to continue the destructive behavior. Dominique's mother was notified continuously of her actions and referred to the district's behavioral interventionist for additional behavioral support. Dominique's negative behaviors continued, and after her first session with the interventionist, she received a ten-day suspension for fighting. This fight included Dominique and her friends jumping a sixth-grader, causing the student multiple injuries and a visit to the emergency room. However, Dominique's behaviors continued upon her return to school.

In another incident, Dominique was caught stealing money out of her teacher's desk. Dominique admitted her misdeed to the school administrator, apologized to the teacher and completed out of school suspension for ten days, but was not required to return the money. On another occasion, Dominique was caught on school surveillance keying teachers' and

administrators' cars after school. The police arrived at the school, and Dominique was reprimanded for vandalism and suspended from school for ten days. Her behaviors continued upon returning to school. By January, Dominique was absent from school forty days, all of which were dedicated to out of school suspensions.

The idea of zero tolerance, which targets offenses with severe consequences, originated from state and federal drug enforcement policies in the 1970s and 1980s (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Bell, 2015; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Pipho, 1998). The terms "zero tolerance" made its journey through the 1980s, gaining national attention for its attempts on seizing illegal drugs on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts (Skiba & Peterson,1999; Bell, 2015). The notion of zero tolerance policies also stemmed from Wilson & Keelings (1982) Broken Windows Theory, which believed that less social control present through the decay of dilapidated communities promotes the creation of crime and disorder. This idea of communal degradation aligns with Davis's (2001) imprisonment ideology, which states, "prisoners came to be viewed as `producers of insider knowledge regarding one of the major institutional structures responsible for the perpetuation of racism, poverty, and male dominance" (p. 428). These two theories suggest that the prison mentality is echoed within lower socioeconomic communities as criminals who get away with minor infractions will continue to influence more crimes to take place, causing the community to be riddled with violence and more serious offenses (Bell, 2015; Wilson & Keelings, 1982). Bell's (2015) notion of "order maintenance" suggested that state and federal legislators enforced stricter laws that targeted drug distribution, gun possession, and other criminal offenses (p. 14). The

need to maintain order registered in schools under the surname "serious issue" as the war on drugs and violence spilled into America's educational institutions' hallways.

The idea behind zero tolerance was a policy established within school systems, which severely punished all behavioral offenses, no matter how minor (Skiba & Peterson, 1999 p. 373). The public school system adopted the ideology of zero tolerance to combat school violence, drug abuse, and behavioral disruption (Richards, 2005; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Knesting, 2001). In 1989, California, Kentucky, and New York adopted the zero-tolerance policies for public schools. By 1994, the Clinton Administration signed into the law the Gun-Free Schools Act in which all fifty states were required to adhere to the disciplinary mandates (Bowditch, 1993; Bell, 2015; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Richards, 2005).

In schools across the country, school violence concerns become a more significant concern than academic achievement- and became the highest priority for reform and the need for intervention (Noguera, 1995). During the rise of the zero-tolerance era, the use of security guards, police, and cameras were implemented, with higher usage in urban, inner-city areas (Neiman & DeVoe, 2009). In the 1999-2000 school year, approximately 19% of all public schools utilized security cameras to monitor student behavior (Zhang et al., 2015; Mowen, 2017). By the 2014 school year, 75% of all public schools reported that security cameras were necessary for monitoring student behaviors (Zhang et al., 2016; Mowen, 2017). Schools also increased the use of drug-sniffing dogs, armed security officers, and metal detectors to ensure safety (Zhang et al. 2016). Welch and Payne (2010) found that schools with higher proportions of African American students were more likely to use extreme security-based practices and more

forms of punitive forms of student discipline to control the environment (Irvwin et al. 2013; Payne & Wayne, 2010; Kupchik & Ward, 2013; Mowen & Parker, 2014).

The idea of promoting safety within the school system after the surge of school shootings and drug abuse amongst teens enforced policies that focused on more stringent disciplinary practices, leading to suspensions and expulsions. According to the CDC's School Associated Violent Death Study (SAVDS), "from 1999 to 2006, a total of 116 students were killed in 109 school-associated incidents, with 65% attributed to gunshot wounds as 80% of these incidents occurring in elementary, middle or high school settings" (p. 2). The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, mandated a one-year calendar expulsion for possession of a firearm, referral of law-violating students to the criminal or juvenile justice system, and the provision that state law must authorize the chief administrative officer of each local school district to modify such expulsions on a case to case basis (Skiba & Knesting, p. 19). Richards (2005) suggests that zero-tolerance policies were initially intended to provide students with "equal fairness in disciplinary matters by providing a hard and fast approach to deal with any infractions in the same way" (p. 91). In other words, legislators believed that to maintain a sense of structure within the educational setting, implementing policies that promote consequential outcomes would deter students from participating in activities deemed as "disruptive."

This notion of ridding schools of students who disrupted the school system for obtaining drugs and weapons (perpetuated through the war of drugs and crimes of the 1980s) escalated to include minor behaviors that focused on tardiness, absenteeism, and physical conflicts and disruptions. These minor offenses began to overshadow the zero-tolerance policies' primary

purposes, causing the perpetuation of disproportionality to increase for African-American students (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Allen, 2017; Wilkie, 2015). The implementation of zero-tolerance policies led to several incidences, whereas students, teachers, and administrators were severely penalized. In Chicago, a seventeen-year-old junior in high school who shot a paper clip at another student, which accidentally hit a cafeteria worker, was taken to the County jail, was expelled from school, and advised to drop out. In Ohio, a student who shared Midol tablets with a classmate and was suspended for ten days. In Maryland, a twelve-year-old honor student who shared his asthma inhaler with a student suffering an asthma attack was barred from participation in extracurricular activities. A five-year-old found a razor blade at his bus top and brought it to school to show the teacher was expelled and eventually transferred to another school. A principal was suspended and banished to a teaching position after four seventh and eighth graders sipped a thimbleful wine as part of a trip to Paris. In Louisiana, a second-grader who brought grandfather's watch, which had a one-inch pocket knife attached to show and tell, was suspended and sent for one month to a local alternative school (Skiba & Knesting, 2001).

After the signing of the Gun-Free School Act (October 1994), these incidences documented are just snapshots of school events that led to suspensions and expulsions influenced by the zero-tolerance policies. This policy also includes non-violent student behaviors, such as verbal harassment, disobedience, obscene language, and truancy (Arum 2003; Marsh, 2014). The exclusionary disciplinary practices, with heavy reliance on the zero-tolerance ideologies, lead to worse educational outcomes for the excluded student, including loss of "educational opportunities, poor school performances, and dropping out, which further jeopardized youth

human capital accumulation" (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013).

In schools, institutional racism has sometimes found labels inconspicuous and subtle, as racist policies, practices, and procedures have hidden agendas and rhetoric that explicitly targets students of color, especially African Americans (Stover, 2017; Taylor & Clark, 2009). The purpose of these racist policies is to promote, protect, and serve White interests (Crenshaw, 1995; Harris, 1993). Kohli et al. (2017) study on "The New Racism of K-12 Schools; categorized racism by defining exclusionary discipline through zero-tolerance practices as evaded racism. In this form of institutional racism, education research, policies, and practices "result in deficit-minded or superficial approaches to reform that center Whiteness rather than improve the educational opportunities of students of color" (p.188).

Zero tolerance policies utilized exclusionary practices as a superficial remedy to discipline instead of identifying the underlying causes of such behaviors. The stringent procedures of the zero-tolerance systems prompted many stakeholders to question the validity of the Gun-Free School Act's behavioral outcomes. Skiba (2014) noted that data emerging from this twenty-year social experiment has failed to demonstrate that school exclusion and increasing punishment levels keep our schools safer. Moreover, it is suggested that this form of disciplinary practices with the increase of law enforcement in the school setting enhances negative academic and life outcomes for African-American students (Skiba, 2014; Bell, 2015). Zero-tolerance policies do not eradicate discipline infractions but alienate students from the school, leading to

higher disciplinary issues and dropout rates (American Psychological Association, 2008; Lustick, 2017).

This form of institutional racism became the hidden agenda for excluding African American students from the classroom and a chance at a successful academic future. The zero-tolerance policies implemented in the educational setting enhanced the disproportionate disciplinary practices of suspensions and expulsions for minority students, especially African American males and females. Although African American males represent 8.23% of the total student population, they have suspended three times their percentage in the community (Townsend, 2000). As time passed, the percentages of disproportionate exclusionary practices increased tremendously. During the 2009-2010 school year, 31% of African American middle schoolers had experienced being suspended at least once (Kang-Brown et al. 2013). In the 2011-2012 school year, nationally, 8% of African Americans in elementary school and 23% of African American students in secondary schools were suspended compared to 2% of white elementary and 75% white students in secondary schools (Losen et al., 2015; Girvan et al., 2016).

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 12% of African American girls were suspended in the 2011-2012 school year compared to 7% for American Indian and 2% for white girls. The United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) reported African American youth are suspended three times higher than white youth, and 16% of African American youth are suspended each year across all grades. The Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education (2016) found that 13 Southern States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South

Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia) were responsible for 55% of the 1.2 million suspensions and 50% of expulsions documented against African American students nationwide. This study also found that in 84 southern school districts, 100% of students suspended were African American.

Illinois policymakers and advocates worked for discipline reform as a 2012 report created by The Civil Rights Project at UCLA. They found that the suspension rates for African American students were the highest in the nation (Belsha, 2018). Loyola University of Chicago research shows African American students represent 65% of all suspensions but only represent 31% of the student population. In comparison, white students represent 15% of all suspensions at 31% of the student population, and Hispanic students represented 11% of all suspensions with 27% of the student population (Belsha, 2018). African American students in Illinois have been suspended 4, 288 times. The zero-tolerance policies are not limited to elementary-aged and high school students. Of the 1 million students enrolled in preschools, 5,000 were suspended at least once, and 2,500 were suspended more than once (Lee, 2014). Judith Browne Dianis, co-director of the Advancement Project, stated, "But we do know that schools are using zero-tolerance policies for our youngest, also, while we think our children need a head start, schools are kicking them out instead" (Lee, 2014).

Disruptive or Disconnected

Brandon experienced a tumultuous time in school, and he never tried to form relationships with his teachers. Throughout his time at Turner-Bozeman Middle School, he was already targeted based on his academic and behavioral performance. He would continuously hear

teachers say, "Oh, so you are Brandon, oh yes, we have heard about you!" This particular statement caused Brandon to shut down from doing his best. He heard that statement so much that he decided to shut down anytime a teacher would say it automatically. During his sixth grade year, Brandon was always made to be the example. When Brandon wore a pair of blue shoes instead of the standard black, he was suspended for two days for non-uniform compliance. When he returned to school with his black shoes, his teacher told the class, "make sure you wear the correct shoes, or you will be Brandoned."

Although the class erupted in laughter, Brandon realized at that moment; the school was not a place he wanted to be. His disconnect from his teachers caused them to discipline him for the slightest incidences. In the disciplinary school logs, Brandon had thirty-two write-ups for one school year. Brandon was recorded as insubordinate and given an in-school suspension in one incident because he shot his milk in the garbage can like a basketball instead of just "throwing it away." Another teacher wrote him up for tapping his pencils on the desk during a test. This also warranted an in-school suspension. His science teacher recorded an infraction for him yelling out the answer instead of raising his hand for permission.

This lack of connection turned Brandon into a student whom teachers feared before knowing who he was an individual. Brandon lost interest in the content the teachers were teaching as well. Often, when he came to class and put his head down, it was to gather his thoughts about how he would deal with his mother and stepfather's constant bickering at home. He chose to keep his head down in class because he was embarrassed about not completing the homework independently. He decided to keep his head down because this was the only time

during the day in which if he could just sit still, he could be invisible from everything and nothing. Unfortunately for Brandon, this disconnection was something he felt did not matter because the school did not matter; home did not matter because he mattered to no one.

Along with her numerous infractions and suspensions, Dominique's grades also faltered, causing her grade point average to fall below 1.6 on a 4.0 scale. She could not make up any missing assignments because out of school suspensions were marked as unexcused absences. Therefore, all missing assignments were marked as zero percent. Dominique hated her teachers, and it seemed like the feeling was mutual. Dominque was often welcomed to class with eye-rolling from the teachers. This type of encounter empowered her to continue with the disruptive behaviors as she knew she was the one who had power over the classroom. She would purposely enter the classroom talking in a loud voice with her friends, often using profanity. The teachers would immediately write her up for these behaviors. However, that did not stop her. In her Math class, she yelled across the room, "Does anybody have a f***** pencil?" This action had her removed from the classroom. One day in her science class, she got into a verbal altercation with the teacher, resulting in her attempting to key the teacher's car after school.

Dominique also had a hard time trusting adults, especially after the death of Yolanda. The only adult she trusted was her mother, but she still held onto the idea that her mother was the cause of Yolanda's passing, resulting in her having a limited connection with her mother. It was not until the seventh-grade year that she met a teacher who tried to build a relationship with her, an African American teacher named Ms. Cole. Dominique would try to act out in this teacher's class purposely, but Ms. Cole would not tolerate her behavior. When Dominique would blurt out

profanities, Ms. Cole would pull her to her desk and talk to her about what it means to be a young lady in her class. When she would leave her seat without permission or try to disrupt class instruction, Ms. Cole would redirect Dominique and continue with the lesson, letting all students know that they are all important and in charge of their futures. She even rearranged the class seating chart to ensure Dominique was not sitting with her "friends." If Dominique refused to do work, Ms. Cole made sure she did not leave the building until the job was done, often going into her lunch periods and sitting with Dominique.

On several occasions, Dominique would try to skip class, only to be found by Ms. Cole in the bathroom or other unsupervised school areas. She would become so frustrated and often ask her, "Why do you care so damn much?" However, Ms. Cole would never respond to her. After weeks of the cat and mouse game, Dominique gave in, feeling as if she had no other choice but to succumb to Ms. Cole and her tactics. She started to arrive on time for Ms. Cole's class and participated in daily activities. Homework was a big issue for Dominique, so Ms.Cole arranged for her to complete her homework during her study hall. Ms. Cole experienced small victories with Dominique, but her other teachers were still dealing with the disrespectful Dominique. Ms. Cole tried to share her strategies with the other teachers, but they were not interested. Mrs. Gates, the math teacher, stated, "I am not doing anything extra. She does not want to learn, and her mother does not care. That is not my job to do all this extra stuff. If she continues to act up in my class, she will continue to be sent out. Suspensions are working for me, and it gives me days off from dealing with her". Although Dominique continued to receive infractions, none came from the time she had instruction with Ms. Cole.

The misinterpretation of the African American youth within the educational system promotes schools' idea of representing forms of institutionalized racism (Skiba, 2002; Gaynes, 1993;), especially with exclusionary disciplinary policies. Neal et al. (2003) stated, "Not only does culture allow us to maintain our sense of identity and how we perceive ourselves, but it also represents the lens through which we view and evaluate the behaviors of others (p. 49). According to the Marxist theory, the ruling elite ensures their material dominance by maintaining the "structural oppression of a segment of society" (Payne, Hitchens & Chambers, p. 876). The concept of institutional racism, which systematically favors the white culture in gaining access to power, economic stability, and opportunity while excluding people of color (Skiba, 2002;), mirrors the education system's exclusionary discipline policies. African American students' achievement in school can increase when their educational processes are directed by teachers who understand their socio-cultural and include these factors in their lesson planning, instruction, and assessments (Boykin & Bailey, 2000; Elison et al., 2000).

Racial stereotypes by teachers held against African American students cause them to react quickly and more harshly to their misbehavior (Skiba et al., 2002; Ferguson, 2000). Some of these stereotypes include African American youth being prone to violence, angry, hostile and aggressive, malicious, rude, intimidating, and threatening (Carby, 1998; Fujioka, 1999; Sue &Sue, 1990; Foster, 1986; Majors & Mancini Billson, 1992). This ideology stems from the disparities of discipline as African American students, not only in poor communities but also in middle and higher socioeconomic communities, experience disproportionate exclusionary outcomes (Skiba, 2002; Witt, 2007). Hall (2016) posits that meaning is continuously being

produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction in which we take part. This is evident in the disciplinary exchange, whereas students of color are targeted for having "attitudes" or being insubordinate. These perpetuations of constructs are often formulated from teachers and other adults who are present throughout the day. These policies limit youth of color, such as the zero-tolerance policies and rigid disciplinary processes that were created as a result of the social constructs of students of color (James & James, 2004). According to the Equal Justice Initiative (2017):

> Black youth are burdened by a presumption of guilt and dangerousness — a legacy of our history of racial injustice that marks youth of color for disparately frequent stops, searches, and violence and leads to higher rates of childhood suspension, expulsion, and arrests at school; disproportionate contact with the juvenile justice system; harsher charging decisions and disadvantaged plea negotiations; a greater likelihood of being denied bail and diversion; an increased risk of wrongful convictions and unfair sentences; and higher rates of probation and parole revocation.

The constructs and preconceived notions of students of color or the myth of cultural poverty can dictate the outcome of being reprimanded. If the body language is misinterpreted, it can lead to the overrepresentation of exclusionary practices (Gorski,2008; Ferguson, 2000). In articulating reactive and proactive measures of discipline, (Fenning & Rose, 2007) found reactive measures of discipline- suspension and expulsions- were the most commonly stated responses to code infractions, even for minor behaviors unrelated to school safety, and were the most likely consequences offered, regardless of the problem behavior. African- American

students are also more likely to receive harsher disciplinary consequences, such as corporal punishment, and are less likely than other races to receive mild consequential alternatives such as written infractions (Gregory, 1996; Shaw and Braden, 1990). Moreover, Casella (2003) found that "suburban schools in higher socioeconomic areas offered more proactive alternatives to punitive responses (e.g., substance abuse interventions for drug or alcohol infractions as opposed to removal through suspension or expulsion) in comparison to those in urban high school environments, which are most likely places in which students of color receive their education" (p. 547).

Foucault (1979) asserts that disciplinary policies in schools are an act of "normalizing" individuals. His conceptualization of discipline leads to a mode of domination, which eventually compares, differentiates, hierarchizes homogenizes, and excludes; in short, it normalizes (Ferguson, 2000; Foucault, 1979). What exactly is normal behavior for African American students in school? Daily, they are disciplined for actions not classified as usual, so who exhibits the rights to normal and what measures are utilized to determine this normalcy? This normalcy, which represents separation from the community, is demonstrated through the educational and disciplinary policies implemented in urban schools designed to strip the sense of self from African American students who do not assimilate. Questions surrounding the role disciplinary procedures play in perpetuating community stereotypes and racial biases of African-American students contribute to the sense of normalcy and hierarchy development. Ferguson (2000) viewed schools as sorting systems, stating:

This system is designated to produce a hierarchy: a few individuals who are valorized as "gifted" at the top and a large number who are stigmatized as failures at the bottom. School rules operate along with other elements of the formal curriculum, such as standardized tests and grades to produce these ordered differences among children (p. 311-312).

In other words, students who do not meet the criteria of school rules representative of "normal behaviors" are sorted into categories, which leads to harsher consequences that lead to exclusionary discipline practices, often increasing the chances of African American students to drop out of school. Over half of young black men who enroll in urban high schools do not earn a diploma, and nearly 60% will go to prison (Lynch, 2016).

This invisibility felt by African American students in policy, curriculum, and instruction creates a negative space, causing a disconnection, disengagement, and distortion to school. This sense of invisibility also stems from educators not connecting to their students' world, not vice versa. Ladson-Billings (2001) argued that students of color become disconnected from school due to the refusal of assimilation to school culture. Students are asked to remove their cultural and communal awareness and become of the school's processes, which alienated themselves and their self-worth. Teachers who are disconnected from their students are more likely to impose their racial biases, causing instructional conflict within the classroom. Neal et al. (2003) argue, "teachers misunderstandings of and reactions to students' culturally conditioned behaviors can lead to school and social failure" (p.49). Emdin (2016) asserts, "many of us who think about the education of youth of color have developed our ideas about the field from specialists who can describe the broad landscape of urban education but are often far removed, both geographically

42

and psychologically, from the schools and students that they speak and write about so eloquently" (p. 19). The inability to connect to the students or the community stems from the educator's inability to relate to the community through the students' and communal experiences. Emdin (2016) concludes that urban education experts lack of understanding of how urban experience and school performance are married concepts and view communal disadvantages as having little to no impact on school achievement. This lack of interconnectivity increases the odds of African American students experiencing exclusionary discipline procedures as behaviors are not understood, undiagnosed, and un-nurtured.

Misunderstood behaviors are sometimes associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, better known as PTSD, and has been found to have a direct correlation between school and community violence (Zyromski, 2007). African American youth who reside in low socioeconomic urban communities are more likely to witness, become a victim of, or experience violent traumas than their white peers (National Center of PTSD, 2005; Zyromski, 2007; Buka et al., 2001; Rich et al., 2009; Smith, 2015; Way, 1998; Smith & Patton, 2016). Violence affects the lives of African American youth and their community (Smith, 2015; Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 2011, 2012), and exposure to these communities compares to growing up in war zones abroad (Bell & Jenkins, 1991; Garbarino, 1995, 1999). African American youth are also 7.8 times more likely to have a family member or friend murdered than their White peers (Finkelhor et al., 2005). Consequently, these experiences begin in early childhood and increase throughout the school-aged years and merge into adulthood, "creating an enduring threat to

health and well-being across developmental stages" (Smith & Patton, 2016). The behavior and performance of children who have PTSD:

Exposures to violence are associated with a child's experience of clinically significant stress reactions and externalizing behavior problems, such as an increase in aggression and violence toward peers, an increase in self-abuse and self-destruction, delinquency, antisocial behavior, inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Other externalizing behaviors could include irritability, anger, rage, rudeness, infantileness, provoking conflicts, a loss of self-esteem and /or self-confidence, low concentration, aggressiveness, cognitive restructuring or impairment and unpredictability, and declining performance for the student in school (Turkel & Eth, 1990; Armsworth & Holaday, 1993; Berton &Stabb, 1996; Duckworth, et al., 2000; National Center for PTSD, 2005; Zyromski, 2007).

When students are suspended or expelled from school, they lose access to an education designed to further their academic intellect. Nittle (2019) states that African American students are disciplined more harshly, have limited access to quality educators, and are less likely to be identified for Honors/gifted curriculums. Moreover, they lose precious minutes of instruction. This lack of access and instructional time loss widens the achievement gap between African American students and their white peers (Townsend, 2000; Baribaldi, 1992; Simmons & Grady, 1990). Due to exclusion, this achievement gap can often lead to African American students scoring significantly lower on standardized tests or placing into low ability groups, which are often taught with lower-level teaching materials and resources (Oakes, 1994; Townsend, 2000).

For the 2014-2015 school year in California, African American students lost 45 days of instruction per 100 enrolled, compared to 11 days lost per 100 white students. African Americans lost an average of 32 more days of instruction than their white peers (Civil Rights Project, UCLA). Repeated suspensions and expulsions have also doubled students' risk of repeating a grade (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). In 2014, higher percentages of African American students were retained in a grade during elementary and secondary school compared to White students (Musu-gillette et al. 2016; Rose et al., 2017). The Council of State Governments (2011) found that school rates of suspensions are moderately associated with lower graduation or higher dropout rates and greater contact with the juvenile system (Skiba, 2014). African American students are graduating at lower rates (75%) compared to Hispanics (78%), White (88%), or Asian/ Pacific Islanders (90%) (Kena et al., 2016). Rich et al. (2018) believes that the disregard for the disconnect leads to hopelessness and resignation towards school, home, community, and life.

When the symptoms above are displayed within the classroom/school setting, African American students are often suspended and recommended for other exclusionary disciplinary outcomes. Educators who are disconnected from the student and community may obtain a misunderstanding about their trauma-affected experiences. Therefore, they assume that the student lacks a willingness to change, are unremorseful or hard, thus begin to blame and stigmatize them because of their race or gender because they are somehow at fault for their experiences, when the student is simply traumatized (Rich et al., 2018). Noguera (2008) states:

Too often, schools react to the behavior of such children while failing to respond to their unmet needs or the factors responsible for their problematic behavior. In doing so, they

45

contribute to the marginalization of such students, often pushing them out of school altogether, while ignoring the issues that cause problematic behavior (p. 113).

In the article, "There is no post," Rich et al. (2018), discuss that the use of post in post-traumatic syndrome disorder fails to identify all symptoms experienced by African American youth. Post, which symbolizes the idea of after, is irrelevant to the youth's trauma because traumatic experiences are ongoing. Rich et al. (2018) believe the traumas also extend beyond those usually associated with PTSD. Since this particular prognosis does not include these traumas experienced by the youth, it is unclear if PTSD could be the correct diagnosis. On the contrary, McKenzie (2018) of the Black Youth Project suggests that any child has to relive the trauma when exposed to anything that triggers their memory is common to the disorder. Consequently, African American youth experiencing these behaviors are labeled disruptive; but failed to diagnose these behaviors.

Prepping for Prison in a School Uniform

Brandon's days as a student were coming to a fast halt. The more suspensions he had, the more access he had to his gang and criminal activity. During the two weeks of his eighth-grade year, Brandon was suspended due to a fight that was considered mob action against another student. His parents were told by the school's administration team to keep him home for the remainder of the school year. He received his diploma from JRMS, even though he refused to participate in the graduation ceremony. The summer before beginning high school, Brandon was heavy in gang activity. He began distancing himself from his mother and stepfather, often coming home once or twice a week. He started smoking marijuana, as well. Everything came to

a complete stop on a summer evening in August. Brandon and his friends were out looking for a victim to rob. They spotted a senior woman walking to her car. Brandon was encouraged to carjack her while the friends waited inside the awaiting vehicle. As Brandon attempted to rob the victim, he decided to take the attack a step further by physically assaulting the woman, causing great bodily harm that left the woman on life support. Although he did not steal her car, he took her purse, which has twelve hundred dollars and five credit cards. Brandon decided to use the victim's credit card to order a pizza for his crew as a celebratory reward. This action of credit card usage allowed the police to identify Brandon as the suspect. He was arrested at school the following week, with his mother present. Brandon was sent to the juvenile detention center, where he awaited his trial.

Dominique's journey was similar to Brandon. Although she was on the straight and narrow while with Ms. Cole in the seventh grade, the eighth-grade transition drew her right back to her negative behaviors. In addition to the behaviors, her grades also faltered, as she failed every subject that she was enrolled. Her final act led to a hotel party that she hosted, in which she was recorded performing sexual acts with another high school student. The recordings circulated within the school and ended up in the administrators' hands and led to a ten-day suspension. Dominique was prohibited from participating in the graduation activities as her mother picked up her diploma a week after the last day of school. With her years in Yatesville, Sandra decided to move back to the major city's south side. She felt that Dominique needed a fresh start with a new community and Yatesville, in her opinion, had a negative influence on her child. Unfortunately for Dominique, her actions led her to an alternative high school as she was expelled from the

neighborhood high school based on her behaviors. Dominique's behaviors continued as she fought daily with students in the alternative school. One particular fight spilled into a major street on the south side of the city, as Dominique was equipped with a knife that she brought from home. While fighting another student, Dominique stabbed the individual, severely injuring the student. The student was placed on life support, and Dominique was sent to a juvenile detention center to await her trial.

The juxtaposition of school and the prison pipeline ideology requires an in-depth analysis of the prison industry's complex operation and its influence on the educational system. Prisons, which experienced a widespread and swift expansion in the 1980s and 1990s (Samura, 2000), had a financial impact on the American society that has advanced its being into a culture. According to the Sentencing Project (2012), the prison population increased by 200% between 1925 and 1975, and the number of prisoners grew by 700% since that time. However, during the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations, implementation and maintaining stiff federal drug laws, criminal penalties including additional offense categories, mandatory minimum sentences were measures taken to reassure the nation that America was tough on crime (Alexander, 2011; Gray, 2012; Koch, et al., 2016). Parenti (1991) noted that the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and 1988 escalated the drug war by increasing the federal criminal justice budget and promoting anti-offender mandatory sentencing policies, law enforcement practices, and judicial processes. Bill Clinton also signed into law the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which created new federal crimes, mandated severe minimum sentences, enforced border control, and budgeted 30 million to hire 100,000

new police officers and construct new prisons (Chang & Thompkins, 2002). Mauer (1999), the war on drugs resulted in broader definitions of illegal drugs, increased amounts of arrests and prosecutions, and stiffer mandatory minimum sentences for drug users and dealers.

a) *Longer Sentences*- Most crack cocaine defendants receive an average of 11 years in prison (King & Mauer, 2006).

b) *Mandatory Minimums*- A conviction of possession with 5 grams of crack cocaine- mandates a five-year minimum prison sentence (Meierhoefer, 1992).

c) *Felony Drug Offenses*- Small possession convictions, particularly crack cocaine, were recategorized from misdemeanors to felony charges based on the Drug Abuse Act 1986 (King & Mauer, 2006).

d) *Three Strikes You are Out*- Applies to those convicted with a third felony. Haney (1998) notes that many inmates are serving life sentences for three –drug possession offenses.

Therefore, between 1980 and 1997, the number of drug offenders in federal and state prisons increased by 1000%.

Davis (1998) stated, "Corporations that appear to be far removed from the business of punishment are intimately involved in the expansion of the prison industrial complex" (p. 15). As the prison industry became a profitable opportunity, corporations began to seek multi-million dollar contracts with state governments to construct, manage, and operate prisons (Chang & Thompkins, 2002). The privatization of prisons became a big business, as rural towns became the prime location due to the elimination of manufacturing industries (Fasching-Varner et al.,

2014). Samura (2000) posited, "much like Third World nations competing to attract foreign investments, rural communities fighting each other for prisons risk engaging in a race to the bottom and becoming dependent on their community's new employer and the crime that supports it" (p. 42).

As the prison system expanded, so did the need for additional "clientele," and their ability to occupy the residence for extended amounts of time. Samura (2000) suggested that these extended occupancies in the prisons were not to acquire rehabilitation nor corrective restorations, but instead to be honored for their continued failures. Brewer & Heitzeg (2008) analyzes the phenomenon, "this complex now includes more than 3,300 jails, more than 1,500 state prisons, and 100 federal prisons in the United States. Nearly 300 of these are private prisons. More than 30 of these institutions are super-maximum facilities, not including the super-maximum units located in most other prisons" (p. 637). Fasching-Varner et al., (2014), notions that prisons rally around having a "population to punish," and look upon institutions that can foster these ideologies - schools, "particularly within urban centers, to prepare the next generation for future inmates" (p. 418).

Education is one of the most accurate predictors of future success and access to wealth. Limited access to quality education is the likely component that falters upward mobility in areas of poverty (Autor, Katz, & Kearney, 2008; Bailey & Dynarski, 2011). The widely researched school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) is best understood as policies, protocols, and practices in schools that increase the chances of students facing criminal involvement with the juvenile and criminal court system (Marsh, 2014; Kang-Brown et al., 2013; Advancement Project et al.,

2011). Cuellar & Markowitz (2015) describes STPP as the vehicle for pushing students out of the classrooms toward the juvenile justice system. Fenning & Rose (2007) suggests that this link between these exclusionary disciplinary practices and encounters with the criminal justice system defines the school-to-prison pipeline, which emerged out of zero tolerance and punitive policies designed for this vulnerable population of students. STPP is also implied as a direction of causality- that policies and practices are responsible for the adverse outcomes (Advancement Project et al., 2011; ACLU, 2011). Students who are penalized due to the zero-tolerance policies gain access to unsupervised time outside of the school building, often indulging in criminal activities that lead to access to the legal system (Townsend, 2000; Skiba, 2014; Skiba et al., 2000). This access to the streets has been viewed as the reproduction of cultural ideologies that reflect African American students, especially the black male, as "culturally deficient, anti-intellectual, deviant and intimidating" (Allen, 2017; Ferguson, 2000; Howard et al. 2012; Sewell, 1997).

This practice's consequences have resulted in increasing the achievement gap, low motivation, alienation, and increased levels of engagement in illegal behaviors inside and outside of the school amongst African-American students (Howard, 2013; Townsend, 2000; Garibaldi, 1992; Simmons & Grady, 1990). Due to these disciplinary practices, African-American students are pushed out of the educational system. In the study of challenging out of school suspension with STPP, Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) found that being suspended out of school on a school day is associated with a more than doubling of the probability of offense than weekend or holiday, especially for African American students. Although youth crime is committed outside of

the school building, STPP affords these students to have more access to opportunities of committing such crimes, thereby landing in the confinement of the juvenile detention facilities (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). Once these individuals land in the juvenile court systems, more racial disparities await their outcomes. Research shows that African American youth are more likely to be referred on for further court proceedings than their White peers (Bell & Lang, 1985; Bishop & Frazier, 1988; Lieber & Stairs, 1999). African American youth tend to also have a more significant number of prior referrals and more severe previous dispositions (Feld, 1999a; Mitchell, 2009).

The juvenile justice system detains 60% of minority youth in the U.S., and they are also eight times more likely than their white peers to be housed in juvenile detention centers (Hsia, Bridges, & McHale, 2004; Wordes & Jones, 1998). As of 2015, nearly 43% of 48,043 youth held in juvenile facilities were African American boys, and 34% were girls, yet, only 16% of youth nationwide are African American (Serrano, 2018; Equal Justice Initiative, 2017; Sentencing Project, 2017). In 2015, the black/white youth placement disparity in Illinois stood at 89% (Sentencing Project, 2017). Serrano (2018) suggests that at every stage of justice involvement, minority youth face disadvantages- "over-policing of their communities, criminalization of their behavior in schools, and a greater likelihood of being tried as adults and held in adult jails" (p. 1). Although research tends to focus on the consequential outcomes of African American males, the young women and girls are also recipients of these harsh outcomes. African American girls account for more than one-third of all female arrests that take place on school campuses (Chatelain, 2016). Morris (2015) believes that the juvenile system is detrimental to girls due to

its premise focusing on punishment, especially when they are already suffering from trauma, as these practices do not promote academic achievement. Morrison (2015) also states, "Today black girls in juvenile correctional facilities have continued to endure hypersegregated and inferior learning conditions that prevent their full rehabilitation and fail to support their healthy development" (p. 7). However, policymakers still believe that exclusionary disciplinary policies and severe behavioral consequences remedy these negative behaviors.

Ferguson (2000) depicts school rules, which mimic jail culture, as a rigorous way of life. In other words, the children are passive receivers of discipline, and the adult administers as such, without regard to concepts that may cause the outcomes. How can the participants of the power struggle coexist? It seems as if the teachers are struggling to obtain power over the African-American youth while the youth struggles to identify the power they hold within. Therefore, the power struggle ensues. Ferguson (2000) stated, "the verbal disparagement and the harsh dressing down of kids were carried out in the name of school discipline required by certain kinds of children; it was seen as an essential weapon, given the circumstances, in the creation and maintenance of order" (p. 317). This statement undergirds the disciplinary policies that are in place in most schools. Through these misconceptions, the African American students are no longer perceived as children, but as adults, whereas teachers view African American boys as "dangerous and deserving of adult-like punishment (Ferguson, 2000; Edwards, 2016). Ferguson (2000) stated, "their transgressions are made to take on a sinister, international, fully conscious tone that is stripped of any element of childish naiveté" (p. 323). These constructs, based on the youth of color, are interpreted as ignoring the youth characteristics of minorities and categorizing

their actions as an adult. This continuity of institutional racism not only excludes the youth of color from school practices but eventually excludes them from real-world opportunities and is treated as utterly redundant and disposable- waste products of a society that no longer considers them of any value (Giroux, 2012). This lack of value causes a disconnection between school and minority students, especially the African American male, who has misidentified with school, causing this careless attitude towards literacy, test scores, and behavioral outcomes (Kunjufu, 2013). The ideas of black youth, boys, and girls alike, having higher suspensions than white peers and other minority groups, symbolize the institutional racist ideologies that influence education's exclusionary policies such as zero tolerance and the perpetuation of the school to prison pipeline. To combat these outcomes for African American youth, new proactive disciplinary practices must be implemented to decrease juvenile detention confinement and increase enrollment and graduation rates.

Advocating for Proactive Consequences

An early attempt to proactive consequences was implementing school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports policy (PBIS). This intervention system was created in the late 1980s to assist students with disabilities' journey into mainstream education, but the program was later expanded to address the needs of at-risk students, a measure to eliminate punitive discipline practices (Walker & Horner, 1996; Fenning & Rose; 2007, Sugai & Horner, 2002). The four primary objectives of the Positive Behavior Intervention System are a) provide clear and measurable outcomes, b) collect and use data to guide their decisions, c) implement useful, relevant, and evidence-based practices and d) invest in systems that will ensure that those

practices are implemented and sustained over time in the area of behavior management

(Simonsen et al., 2008). Green (2009) posits that PBIS is a three-tiered, universal, targeted

group, individual approach that focuses on the (universal) entire school (targeted group) teaching

prevention and intervention strategies and (individual) prevention and intervention for severe

emotional behaviors.

The implementation of Tier 1 is a team-based approach designed to develop, teach, and

reinforce positively stated school-wide expectations (Myers & Briere, 2010). Tier 2 intervention

implementation focuses on targeted groups of students at risk, displaying the following

behaviors: talking out, arriving at school leat, arguing with peers, or refusing to follow teacher

directives (Myers & Briere, 2010). These particular behaviors, which is approximately 15% of

the population (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai et al., 2000; Walker et al., 1996), utilizes the

Behavioral Education Program interventions (BEP) (Crone, Horner & Hawken, 2004). The BEP

is designed to target behaviors to best fit the needs of the behavioral concerns of the student

(Crone et al., 2004). This particular behavioral cycle may include the daily check-in/check-out

(CICO) system. Students who require this extra support check-in with an adult before the

beginning of their instructional day, utilize a behavioral point sheet throughout the day, gathering

feedback from instructors and then report back at the end of the day for behavioral reflections

(Horner, et al., 2009; Myers & Briere, 2010). Individuals who display behavioral concerns

representative of Tier 2 and Tier 3 participate in the following but not limited to, interventions:

"daily communication with parents, referral system for teachers and staff, link to school-wide

expectations, weekly meetings for student progress analysis and use of data for informed

decisions and training for students (Crone, et al., 2004; Myers & Briere, 2010). Many elementary and middle schools that have implemented the tiered systems to combat at-risk behaviors have experienced positive effects on social behaviors (Fairbanks, et al., 2007; Hawken, MacLeod & Rawlings, 2007; Todd et al., 2008; Hawken, 2006; Hawken & Horner, 2003; March & Horner, 2002).

PBIS was designed to replace exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension and expulsions with interventions and supports that will therapeutically achieve socially significant behavior change through the existing science of human behavior linking the behavioral, cognitive, biophysical, developmental and physical/environmental factors that influence how a person behaves" (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 133-134). Morris (2015) noted in her research on at-risk African American girls in school that Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems in schools reduced office discipline referrals and increased instructional time. She believes that "the system helps students find ways to adjust their behavior rather than simply remove them from school" (Appendix). However, not all research praised the realities of the PBIS support system. Research suggests that "the implementation of strategies like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) do not appear to reduce racial discipline disparities, and at times, may exacerbate them unless coupled with other race-conscious approaches (Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Venicent et al., 2015; Anyon et al., 2018). Arguments amongst the research also view these approaches to discipline as forms of social control that ignore the structural inequities and obscure school staff's actions and discount institutional context (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Watts & Erevelles, 2004; Anyon et al., 2015).

Restorative Justice is also an evidence-based disciplinary program designed to combat the zero-tolerance policies for school-wide discipline. The objective of restorative justice practices is to "repair, to the extent possible, the harm done by problematic behaviors and wrongdoing" (p. 7). The U.S. Department of Education (DOE, 2104) suggests that to combat traditional discipline practices, students should be held accountable for not only conduct but also learning from these incidents to build social and emotional skills. Unlike zero-tolerance policies, restorative practices serve to reintegrate students into the school community rather than isolating them with out-of-school-suspension, further increasing disconnect and disengagement (Armour, 2013; Gonzalez, 2012; Teasley et al., 2017). Restorative practices are aligned with the prevention-intervention continuum and aim to prevent infractions and intervene after the infraction took place (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Blood & Thorsborne, 2005; McCluskey et al., 2008; Wachtel, Costello & Wachtel, 2009).

The restorative practices for discipline seek collaboration from the entire school community to enhance students' social-emotional development. Gonzalez (2012) notes that restorative practices rely on victim-offender mediation, peer juries, and restorative circles to tapping into the social-emotional aspects of infractions. In contrast, students understand the consequences of their actions, involve peers of the same group to identify consequences while promoting conflict resolution. According to the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, the following concepts drive the mission of the program:

- Restorative Discipline is a philosophy and system-wide intervention that places relationships at the heart of the educational experience.

- The goal of Restorative discipline is to change the school climate rather than merely respond to student behavior.

- Restorative discipline requires a top-down commitment from school board members and administrators.

- The restorative discipline uses a whole-school approach. All administrators, teachers, all staff, and students should be exposed to an/or trained in restorative processes with periodic boosters.

- Restorative discipline engages parents/caregivers as integral members of restorative conferences and circles.

- Restorative discipline uses an internal leadership response team to spearhead the implementation and help support necessary dialogue.

- Restorative discipline calls for an outside restorative justice coordinator to serve on-site.

- Restorative discipline has a data system to analyze trends and inform early interventions.

- Restorative discipline focuses on the harms, needs, and causes of student behavior, not just breaking the rules and dispensing of punishment.

- Restorative discipline places fundamental attention on harm and the subsequent needs of the victim.

- Restorative discipline places emphasis on meaningful accountability in matters involving harm and conflict.

- Restorative discipline takes time. It is dialogue-driven and rests on the steady establishing and deepening of relationships.

- Restorative discipline calls for collaboration with community-based restorative justice programs, local businesses, and agencies that serve youth, including community and faith-based programs, law enforcement, public health and mental health entities, local Community Resource Coordinating Groups, justice system representatives, and other stakeholders.

Karp & Breslin (2001) suggests that restorative practices are a movement away from "authoritarian control to an approach that emphasizes student retribution and accountability, rehabilitation and community engagement as methods to work holistically to resolve interpersonal conflict leading to problem behaviors" (p. 251). Restorative practices are recognized for addressing the disproportionate suspensions based on race, class, and disability (Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, & Rime, 2012; Fenning et al., 2012; Nezel & Eber, 2003). Restorative justice practices have had successful outcomes in many cities across the U.S. as schools experienced significant drops in suspensions for African American youth (Teasley et al., 2017). Armour (2013) noted that suspensions for African American students who participated in restorative disciplinary practices were 35% lower than previous school years. St. Paul, MN, reported a decrease of 50% over three years in school suspensions (Stinchcomb et al., 2006), and Denver, CO found that restorative disciplinary practices reduced out-of-school suspensions by 40%.

Decades of studies have triggered outrage. In fact, many states, including Illinois, have created school disciplinary reforms in hopes of combatting these dismal outcomes and invalidate the famous "school to prison pipeline" sentiment (Wald & Losen, 2003). Illinois Public Act 99-0456 is designed to provide alternative measures to discipline that may combat these overrepresentations. Illinois State Senator Kimberly Lightford, the chief sponsor of Public Act 99-0456, proclaimed, "In schools all across our state, African American students are disciplined more harshly than white students. As legislators, we saw that this was a severe problem and that it required our immediate attention (VOYCE, p.1). Illinois Senator Lightford and State Representative Will Davis's sense of urgency describes the disproportionate data that displays the overrepresentation of African American students with exclusionary disciplinary practices and the need for proactive behavioral interventions within our educational institutions. According to Wilkie (2015), Illinois has one of the nation's vastest disparities between suspended black students and their white classmates. Illinois policymakers have taken the Human Rights of Education approach to disciplinary reform. No longer does the exclusionary disciplinary consequence define the student and label their outcomes. This human rights approach allows the student to gain access to development, cooperation, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, participation and empowerment, transparency, and accountability (Bajaj, 2014, p. 57).

In response to the disproportionate practices of suspensions and expulsions amongst African-American students, the Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) and Illinois State Senator Kimberly Lightford collaborated to create legislation to address the "School to Prison" pipeline phenomenon. The Illinois Senate Bill 100, now known as Public Act 99-0456, is

a current school disciplinary Illinois policy designed to combat disruptive behaviors through proactive behavioral and restorative practices (Wilkie, 2015). The goal of this policy is to provide proactive restorative behavioral interventions that will address the underlying reasons why these behaviors occurred. It is with the hope that these additional proactive disciplinary supports will include, instead of excluding, the vulnerable student populations in the school setting. Public Act 99-00456 has utilized the use of proactive consequences for improving school behavior management systems in Illinois schools.

Restoration and Re-engagement

In conjunction with eliminating these overrepresentations, Illinois school districts are encouraged to provide proactive restorative behavioral intervention strategies to students who threaten the school environment while serving disciplinary consequences. Listed below are the new guidelines for suspensions and expulsions, including evidence of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Restorative disciplinary practices for students attending schools in Illinois.

Suspensions

According to the Public Act policy (2016), "Out-of-school suspensions of longer than three days, expulsions, and disciplinary removals to alternative schools may be used only if other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted" (p. 8). The policy furthers states that documented interventions play an integral role in determining if a student is subjugated to punitive disciplinary procedures. Such exposure is only deemed if the student is "a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community"

(Public Act policy, p. 8). If a student receives out-of-school suspension, the students have the right to obtain make-up assignments to prevent falling behind in the curriculum.

Students who are subject to punitive disciplinary procedures for four days or more will be required by law to receive behavioral support for their suspension duration. According to Public Act 99-0456 policy, a school district will provide appropriate and available support services. This process must be documented or if there are no such appropriate services available. This practice also applies to students who are expelled as they are not denied transfer to alternative placements. In all cases of disciplinary procedures, "A school district shall create a policy to facilitate the re-engagement of students who have suspended out-of-school, expelled, or returning from an alternative school setting" (Public Act policy, p. 10). Students who are suspended more than 20 days may be immediately transferred to an alternative program in the manner provided in Article 13A or 13B of this code (Public Act Policy). All incidences determining if students are a "threat to school safety or disruption to other students' learning opportunities shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the school board or designee. According to the Public Act, "School officials shall make all reasonable efforts to resolving such threats, address such disruptions and minimize the length of suspensions to the greatest extent practicable" (PA 099-0456).

Students may also be suspended if they exhibit gross disobedience or misconduct on a school bus. The reasons could qualify as a safety hazard to students and bus personnel. All suspensions must be accompanied by details of the specific act of gross misconduct and rationale

as to the specific duration of the suspension. All suspensions must be immediately reported to the parents or guardians, and parents notice for the rights to review such suspension.

Expulsions

When processing expulsions for students, the Public Act has new stipulations to ensure that the students have exhausted all intervention and behavioral protocols created by the school and district. For a student to be expelled from school, the following must take place:

a. Parents must be requested to appear at a meeting of the board or with a hearing officer (made by registered/certified mail).

b. The board or a hearing officer must be present and shall state the reasons for dismissal and when the expulsion is to become active.

c. Written expulsion decisions shall detail the specific reasons why removing the student from the learning environment is in the best interest of the school

d. The expelled student may be immediately transferred to an alternative program

e. A student must not be denied the transfer, except in cases deemed to cause a threat to the safety of students or staff in an alternative program.

In the expulsion process, there are exceptions to the rules. A student may be expelled for not less than one year if:

a. Suppose the student is caught with a firearm within the school building. The term firearm is defined as "gun, rifle, shotgun, any weapon defined by the United States Code, a firearm in section 24-1.

b. If a student brings a knife, brass knuckles, a billy club, or any other object if used or attempted to be used to cause bodily harm, including look-alikes of any firearm.

c. Threats made through social media against a school employee, a student, or any school-related personnel

The Superintendent may modify all expulsions in a manner consistent with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Reacclimation Process and Supports

During the duration of the expulsion or suspension, the school district is required to create a re-engagement policy, which provides support services for the student as they make their transition in returning to the learning environment. The system also states that the Department of Human Services shall be invited to send a representative to consult with the board whenever there is evidence that mental illness may cause such suspension or expulsion.

To ensure that zero-tolerance policies are not revisited in the expulsion and suspension processes, all school districts are encouraged to make efforts to provide professional developments to the entire staff on the "adverse consequences of school exclusion and justice-system involvement, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline and developmentally appropriate disciplinary methods that promote positive and healthy school climate" (PA 099-0456). This particular concept is evident in the Restorative disciplinary practice, which encourages all staff and students to be trained to gain access.

In contrast to zero-tolerance and other exclusionary disciplinary practices,

a. School officials are prohibited from advising or encouraging students to drop out voluntarily due to behavioral or academic difficulties.

b. Students may not be issued a monetary fine or fee as a disciplinary consequence.

c. Such provisions shall apply to elementary, secondary, charter, and special charter districts.

Insightful Restoration or Undocumented Elimination?

The goal of the new Public Act is to eradicate the use of exclusionary discipline practices. This policy mandates that "educators, school administrators, staff and school board members receive professional development training on culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate disciplinary action and effective classroom management strategies" (IEA p. 1). Does this discipline reform change the dynamic of how students are facing disciplinary procedures but does the policy fail to highlight its vital component, interventions? Several studies have shown that all interventions are not "one size fits all," and variations of interventions can weaken the impact on student outcomes (Jain et al., McCluskey et al., 2008). These practices can cause inconsistencies within the program across districts, identifying disciplinary strategies beneficial to African American youth. Anyon et al. (2016) suggest that more research is required to determine whether students from disadvantaged groups participate in restorative discipline when receiving discipline referrals than non-disadvantaged groups. Payne and Welch (2013) found that restorative practices were less likely to be systematically implemented at schools of predominately African American students. Vincent and Tobin (2011) found that although positive behavioral supports decreased exclusions in elementary and middle school for white

students, African American students remained overrepresented in exclusions. Due to African American students receiving higher rates of suspensions and expulsions, which proactive restorative practices are the most beneficial for combating disproportionate exclusionary disciplinary practices?

According to the student discipline reform, interventions are also determined by school officials, which is a concept that can be lost in translation. Horner and Sugai (2015) suggest that school administrators select and identify all cultural practices and behavioral expectations for school purposes. However, Wilson (2015) posits that these behavioral expectations may not represent the student body's cultural needs and may be more likely to select behaviors associated with their own Eurocentric culture. This disconnect to the cultural disconnect permits these proactive restorative behavioral practices to increases the chances of African American students being categorized to tier level 2 or 3, thereby allowing more unnecessary behavioral interventions that continue the cycle of overrepresentation. Lustick's (2017) study on restorative practices with African-American students found that "individuals hired to be restorative coordinators were consistently young, non-White staff from the same neighborhoods as their students and the non-White faculty and administration greatly depended on these coordinators to bond with, contain, and compel obedience from students of color" (p. 2).

And What About the Children?

As for Brandon Jones, life took a turn for the worse. Due to his misbehaviors and criminal record, Brandon's outcome was determined by his victim's outcome, as she was on life support due to her injuries. Unfortunately for Brandon, the victim succumbed to her injuries.

Thus, his outcome in the judicial system was inevitable. Brandon was charged with murder in the First Degree, served years in the Juvenile Detention Center, and then was transferred to a maximum-security prison when he turned nineteen. He is currently serving a 40-year sentence. Brandon's mother refuses to visit him in jail, and he has had no contact with his dad since the unfortunate incident took place.

Dominique Foster's outcome took a different route than Brandon's. It was touch and go for the victim in this situation. However, she was taken off of life support and, with extensive surgery and therapy, was able to live a normal life. However, the family sued Sandra, and she was ordered to pay medical expenses for the attack. Dominique was required to stay in the Juvenile Detention Center until she turned eighteen and then was released. Upon her release, Dominique continued the street lifestyle she loved until that fateful night in July that reunited her with Yolanda. She never lived to see nineteen, nor did she live to raise the child; she did not even know she was carrying.

The stories of Brandon and Dominique are all too familiar and all too representative of other students. There could be multiple instances where these particular incidences have occurred within our educational system. Were these exclusionary and inclusionary disciplinary practices justifiable in combatting the actions both students experienced in school? Although other factors may contribute to the behaviors existing, it is evident that these corrective practices lacked substance and ineffective in changing their behavior. According to Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010), "Suspended students may become less bonded to school, less invested in school rules and coursework, and subsequently, less motivated to achieve academic success" (p. 60).

The trend of African American students suspended for various offenses was the norm at Turner-Bozeman Middle School. It concluded that the exclusionary and inclusionary non-intervention practices were the only interventions for combatting, such as poor student behaviors. In articulating reactive and proactive discipline measures, Fenning and Rose (2007) found reactive measures of discipline-suspensions and expulsions- were the most commonly stated responses to code infractions, even for minor behaviors unrelated to school safety and were the most likely consequences offered, regardless of the problem behavior. Could this be the reason Brandon, Dominique, and other students disciplined through the traditional consequential practices demonstrate lackluster achievement that eventually results in increased drop-out rates and juvenile criminal experiences? Although many districts have afforded task forces and student services departments, the question remains, how valid and reliable is this policy in combatting disproportionate outcomes of discipline for African American students? With these new interventions in place within the school system, is this enough to end the school-to-prison pipeline, or are there external communal factors that impact the school disciplinary processes continuously not identified or addressed?

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Schools are known for being centers of educational advancement, yet, they are also known for reproducing racial inequality through rules and disciplinary practices (Anyon, 1980; Watts & Erevelles, 2004; Leonardo, 2009; Apple, 2012). African American youth are under constant surveillance in schools across the nation (DeMatthews, 2016). In public school systems, African American youth are targeted through discipline based on negative perceptions, stereotypes, and biases than their White peers (Campbell, 2015; Ferguson, 2003; Gershenson, Holt & Papageorge, 2015). Giroux (2012) believes that minority youth are excluded from the idea of the "American Dream" and treated as disposable waste products of a society that are devalued and "subjected to rigorous modes of surveillance and criminal sanctions and viewed lower than flawed consumers and civic felons" (p. 5). For African American students, their race immediately suggests that exclusionary disciplinary practices are necessary to obtain an order in the school setting (DeMatthews, 2016; Ferguson, 2000).

This study will explore and interpret the new disciplinary processes under Public Act 99-00456 and determine if this new legislation assists in decreasing disproportionate exclusionary disciplinary outcomes through practice consequences for African American students in an urban middle school setting. The purpose of P.A. 00-9456 is to ensure that all students, primarily targeted populations, are receiving more proactive consequences in all elementary, secondary, and charter institutions. These forms of consequences were designed for those with the potential to teach expected alternative behaviors before unexpected behaviors occur directly. For this study, I will examine the disciplinary policies and procedures in this middle school setting and

determine if they are not only reflective of P.A. 99-0456 but if the behavioral outcomes of African American students have improved. I will also explore the perspectives of educators and administrators of this middle school on using these behavioral interventions and supports concerning eliminating disproportionate discipline practices for African American youth under the new Public Act 099-0456.

Critical Race Theory

The theoretical framework that guides the research in this study is Critical Race Theory (hereafter CRT). Hylton (2012) argues, CRT's primary presupposition is that "society is fundamentally racially stratified and unequal, where power processes systematically disenfranchise racially oppressed people" (p. 23). The emergence of CRT derived from legal scholarship with a critical analysis of racism as the fundamental axis of American society (Fine, 1991; Omi & Winant, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2002; Lewis, 2002; Anyon et al., 2017). This framework's importance is to acknowledge how race and racism are sewn into the fabrics of American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002). Stovall (2005) posits, "CRT examines racism as both a group and individual phenomenon that functions on many levels, and it offers a means by which to identify the functions of racism as an institutional and systematic phenomenon" (p. 98). Yosso (2005) defines CRT as a means to explore how race and racism explicitly and implicitly affect minority groups. CRT is pivotal when exploring discrimination and marginalization in educational settings and evolved out of the necessity for people of color to expand the dialogue of racism and race relations from the "realm of the experiential to the

70

realm of the ideological" (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Tate, 1997; DeMatthews, 2016)). Parker and Lynn (2002) identify three main objectives of CRT as the following:

- To present stories about discrimination from the viewpoint of people of color.

- To argue for the eradication of racial subjugation while simultaneously acknowledging that race is a social construct.

To deal with other dissimilarity matters, such as sexuality and class, and any injustices experienced by communities (p. 9). American society's conceptualization stems from generations of racist ideologies that promoted inequalities while imposing White cultural practices onto racialized groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Anyon et al., 2017). CRT scholars believe "educational inequalities are a logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized" (Ladson- Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 47). The use of CRT is to "empower human beings to rise above the restraints placed on them by race, gender, and sexuality (Fay, 1987). Zion and Blanchett (2011) suggests, "without addressing racism- the need to pacify, control and exclude Black and brown bodies- alongside ableism, students of Color continue to be overrepresented, segregated, and prevented from reaching their academic potential" (p. 2196). Therefore, CRT is chosen to confront the relationship between disproportionate disciplinary practices and the "structural or systematic racism in educational institutions" (Anyon et al., 2017, p. 393). The idea of systematic racism or "invisible forces" ensures that African Americans maintain a permanently subordinate position in society (Bell, 2004). Woodson (1916) noted,

The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought

that he is everything and has accomplished everything worthwhile depresses and crushes

at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not

amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples (p. xiii).

Arguments in the literature suggest that African American students encounter

disproportionate disciplinary practices, but they also experience harsher consequences for minor

infractions. Calmore (1995) suggests that when members of ethnic minority groups perform

poorly, the overall group's characteristics are interpreted as exhibiting inferior aptitude.

Morrison (1993) stated, "Race has become metaphorical- a way of referring to and disguising

forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more

threatening to the body of politic than biological race ever was" (p. 8).

According to Ladson-Billings (2005), CRT is commonly utilized as a framework to

provide a rich analysis, in addition to critiquing educational policies, practices, and research.

Moreover, CRT tenets uncover how the role of race and racism plays in sustaining social

inequities between the marginalized and dominant racial groups (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004;

Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Hiraldo, 2010). This research study will utilize

the seven tenets of CRT; Interest Convergence, Critique of Liberalism, Whiteness as Property,

The Permanence of Racism, Experiential Knowledge (Counter-storytelling), Intersectionality and

Commitment to Social Justice, to analyze if the utilization of P.A. 99-0456 disciplinary practices

perpetuates the ideologies of institutional racism that targets African American students,

primarily, those attending Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

CRT's seven tenets define its importance to this research study as a methodology and a theoretical framework.

The idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling

Delgado and Stefanic (2001) define this tenet of storytelling that "aims to cast doubts on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (p. 144). DeCuir and Dixson (2004) suggest that counter-storytelling gives voice to marginalized groups by challenging the majority's discourse. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) posit that counter-storytelling "serves as a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (p. 32). Malagon et al. (2009) posits that the "CRT believes that People of Color are creators of knowledge and have a deeply rooted sensibility to name racist injuries and identify their origins (p. 257). Despite CRT developing out of interpretations of legal doctrines, narratives, and storytelling methods have served as mechanisms to present different perspectives of how the ideas of racism against people of color are justified and perpetuated through institutional policies and practices (Harris, 1994; Delgado, 1989; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Stories of the oppressed and disenfranchised are pivotal for the world to experience the hardships through the eyes of those who are victimized (Delgado, 1989). According to Solórzano & Yosso (2002), "counter-storytelling developed as both a method of telling the story of those experiences that have not been told (that is, those on the margins of society), and as a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power and whose story is a natural part of the dominant course- the majoritarian story" (p. 232). Matsuda (1987) echoes these sentiments by arguing that "storytelling under CRT is imperative because "these experiences were real and the connections

73

from the past have to be understood to see how the hierarchical relationships of power protect the legal interest of White European Americans over persons of color" (p. 38).

Huber (2008) believes that for people of color's injustices and struggles to become humanized, critical race counterstories must be told and captured to combat racial structures, practices, and policies in education. Parker & Lynn (2002) suggests that CRT narratives and storytelling provides the readers "with a challenging account of preconceived notions of race, and the stories are sometimes integral to developing cases that consist of legal narratives of racial discrimination" (p. 11). Storytelling is an integral part of African American traditions' cultural experience and is pivotal for disseminating vital information (Graham et al., 2011; Bell, 1987, 1992, 1996; Lawrence, 1992). Through these narratives, the reader can identify the participant's experiences and perspectives of discriminatory disciplinary practices in the educational setting.

The idea of counterstorytelling is a pertinent tenet to the research because it provides the voices of the marginalized group to be heard. Stovall (2016) reiterates that the exclusion of the perspective of the marginalized is too often excluded. Counter storytelling grants the marginalized group access to their empowerment through their connection with their realities and experiences while enhancing their willingness to share these stories with those of equal and dominant groups. Delgado & Stefanic (2001) stated, "counter storytelling helps us understand what life is like for others and invites the reader into a new and unfamiliar world" (p. 41). Counter-storytelling will provide the participants in this study an opportunity to critically reflect on their experiences and provide the reader with a myriad of perspectives on the effectiveness of P.A. 99-0456's proactive disciplinary practices Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

The Permanence of Racism

Bell (1992) believes that racism is a permanent staple in American society. This permanent ideology poses a sense of naturalness for racism, as it can represent conscious and unconscious doing (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). Morrison (1993) echos this sentiment by defining race as "metaphorical- a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body of politic than biological race ever was" (p. 8). The role of CRT in educational research, as defined by Malagon, Huber & Velez (2009), "does not simply treat race as a variable, but rather works to understand how race and racism intersect with gender, class, sexuality, language, etc., as structural and institutional factors that impact the everyday experiences of People of Color" (p. 256).

Racism should be viewed realistically, further suggesting that it has knowingly and unknowingly, been a dominant construct in American society (Bell, 1995; Lawrence, 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). The permanence of racism has also invoked the ideology of white privilege, especially in the area of education (Hiraldo, 2010; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For this research study, an example of this tenet is evident through the disproportionate disciplinary consequences that target African American students (boys and girls) on a national level, such as significant and disproportionate levels of suspensions and expulsions more than any other racial group in America. than any

For decades, institutional racism became the inconspicuous avenue for excluding African American students from equitable educational opportunities as educational policies were

designed to deny African American students access. As for disciplinary policies, arguments in the literature suggest that African American students encounter disproportionate disciplinary practices due to these racist policies, but they also experience harsher consequences for minor infractions. Calmore (1995) suggests that when members of ethnic minority groups perform poorly, the overall group's characteristics are interpreted as exhibiting inferior aptitude, which denies access to educational advancement. The use of this tenet in this study will highlight the teacher's and administrator's perception of the paradigm of race and racism in regards to the P.A. 99-0456 policy and its role in eliminating disproportionate exclusionary practices for African American students at Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

Whiteness as Property

Harris (1995) argues that "due to the history of race and racism in the United States and the role that U.S. jurisprudence has played in reifying conceptions of race, the notion of Whiteness can be considered a property interest (p. 280). The idea of whiteness as property resonates in the school system through educational inequities such as rigorous curriculums, honors, and advanced placement courses to which students of Color have limited access (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). DeCuir & Dixson (2004) stated, "through the myriad policies and practices that restrict the access of students of color to high-quality curricula, and to safe and well-equipped schools, school districts have served to reify this notion of Whiteness as property whereby the rights to possession, use and enjoyment, and disposition, have been enjoyed almost exclusively by Whites (p. 28). CRT challenges these notions due to the history of racism in America. Gotanda (1991) argues that the ideology of colorblindness was established to eradicate

race-based policies designed to combat societal inequities. DeCuir & Dixson (2004) defines

incremental change as beneficial to those who are not affected by racist policies and racism

prevalent throughout social, economic, and educational inequities.

Interest Convergence

Although African American communities gained limited access through civil rights, Bell

(1980) argues that these fundamental rights were only prevalent due to their convergence with

Whites' self-interests. DeCuir & Dixson (2004) postulates, "given the vast disparities between

elite Whites and most communities of color, gains that coincide with the self-interests of White

elites are not likely to make a substantive difference in the lives of people of color (p. 28). The

tenet of interest convergence will be utilized for analyzing the proactive consequences in P.A.

99-0456. CRT will analyze this disciplinary practice's proactive consequences to determine if

this policy is a mirrored image of traditional disciplinary practices. CRT will also determine the

dominant group's creation of interventions that reflect society's dominant constructs that omit

cultural relevancy and promote the idea of assimilation- behaviors deemed as "appropriate

behavior" by society.

Critique of Liberalism

This tenet focuses on three basic notions centered around liberal ideology; neutrality of

law, colorblindness, and incremental change (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). This tenet also analyzes

racism as:

> Whereby rights and opportunities were both conferred and withheld based almost
>
> exclusively on race, the idea that the law is indeed colorblind and neutral is insufficient

(and many would argue disingenuously) to redress its deleterious effects. Furthermore, the

notion of colorblindness fails to take into consideration the persistence and permanence of

racism and the construction of people of color as Other (p. 29).

As for incremental change, marginalized groups obtain gains at a slower pace, which is

acceptable by those who hold power (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Hartlep, 2009; Ray et al., 2017;

Hiraldo, 2010).

This study will identify how the structures of disciplinary practices reinforced Whiteness

and dominant interests through the lens of the tenet of colorblindness. More specifically, P.A.

99-0456 will be analyzed to determine if this new approach to discipline halts these traditional

beliefs and how this policy affects the dominant group. Researchers have argued that these

disciplinary policies, known for targeting students of color, were reinforced by institutional and

structural racism. Therefore, through CRT analysis, P.A. 99-0456 will be examined in this

research study to determine if the teachers and administrators believe these disciplinary practices

perpetuate institutional racism or if these practices can significantly combat the school to prison

pipeline phenomenon for African American students at Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

Intersectionality

In CRT, intersectionality is a concept that addresses inequality as the inter-connectedness

of multiple forms of oppression (Gilborn, 2015). This inter-connectedness is what Crenshaw

(1995) defines as "providing insights into the lives of those at the bottom of complex layers of

social hierarchies to determine how the interactions with each hierarchy influence the dynamics

of another" (p. 223). These symbiotic relationships expose patterns of disempowerment that

enhance intersectional identity (Parker and Lynn, 2002; Crenshaw, 1988). This study will uncover the interconnectedness of race and low socioeconomic status of the Turner-Bozeman school community through the lens of intersectionality to the effects of the lack of funding and resource accessibility.

Commitment to Social Justice

Critical race scholarship is committed to ensuring that the educational system and our society work towards eradicating racism (McCoy and Dirk, 2015; Bartlett and Brayboy, 2005). The commitment to social justice is devoted to now only empowering the disenfranchised but " is grounded in "a consistent commitment to resist the racialized and gendered inequality and injustice making access to social, political, economic, and cultural resources (McCoy and Dirk, 2015, p. 14). In this study, commitment to social justice resonated through the work of the participants who fought the inequities within the disciplinary policy that affected the Turner-Bozeman Middle School students' success.

According to Parker & Villalpando (2007), "CRT's purpose is to unearth what is taken for granted when analyzing race and privilege, as well as the profound patterns of exclusion that exist in U.S. society" (p. 521). Therefore, through the lens of race, racism, and awareness, CRT will be examined and is pertinent in decoding the truths behind P.A. 99-0456's proactive disciplinary practices and its ability to perpetuate oppressive disciplinary policies that excluded African American students from education and advancement. Hiraldo (2010) postulated that "CRT can be used to uncover the ingrained societal disparities that support a system of privilege and oppression" (p. 54). These dominant ideologies force African American students to remain

in schools without the appropriate resources to deal with the epistemological, ontological, cosmological racism that they endure without fully gaining access to the underlying issues students deal with daily. It is with the hope that this race-conscious lens will encourage changes in school policy that can revamp the educational experiences that were once plagued by unnecessary and overrepresented disciplinary consequences for African American students.

Critical Race Theory's Approach to Mixed Methods Design

For this case study, CRT will marry the Convergent Parallel research design for heightening access to both qualitative and quantitative data. CRT "strategically uses multiple methods, often unconventional and creative, to draw on the knowledge of people of color who are traditionally excluded as an official part of the academy" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 37). The case study forges the reader to obtain a detailed description of the study's participants and setting, which analyzes data through thematic patterns and issues (Meriam, 1998, 2009; Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1995; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Creswell (2014) postulates that "mixing or blending data provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question than either by itself" (p. 215). Although mixed methods research is a reasonably new methodology, it is complex yet sophisticated approach is designed for:

- Comparing different perspectives drawn from quantitative and qualitative data.

- Explaining quantitative results with a qualitative follow-up data collection and analysis.

- Developing better measurement instruments by first collecting and analyzing qualitative data and then administrating the instruments to a sample.

- Understanding experimental results by incorporating the perspectives of individuals.

- Developing a complete understanding of changes needed for a marginalized group through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data.

- Having a better understanding of the need for and impact of an intervention program through collecting both quantitative and qualitative data over time. (Creswell, p. 218).

Hylton (2012) identifies CRT as a methodology by its "focus on race and racism and its intersections and a commitment to challenge racialized power relation" (p. 26). CRT methodology approach to research is designed to:

- Foreground race and racism in all aspects of the research process;

- Challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of people of color;

- Offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination;

- Focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color;

- Uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to understand better the experiences of students of color (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002, p. 24).

For this research study, critical race methodology is utilized to search for answers derived from conceptual, theoretical, and methodological questions related to marginalized groups and

communities (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). For decades, institutional racism has targeted African American students in the educational field through the curriculum, discipline, and special education processes. This research study will utilize CRT as a methodology to analyze P.A. 99-0456 to determine if this new disciplinary policy challenges the tenets of CRT or if the notion of institutional racism is interwoven in the fabric of yet another educational policy designed to combat dominant ideologies. Hence, Delgado Bernal (1998) argues that "critical race methodology in education challenges White privilege, rejects notions of neutral research or objective researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color (p. 560). Even though critical race methodology challenges traditional paradigms, texts, and theories, it exposed to research methods that hinder the voices of marginalized groups and communities by only focusing on the "racialized, gendered and classed experiences as sources of strength" (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Anzaldúa (1990) identifies the importance of CRT as a methodology by stating:

> Theory, then, is a set of knowledge. Some of this knowledge has been kept from us- entry into some professions and academia denied us. Because we are not allowed to enter the discourse, because we are often disqualified and excluded from it, because what passes for theory these days is the forbidden territory for us, it is vital that we occupy theorizing space, that we do not allow white men and women solely to occupy it. By bringing in our approaches and methodologies, we transform that theorizing space. (p. xxv)

Methods

This research study aims to understand how the implementation of Illinois PA 99-00456 is perceived by the school community. This research study depends on the stories and narratives of individuals that I believe are oppressed and marginalized within their schooling institutions. Thus, semi-structured interviews will be utilized to obtain these in-depth encounters. Interviews result from interaction and context between interviewer and interviewee (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Schwandt, 1997). The teachers and administration team's perception of the implementation and practices of P.A. 99-0456 will be analyzed through semi-structured interviews. This method is designed to "understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of the subject's experiences, and to uncover their lived world" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 1).

My goal is to capture the real-life experiences of individuals who have encountered the adverse effects of disciplinary practices and also those who have administered these consequences. In order to gain the perspective of this case study, the student population will also participate in completing surveys. Fowler (1993) believes this method of data collection easily accessible, administrable, and manageable. Creswell (2014) also noted, "survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (p. 155). Due to the mixed methods approach to this research study, some questions utilized in this survey will be open-ended. The purpose of this method is to ensure that the participants' perceptions and experiences are collected, analyzed to identified as

additional sources for garnering their perspectives on how the students navigate through P.A. 99-0456.

Participants and Setting

This research study's setting is Turner-Bozeman Middle School is located in Shoreville[6], a suburb in Illinois. The student population of this school is 619. Of this total, 67% are African-Americans, 28.8% are Hispanics, 3.9% represent two or more races, and 0.3% are White. 69.6% of the student population is categorized as low income, 20.2% above the state average. Turner-Bozeman is home to the General education (85%), English Language Learners (8%), and Special Education (15%) instructional programs. 2.7% of the student population registered as homeless. The student attendance rate is 92.4%, only 1.5% below the state average; however, 11.6% are classified as chronically truant. Although teacher retention is 80%, which is 5% below the state average, the principal turnover is low, as there has only been the same principal over the past six years.

Data Collection

Data collection in a case study research is "typically extensive and draws multiple data collection methods, including document review, observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and critical incidents" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31). Based on the needs of this research study, criterion-based sampling will be utilized for data collection. A criterion-based sample was chosen because all of the participants in this study represent the same criteria and have experienced the same phenomenon (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012;

---

[6] Denotes pseudonym used to secure the anonymity of the community referred.

Creswell, 2014). This research study also consists of triangulation or multiple methods of data collection to ensure that the study lacks the redundancy of data gathering, misinterpretation, and procedural challenges (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Data Collection and Methods Plan

Turner-Bozeman Middle School has a three-tiered behavioral system established within its behavior structure. Tier 3- is defined as 5% of the student population who typically do not respond to general or specific verbal directives in a large setting. Tier 2- is defined as 15% of the student population who typically require more specific directives with limited supports. Tier 1- is defined as 80% of the student population who can respond to general verbal directives. For this research study, students who obtain an I.E.P. (Individual Education Programs) or other Special Education classifications will not participate in the research study for privacy purposes. The researcher will not analyze student behavioral records to determine qualified participants due to student confidentiality and privacy laws. The researcher will rely on the building Principal to randomly select student participants due to privacy and student protection. The researcher and the students are never informed of individual behavioral tier classifications due to privacy and confidentiality purposes.

Turner-Bozeman Middle School is home to over six hundred nineteen students, with four hundred sixteen as seventh and eighth-graders. This research study is a case study; therefore, to gain a more in-depth analysis of the student's perception of the implementation and practices of P.A. 99-0456, a survey will be issued for completion. I plan to conduct student surveys with Seventh and Eighth graders of Turner-Bozeman Middle School. I will meet with Turner-

Bozeman District Office Administrators and thoroughly explain the research study's objective, purpose, and expectations. Upon receiving approval from the District Office Administrators, I will have a formal meeting with Turner-Bozeman's Principal to thoroughly explain the research study's objective, purpose, and expectations. After garnering consent and obtaining a letter of support from the building Principal, the following procedures will be implemented for the recruitment process of the survey data collection:

1. At the beginning of each school day, Turner-Bozeman Middle School has a 30 minute-non-instructional block (the time when attendance is taken and school news is shared with the students by their homeroom teacher). There are currently eight- Eighth grade homerooms and eight- Seventh grade homerooms.

2. Per the Principal's discretion, I will meet with the entire Eighth-grade body in the auditorium for 30 minutes (during the non-instructional block) to discuss the study's research and objectives. At this meeting, I will also discuss students' rights and carefully review all documents in the brown envelopes provided.

3. Per the Principal's discretion, I will meet with the entire Seventh-grade body on a separate day in the auditorium for 30 minutes (during the non-instructional block) to discuss the study's research and objectives. At this meeting, I will also discuss student rights and carefully review all documents in the brown envelopes that will be provided.

4. At the end of the 30-minute meeting, I will provide each student with a brown envelope to take home to share with their parents. The envelope will contain:

a. Letter of Introduction (to provide parents with information about the researcher and the goal of the research).

b. Information sheet that provides explanation of each document and instructions on how to complete each form.

c. Research Objective Information Sheet (provides the student and parents with an explanation for potential risks)

d. Parental Permission Sheet (parents will sign this form which gives their child permission to complete the survey).

e. Student Assent Document

f. Thank you card, which thanks the student and parent for considering participation in the research study.

g. Return documents envelope (each packet will contain a new envelope that includes the student assent document, parental permission document, and instructions on where to return the completed documents and time frame, whom they should return their forms of completion. My contact information will also be provided on the documents if any parent wanted to contact me with any questions or concerns.

5. The students will have forty-eight hours from the information session to complete and return their return document envelopes. Students will return their envelopes to the Principal of Turner-Bozeman Middle School. Due to the Sped Department's privacy and protection, the Principal will look through all packets, ensuring that any student with

SpEd classification is excluded from participating in the research study. (The researcher is never informed of student classifications)

6. After excluding all students with SpEd Classifications, the Principal will provide the researcher with the remaining Return document envelopes. The researcher will carefully review all documents to ensure they are completed properly. Students who have completed and returned all required documents will be allowed to complete the survey.

7. Students who completed all required documents will receive a letter thanking them for completing all required documentation for participation in the study. The official date and time in which they should report to the auditorium to complete their surveys. The survey distribution and completion process will take place during the 30-minute non-instructional block in the morning.

I will also conduct interviews with teachers and administrators of Turner-Bozeman Middle School. The researcher will meet with the teachers and administrator participants during an Informational meeting to obtain participation consent. Due to all participants being 18 years old and older, all participants will be provided the Adult Consent to Participate in Research document as well as the Interview Consent Form. During this informational, I will review and request an in-person signature and then will thoroughly explain and read line by line the components of the documents required. All participants have the right to opt out of the research study if they choose. When written consent is received, permission will also be granted to audio record all interviews with an electronic recording device. At this moment, interview meeting times and designations will also be scheduled. These interviews will take place at a mutually

agreed-upon destination between myself and the participant. This interview process will include 30-40 minute sessions with six teachers (2 per grade level- 6th-8th grade) and two administrators (preferably administrators that encounter disciplinary issues daily). Some interviews may be performed via phone, while other interviews will take place at a mutual location agreeably by myself and the participant. If participants want to meet by Zoom due to the COVID Pandemic, that is also permissible

I believe this format of data collection is imperative to garnering the perspectives of P.A. 99-0456 from the Turner-Bozeman school community. This particular format will allow the participants to share stories and experiences of discipline they have never had access to. I also believe that my data collection plan will empower the participant and allow their voices to act as advocates for a discipline policy that will either promote the effectiveness of P.A. 99-0456 or provide insight into ways in which this policy can be improved in eradicating the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon.

The following steps will be taken to ensure that all data is reliable and valid.

Teacher and Administrator Interviews

The purpose of these interviews is to identify the experiences with the implementation process and practices of P.A. 99-0456 through the eyes of individuals who enforce this policy daily. All participants will be asked to complete a 40-45 minute interview and a 30-40 minute member check session. Transcription software will transcribe all interviews.

During the interviewing process, participants will have the right to stop the interview if necessary, or if they choose not to be audio recorded, they can opt for handwritten notes to be

taken. Moreover, the interviewing process will start with the reiteration of the objectives of the research study, and then questions listed on the Interview Protocol Document will be utilized for the interview. After the completion of the interview, I will formally thank all participants for their participation. Transcription software will transcribe each interview. After all, interviews are transcribed. I will meet with the participants for the last time for the member checking session, designed to ensure that all information is valid and reliable. Participants will be able to determine mutual meeting place and time for this session. During this session, all notes and transcriptions will be reviewed with each participant. All data obtained from the interviews will be coded with pseudonyms and numeric codes to ensure that all participants are protected, and anonymity is consistent throughout the entire research study. All data collected will be stored on password sensitive computer, and all transcribed data will be locked in a safe where only the researcher will have access.

Student Surveys

To ensure that instructional time is not compromised, all student surveys will be completed during non-instructional block times. Student participants are not required to provide their names for the survey, and all information provided is anonymous. All data collected will be stored on password sensitive computer, and all transcribed data will be stored in a locked file cabinet with the researcher having the only access.

Data Analysis

Coding is essential in data analysis because it allows themes to be identified. Bloomberg & Volpe (2012) stated, "coding is the process of noting what is of interest or significant,

identifying different segments of the data, and labeling them to organize the information contained in the data" (p. 142). Coding will also assist in ensuring that common themes are aligned with CRT tenets. In this Convergent mixed methods research design, merging the data and ensuring the CRT tenets' alignment is critical for analysis. This alignment is crucial because "centering CRT within the research process transforms the types of questions we ask, the types of methodologies we employ, the way we analyze data, and most importantly, the very purpose of our research" (Malagon, Huber, & Velez, 2009, p. 257). Therefore, this research analysis's most relevant aspect identifies and aligns those themes associated with the CRT tenets to the data collected. More specifically, the CRT tenets and data analysis will shed light on how racist ideologies are the driving force of the disciplinary practices that have targeted African American students and how P.A. 99-0456 positively affects or negatively affects or negatively infects the lives of the youth of Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

Informed Consent

During the informational meeting with my participants (students, teachers, and administrators), consent for participation will be thoroughly discussed and reviewed, and each participant will receive a written document that highlights these concepts. In examining the components of consent, all information, including the research benefits and possible risks for participating in this research study, all participants will be informed that their participation is strictly voluntary and their willingness to be dismissed will be upheld at any time desired.

Confidentiality

The names and identity of all participants in this research study (student survey

participants, teacher/administrator participants) will be omitted for privacy purposes, and all

participants will be guaranteed anonymity. In participating in the student focus group, if any

topic comes up that is considered personal, I will immediately stop the process and inform the

participants that the content of their conversations is not permitted. Each participant will be

coded, either with pseudonyms, numerical coding of 1,2,3, etc. All interviews will be audio-

recorded, using an electronic device, unless others requested by the participant to utilize

handwritten notes. Also, all interview schedules, times and locations, the electronic device (when

not being utilized), and field notes will be locked in my locked file cabinet in my home office.

Participants will receive a copy of their scheduled time and location only, and under no

circumstances will any information be shared with other participants of the study.

Data Access

All data in this research study will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

There will be no one else who will have access to this office.

Limitations of the Research Study

The researcher has anticipated the following limitations for this research design:

Interview data may be impacted based on the level of trust and rapport between the participants

and the researcher. Data may also be skewed based on the relationship between the researcher

and the participants. Molden (2011) believes that participants can be skeptical of the researcher

and suspicious of their motives without this trust and rapport. Therefore, the data will not tell an

adequate and detailed story that aligns with the research. Guillemin & Heggen (2009) stated, "building good interpersonal relations between researcher and participant is an important aspect that needs to be considered, especially when a researcher engages in interviews and observations in order to generate rich data" (p. 293). To ensure that positive rapport is established, the researcher must begin with small talk or light topics that are less intrusive, infusing humor to reduce tension amongst the participants (Zakaria & Musta'amal, 2014).

Discipline data may be skewed if the input of infractions is not recorded ethically. Some administrators may not input suspensions into the database in fear of their school data representing high levels of behavioral concerns. These behavioral concerns can mean job displacement. Therefore, suspensions are sometimes not recorded into the district behavior database, as those students are just "sent home." In this case, if the researcher is pulling students who experience high levels of infractions, some students who would be good candidates as survey participants may not be included, based on the special education data. Thus, the story in which the researcher is trying to obtain may come from a different perspective and not one of authenticity.

The sample size may be smaller than anticipated, based on multiple factors. A smaller sample may not be truly representative of the Turner-Bozeman school community, which may lead to less reliable data. My personal biases may affect my approach to the research study. For example, I am a teacher who has experience with implementing P.A. 99-0456 and the more old-fashioned methods of disciplining students. Therefore, these experiences may influence many data collection factors, such as questioning and generalizing P.A. 99- 0456.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research study is to gain insight into the perceptions of students, parents, teachers, and administrators of the new disciplinary policy designed to combat disproportionate practices in Turner-Bozeman Middle School in Shoreville, IL. To fully capture these participants' lived experiences, CRT will be utilized as a theoretical framework and a methodology to achieve this goal. It is imperative to ensure that this study aligns with the five tenets associated with CRT the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, whiteness as property, interest convergence, and critique of liberalism. Hylton (2012) asserts that "in practice, a CRT methodology can challenge narrow ideologies, and this should be traceable through its implementation back to its theoretical roots" (p. 25).

I believe it is imperative to obtain the perspective of students who are experiencing difficulties with discipline and gaining a deeper understanding of how the behavioral consequences, if at all, combat their behaviors. It is also essential to understand their stories of discipline and to determine if the interventions implemented by Public Act 99-0456 are crucial in eliminating past disciplinary practices. This particular section of the research strives to provide students with a voice, as a means for self-advocacy, in expressing what they think the role of discipline means by their educational experience.

In interviewing teachers and administrators, the experience is designed to be quite different from the students. Teacher's and Administrator' perspectives are essential in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation processes and practices of P.A. 99-0456. Are disciplinary procedures authentically handled, or are the disproportionate behavior policies

still secretly ruling the educational atmosphere at Turner-Bozeman Middle School. It is vital to compare school data with the faculty's perspectives to determine if there is an alignment to the new disciplinary policy.

Turner-Bozeman Middle School was chosen due to the challenging behavioral outcomes of African American students of Shoreville. Although Brandon Jones and Dominique Foster's stories take place at Jackie Robinson Middle School in Yatesville, these two students are representative of many students who have walked middle school halls similar to Turner-Bozeman. It was important to highlight these two students because they represent past punitive behavioral practices and outcomes. Still, it makes the researcher wonder, will there be more students whose behaviors are not appropriately addressed? Although the administration of Turner-Bozeman has focused on academic outcomes, the behavioral aspect has worsened in recent years. Residents are transferring their children out of the community based on the behaviors, which has lead to the middle school obtaining negative nicknames and criticisms.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the perspectives of students, teachers, and administrators of this new discipline policy and determine its role, if any, forces residents to lose faith in their community school. It is integral to analyze the data of this study to determine if the alignment of the lived stories of those affected by past and present disciplinary practices can provide insight into how to combat these negative behaviors and change African American students' behavioral outcomes Turner-Bozeman Middle School.

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF THE ADMINISTRATORS

To gain access to the participant's experiences with disciplinary policies, three administrators and four teachers were interviewed using semi-structured processes described by Creswell (2014) and Bloomberg & Volpe (2012). Ladson-Billings (1998) asserts that the primary reason CRT utilizes the lived experiences (counter-stories and stories) is that they add "context to the objectivity of positivist perspectives" (p. 11). I wanted to ensure that my participants' personal stories were heard, so after I transcribed their interviews, I took each participants' response and revised them into narratives. Hunn, Guy & Manglitz (2006) revealed how white privilege reinforces and perpetuates inequities in society. Therefore, in this case, my participants' counter-stories speak to and substantiate racial discrimination within discipline policies in the low-socioeconomic school district featured in this study. CRT defines this experiential knowledge as valued, legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in education (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Solóranzo & Yosso, 2001).

In accordance with my theoretical framework, this chapter is specifically organized to unpack the data and themes through Critical Race Theory (CRT). As throughout my research, CRT was used for data analysis, revealing tenets of counter-storytelling (interviews), the permanence of racism, whiteness as property, interest convergence, intersectionality, and commitment to social justice. The data analysis guide for this chapter's sections is listed below.

In my analysis of each participant, I highlight the three most prominent CRT tenets evident in my data coding. Thus, based on participant responses, tenet analyses will vary.

Chapter four highlights the voices of the Turner Bozeman middle school's former administrators, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. Shorter, and Mr. Michaels. Chapter five reflects the voices of the educators, Ms. Vanessa Coleman, Mrs. Joann Barry, Mr. Alwin Terry, and Mrs. Kajah Ocasio-Matthews. The reader is provided with access to each participant's narrative and the CRT tenets that support their data and connection to the study's research questions and purpose. Grbich (2007) believes the research study's interpretation and constructed meanings mustn't be separate but interwoven.

All data is summarized and cross analyzed to ensure that the progression is fluid throughout each section. Bloomberg & Volpe (2012) stresses that this is more than identifying themes and patterns, but also about the findings that interconnect and create a story. Please note that data is cross analyzed per CRT tenet. Therefore, all administrator and teacher interviews were cross analyzed separately, which will be evident in the data analysis tables available in the appendices and explained explicitly in the final chapter. Chapter Six includes student survey data analyzed through the CRT framework and then crossed analyzed with administrator and teacher data. Although sixty student responses were requested, the COVID-19 pandemic only permitted forty-six students to participate in the survey completion.

Mr. Hudson

I was fortunate to interview Mr. Hudson. Being the administrator that leads the district, his schedule was extremely busy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Hudson was well-informed of my research study because I previously met with him to gain permission from him to complete my research study in his school district. Due to the e-learning planning, instruction, and other issues that overwhelmed most school districts during this time, I had to wait two months before scheduling an interview. However, Mr. Hudson and I eventually were able to arrange a Zoom conference to complete this process.

Mr. Hudson was wrapping up a meeting before our interview session. After he logged on, he was positioned in a brown leather recliner in his home. As we adjusted our cameras and audio, Mr. Hudson greeted me with excitement. He expressed that he had been online since 7:30 am and had just finished a four-hour video chat on "Google Hangout." I wanted to make sure that this was a good time to chat since he had been inundated with meetings. He assured me that this was a perfect time.

I began to read Mr. Hudson my introduction. I expressed to him that I will use pseudonyms throughout the transcription process to ensure that his identity is protected. He laughed and said, "Oh, they will know that it came from Mr. Hudson because Mr. Hudson's words are signature!" We both laughed for a few seconds, and he began to tell his story.

Mr. Hudson's Story

When I reflect on discipline, I will say that it has changed immensely over the last decade. Theoretically, what used to happen back in the day, as I recall as a dean of students when I started out, I came in (I started as a classroom teacher to a dean of students), if kids were misbehaving, you found different ways to try to reward, to give them rewards and incentives to try to change their behavior. I can emphatically say that I saw the change around 1991 when kids were on the onset of having this sense of entitlement in the home, and parents doing everything in their abilities to fight institutionalized established rules for the discipline of kids. Kids came in with a whole new different punch in terms of just dealing with erratic behavior and things of that nature. So, I'd say around '91 or '92, I saw a change and a shift in the change of how discipline was being… how it was being broached in schools. And we were at that time, modifying our behavior, our discipline codes… disciplinary codes throughout the course of the, I would say '92 to'94, we saw some dramatic changes and how we were kind of re-addressing the discipline policies in our schools.

We realized that it wasn't working. It wasn't working, and one thing that I saw coming in as a young administrator is that we had leaders whose focus was on just throwing kids out of school. It was like, if you don't follow the established rules that we have in place, we're just going to put you out. As a classroom teacher, I remember coming up with my own understanding that there's no kid that I couldn't wrap my arms around and do the fatherly thing with them. At that time in my community, we saw a large influx of single-parent homes, where just moms were raising the kids, and there were no fathers in the home. So, at that time, you know, our folks were

changing; it was a paradigm shift with them. As I said, we were really kind of focusing on discipline because we saw a shift in the demographic of the community. A lot of white folks with kids were getting out. White folks were leaving the community. We began seeing many of our kids coming into the school with no established protocols at home with this shift. Just doing their own thing and then coming to school, and then there's a major disconnection because the protocols we had didn't align. They were functioning at home and then trying to come in and transition with the established rules in school. It wasn't cutting for them. We did struggle with discipline, but so did other neighboring communities as well.

I was the middle school principal for the onset of SB100 before I transitioned into the District Office. So, when I look at programs and interventions that will assist in keeping our kids in school, I look at the restorative justice that is embedded in SB100, and I have subscribed one-thousand percent. I think that if we don't give kids second and third opportunities to develop themselves, we're taking a society of people, and we're putting them away, and I just assume we, we will never get those people back. And that kind of human capital, we have to look at ways to be more productive so that the return on the investment is going to… it's going to proliferate a message that everybody can be saved if given, or we're putting the right people in front of them. We've really just got to be really focused on how we are working with young people that are coming into our schools and giving them the essential resources that they need so that they can be successful.

This whole discipline thing, we got discipline policies, and sometimes the rigidity of these policies are so…they are so inflexible to the point where just… there's no wiggle room for kids to get around. And what do I know, I came up from an environment where I wasn't supposed to succeed, sincerely, I mean…the way I grew up, it was tough. I grew up in a house, in foster care. There were seventeen kids in the house, and I didn't know what it was like to have my own bed until I went to college, so I have a whole different affirmation about discipline.

I remember when I rolled it out to the staff, the idea of the new act, I was a little apprehensive, but what made the process easy was because I walk the walk. Everything I do emulates what I expect from my staff. It was not easy, but I walk it. I didn't ask my staff to do anything that I don't do. I think that's why I didn't have a hard time with buy-in. They knew that they had a leader in the house who respected everyone and knew that I respected them. I respected their talents, skills, and all they brought to the table. But in the same breath, they knew that I was going to support them, especially if they are about the kids.

Now, if you care about the kids, everybody will tell you that knows me, "You can't come to this guy, and you ain't about kids." Cause if you are not about the kids, God has given me an internal beacon to see it. I can feel right off the bat, and I don't care how many, how often you come in with all the theoretical epistemologies and the educational buzzwords, I'm not impressed. I'm not impressed. What I am impressed with is your walk with children. What I'm really impressed with is how you develop the people who are gonna be around children. And

once I see that you are forth-rightfully, are gonna do everything to get kids where they need to be, and meet them where they are, not expect them to be where you want them to be.

There's a whole different thing, and I don't mean anything negative about it because we all have an expectation for what we…how we think and where we want kids to be. But when you start putting those perceptions and judgments on kids before even getting to know them… then I got an issue. When the kids walked through my doors, they are scholars; I don't care where they come from. Because I used to be that kid and I remember my next-door neighbor saying, "Them bastard kids over there are not gonna be anything." When I graduated from college, I wished Mrs. Holloway was still living because I wanted to go right next door and knock on it and say, "Mrs. Holloway, I made it!" When I received the push back, this is the story I always told, because it's not about the teachers and the adults in the building; it's about the kids. That's my walk. Because of this, implementation was slow and steady...we did the staff meetings, we did the policy analysis, but again, the major implementation pieces were missing because of funding.

So, when we take a look at Senate Bill 100, I'm an advocate for some of the components as far as I'm concerned. I am definitely for some of it because I think with SB100, one of the things that's a derivative of it is that it's really trying to incorporate some potential humanistic and necessary skills, but everybody doesn't affirm to it. See, the thing is, that's where it requires a good leader; a good leader can look at that and extrapolate the things that are vital for your population of students. I know in my school, SB100 and the restorative justice aspect was

representative in our proactive pieces, and we built around it but also stayed within the framework.

Don't get me wrong; the framework is good. We can't keep throwing babies out with the bathwater. If there is some good to that, but the implementation and follow-through are what many people and districts just don't have the energy to continue, to keep it rolling and the funding for full implementation. Most time, folks don't wanna do referrals; I mean, folks don't wanna keep anecdotal records and notes and then going back because this requires time. Going back to look at the notes, that you have and say, "Oh that didn't work, hey, let's try this okay, let's look at some of the research out there, that's going on in terms of how to deal with these types of behavioral issues." Then they have to tie in that information to what's happening at the house. 'Cause, see, if you only know the kid from school and you don't know the kid at the house, that's a major disconnect.

If I could add anything to this bill, I would examine the implementation phase because there needs to be some more critical…there need to be some more critical workshops and some more evidence-based research. That evidence has to be surrounded by so many different ethnicities and so many different demographics. Policymakers have to realize that one size does not fit all. We all feel that, and this is where I think SB100 lacks a sense of understanding. When you look at schools in urban centers, they are totally different from schools in affluent communities, suburbia, where education is functional, and they have resources. Those districts have the funding to provide the resources, the support curriculum, extra support staff, and child

services. Unfortunately, our district didn't have the budget for this, so again, how can I fully implement something I don't have access to. This bill doesn't really acclimate itself to those little derivatives that are encumbered around that. It doesn't address it! So, you have this piece of paper that has good intentions but not enough support for full implementation. But then again, how can you say this to the legislators who basically make these rules but are not educators and are not in the trenches with us.

You know that is one of the biggest things I have faced as the leader of this district. Most Policymakers and Boards who are not educators are quick to create laws that affect our livelihood. This stuff blows my mind. So, when I hear all of the rhetoric coming from folks' mouths because they picked up a journal and they read something, they were able to capitulate the understanding of it without somebody telling them. Now they are experts in the area. I got a problem. I'm sick of laws that they put nice hairdressings on it to make it look pretty, but when you tear back the layers, and you see what's really under it, the stench is sometimes too unbearable to even breathe in. It's just that to me; it's just that.

So, let's pull back the layers, and this is where we find the perpetuation of institutional racism. But if you don't examine it, it is hidden within the reform. Now don't get me wrong; again, I am an advocate for not suspending kids, and I agree that we have to find alternate ways to handle this. When we look at the Bill, we say, "We're not gonna suspend kids; we gonna find all these different ways to omit that." If you had to develop the culture and climate in your building around embracing all the little and spherical things that's gonna make things work and

connect, then guess what? You are going to be behind the Eight Ball the whole freaking time. Excuse the vernacular; I'm sorry for using that term. And the stark reality of it is this. Stark Realities!

Two weeks after the implementation, teachers dealt with a kid, who don't have the skills to deal with kids, one a particular level, with-coming, exhibiting certain types of behaviors that they have never seen, but they've read about it in a textbook and had a professor, who really never dealt with those issues, talking about what research tells them, and they haven't had the practical experience of seeing it really work. Quickly, all of those theoretical epistemologies these young folk learn goes out the window. And then guess what happens? The worst thing that can ever happen to a teacher: Survival of the fittest. Now you're trying to survive. And when you are in survival mode, guess what? You only focus, intrinsically, on what you can do so that you can make it past the challenge. Right? So now, instruction is out the window. Because now, the teacher knows that Johnny got a leg up, and now the teacher has about ten other gamers in the room, too. And they are looking at this, sizing the teacher up. Now the behaviors are inevitable, and now we have kids doing horrendous things to the teacher and the learning environment.

We don't have the adequate funding to implement the extra supports, so now what does that look like? Let's not forget that yes, we may have all of the institutional frameworks up saying, "We are going to do a referral first, then second, we are going to call the parent and then… The teacher has to do all of this. Then, after all of this, the kid goes to the office, which

may lead to a parent-admin meeting, and then if that doesn't work, and then if that doesn't work...but the kid is getting nothing out of all of this. Think about it, when the kids go home, it's a whole different set of protocols that they play by. They get to their house, and they are running the house! The student now realizes that there is little static here when I get to school cause there are some institutionalized rules that they are going to change for me. I'm not changing to acclimate to the rules. So right there, you got a major issue.

Imagine! Imagine! If you have five teachers in your building, and let's say at the middle school, they teach six classes. And let's say if they were at 28 children per class. Can you imagine how many students are going to be impacted? Are we really progressing? This is just mayhem and madness. So I have preached this through exhaustion. We have to have the funding to have access to the resources so that we can fully implement this! Without it, we are diagnosing behaviors without funding the solution. It's like, you go to the doctor, and they diagnose you, but you don't have the money for the medication. What happens to the ailment? It festers and matriculates into a bigger issue. Same with this! It gives a different message from which the bill intended.

The unfortunate piece to this is that we have many teachers of other cultures that are coming into our schools that are just not ready to deal with this because guess what, they are not committed to the struggles our students experience daily. Unfortunately, we don't get a lot of African American or Hispanic applicants in our field. On top of the inequity of the new staff, they are a part of that entitled generation. Being a part of that entitled generation, the first thing

that comes to mind when they see stuff is that we don't have to put some work into it. I'm going to throw that boy's ass outta here. Out the door." Excuse the vernacular. "Out the door, he goes! I ain't gotta put up with that." They have that mentality. They don't have the endurance and the persistence to say, "If I work this system right, it could work for me." And it takes time, patience. I think the folks who are putting these things together, these different bills, together in many cases, are not educators, and they don't give the educators the power to create such policies.

It's crazy, and this is where I think there is so much hypocrisy in education. It took a teacher for everybody in this civilized world to be who they are today. It took a teacher. It took a teacher to teach a doctor; it took a teacher to teach a teacher. And when we… when the very system that's predicated around the whole sense of rationalization in terms of humanity, and just everybody in a civilized society being able to function without mayhem, it all stops at the door of a teacher. And I think when they're developing all these things, they're not thinking about the teacher and the kids. It's all about the numbers. With all those statistics that they are looking at, it's about the dollar value behind it at the end of the day. It's a profit margin behind it, and they don't want to talk about that! We don't wanna talk about…we don't wanna have that conversation because that's de-veining the demarcation… that demarcation line… you are de-veining that line, and you are not supposed to do that! So, when we start talking quantitative versus qualitative, theory vs. practice, it's a significant divide in that.

SB100 and the whole restorative piece it's good! I just think that the human side of it has to be true to the game. They have to be able to be patient; they have to be able to do all the anecdotal; they have to be able to look at the quantitative data just to determine, are we doing the right thing? There has to be access to resources, curriculum, and student supports to enhance what the bill is asking for all districts, not just the districts that have monies allocated for these special programs. We have to get into the bigger piece of this. I walk the walk with my staff; I just wish policymakers would do the same.

Mr. Hudson's Story through the CRT Framework

CRT is known for providing access to the meaning of institutional racism and its prevalence in the fibers of the American culture, including education (Parker & Stovall, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2013; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Parker & Lynn, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso (2002). Lynn and Parker (2006) define critical race studies in education as "a system of oppression and exploitation that explores the historical and contemporary constructions and manifestations of race in our society with particular attention to how these issues are manifested in schools" (p. 282). Ledesma and Calderon (2015) also articulate that critical race theory locates how race and racism manifest themselves throughout the K-12 pipeline, through the classroom, policy, and community. In my analysis and coding, I found three CRT tenets that repeatedly emerged from Mr. Hudson's counter-story to uncover racist institutional structures that he felt lay within the P.A. 99-0456 framework. These tenets included: the permanence of racism, commitment to social justice, and whiteness as property. Based on his account, these tenets suit

his narrative because they explain why he believes institutional racism within the policies of P.A.99-0456 limits its ability to be adequately implemented and its ability to combat disruptive behaviors.

Permanence of Racism

Racism is a permanent aspect of the political, economic, and social experiences of people of color and influential elements of U.S. society (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ford & Airhlhenbuwa, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Lynn & Adams, 2002; Taylor, 2009). Castaneda and Zuniga (2013) define racism as "the set of institutional, cultural, and interpersonal patterns and practices that created advantages for people legally defined and socially constructed as white" (p. 58). Mr. Hudson reflected on disciplinary practices for African American students and how they were put out of school for not conforming to the established system of rules and how parents fought the educational system on these rules. He stated, "We realized that our disciplinary practices were not working, and I saw, coming in as a young administrator, that we had leaders whose focus was on just throwing kids out of school" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Walton (2010) suggests that institutional and cultural prejudices embedded within the established procedures can persist regardless of reconstructions and reforms in the educational system, which is a Eurocentric construction.

Research has shown that African American students have been disproportionally suspended and expelled for behaviors more frequently than their white peers (Skiba et al., 2002; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Townsend, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Wu et al., 1982). P.A. 99-

0456 was designed to eradicate these punitive consequences, but Mr. Hudson has his doubts. He believes that as long as his low socioeconomic district lacks funding to implement this act fully, students will not receive proper services, which will continue to cause the disconnect between home and school for African American students. He argued, "so we have this piece of paper that has good intentions, but not enough support for full implementation" (Hudson, personal communication March 26, 2020). Without this full implementation, which includes funding and resources that are provided to affluent districts, Mr. Hudson believes that the African American population in his building will be overlooked, underserviced, and disproportionately disciplined again.

Mr. Hudson's concerns reflect Ogbu's (1982) ideology of cultural discontinuity, which focuses on exchanging minority groups and individuals of the dominant culture. Cultural discontinuity forces African American students to be familiar with both the dominant and their own cultures. In contrast, teachers representing the dominant culture are only responsible for obtaining their own culture and infusing it on the subordinate cultures in that setting. Ogbu (1982) articulates that African American students reject the dominant culture; thus, the lack of cultural consideration is perpetuated through academic and social behaviors. The inability to learn African American students' culture prohibits white teachers from engaging in building positive and meaningful relationships with students who are not representative of their dominant cultures. Mr. Hudson feels that some teachers' inabilities to confront African American students' behavioral issues are not culturally leveled. He stated, "the unfortunate piece to this is that we have a lot of teachers that are coming into our schools that are just not ready to deal with this

because guess what, they are not committed to the struggles our students experience daily. Unfortunately, we don't get a lot of African American or Hispanic applicants in our field" (Hudson, personal communication, Mach 26,2020).

Whiteness as Property

Critical race theorists argued Whiteness as property as the right of possession, use of enjoyment, disposition, and exclusion (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billing, 1998; Harris, 1993). These rights to white privilege allow for affluent districts to have access to full implementation of P.A. 99-0456 through funding and access that is limited for this school district that is located in a low socioeconomic community. Delgado & Stefancic (1997) defines this idea of white privilege as a system of rights and advantages allocated to individuals simply because they are classified as White. A prevalent theme throughout Mr. Hudson's interview centered around his concern of inadequate funding and the implementation processes of P.A. 99-0456. He refers to affluent districts having a leg up over low socioeconomic urban communities as he states, "those districts have the funding to provide the resources, the support curriculum, extra support staff, and child services" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020).

Mr. Hudson's main concern was that his district, unlike the white, affluent communities, didn't have access to funding that would permit his staff's professional development, hire additional student support and resources that enhance the systems already in place. However, Mr. Hudson goes deeper than the surface of resources and discusses how this lack of support

infiltrates discipline policies and instruction. Mr. Hudson refers to this as "the survival of the fittest," an ongoing battle between the teacher and the obstructed quality instruction behaviors. Funding entails many aspects of the educational process that Mr. Hudson believes his district lacks access to. His concern stemmed from underqualified teachers and the lack of professional development that will enhance behavioral and academic connections. His concerns are not a new concept; as Anyon et al. (2018) stated, "the unequal distribution of economic, cultural and social capital intersects in schools to reproduce racial inequality without the use of explicitly discriminatory laws or practices (p. 393).

When teachers are underprepared to deal with disruptive behaviors, they tend to communicate with students in an authoritarian approach, including engaging students in power struggles with teachers, increasing negative behaviors within the classroom and school community (Emmer, 1994; Kearney et al.; 1998). The lack of funding prevents teachers from having access to professional development opportunities, especially those that align to the P.A. 99-0456, such as restorative justice practices and extra student supports. This halt of professional development opportunities mirrors CRT's notion of white privilege. The perpetuation of quality instruction is only afforded to students whose school district has access to extra support services, such as social workers, behavioral interventionists, and curriculum support. The low socioeconomic students of Turner Bozeman are in classrooms with minimal supports and untrained teachers (dealing with restorative justice). Without this, Gillborn (2013) asserts that educational policies are perceived as tools to manage racial inequality to enhance White dominance.

Commitment to Social Justice

Mr. Hudson's commitment to social justice was a constant thematic category that resonated through his reflection on his experiences before and after the implementation of P.A. 99-0456. Jones et al. (2014) define the commitment to social justice as the act of empowering the oppressed and the marginalized. As an African American school administrator, he proclaimed his fight for student success because he had people in his life who doubted that he would ever become successful. He reflected on his youth, growing up in foster care, and the community's low expectations set for him. He said, "I grew up in a house, in foster care with seventeen kids, so I have a whole different affirmation about discipline" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). These negative experiences caused him to approach student behavior differently. He stated, "as a classroom teacher, I remember coming up with my own understanding that there's no kid that I couldn't wrap my arms around and do the fatherly thing with them…we saw a large influx of single-parent homes, where just moms were raising the kids, and there were no fathers in the home" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020).

His fight for social justice continued through the implementation of P.A. 99-0456, especially when he identified its inequities. Mr. Hudson is a strong advocate for finding alternative ways to suspend disruptive behaviors but believes the act should expand beyond the school building's perimeters. This is why he believes that giving students a voice is key to combatting disruptive behaviors. As the administrator, he stressed the importance of building

relationships with students and their families to his staff. He stated, "We can have all the institutional frameworks up in the school building…but when the kid goes home, it's a whole different set of protocols that they play by" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). He suggests that students are not acclimating to the established rule system because their behavioral expectations are different at home. This ongoing battle between home and school causes, in his words, "mayhem and madness" in the school building. Consequently, he believes that the students are getting nothing out of this transaction, and the negative behaviors continue to increase.

Mr. Hudson's push for social justice also lay within his work as the head administrator of his district and the ideologies of policymakers and legislation that are focused on the bill or act, but not necessarily the intricacies that fail to support it. He articulates, "I'm sick of laws they put nice hairdressing on it to make it look pretty, but when you tear back the layers, and you see what's really under it, the stench is sometimes too unbearable to even breathe in. It's just that to me; it's just that" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). He focuses on the act as something great on paper but lacks validity when funding is not available for proper and essential implementation. Mr. Hudson stressed, "That is one of the biggest things I have faced as the leader of this district, policymakers, and boards who are not educators but are quick to create laws that affect our livelihood" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). He shared his frustrations with the lack of supports allocated to his district but stressed how he worked hard to provide a quality educational experience, despite the inequities. He discussed how he hosted meetings that engaged his staff in policy analysis, which led to our disciplinary policy's overhaul.

McCoy and Dirk (2015) contend that social justice is a consistent commitment, and Mr. Hudson's fight for equal access to the contents of this disciplinary reform for the student of Turner-Bozeman's school community is a continuous battle.

Summary and Reflective Thought

The permanence of racism, the commitment of social justice, and whiteness as property were utilized to identify how Mr. Hudson believes forms of institutional racism are embedded in this policy and structures that influence how P.A. 99-0456 is implemented in this low socioeconomic middle school community. Mr. Hudson agrees with the practices of P.A. 99-0456 that provide students an opportunity to gain chances for improving disruptive behaviors but challenges the implementation processes. Mr. Hudson's commitment to social justice highlighted his fight with the undergirded levels of oppression (family structure, community disadvantages, and low socioeconomic inequities) that hinder the ability to implement and sustain the behavioral intervention system properly. He challenged policymakers to take a deeper dive into rooted community issues, structures that promote inequalities and impose privileged norms, that must be addressed before the school can attempt to eradicate these behaviors (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001).

Mr. Hudson's argument with support of the tenet, permanence of racism, emphasized the lack of monetary access that low socioeconomic districts have, providing more resources such as improving teacher preparedness through professional development opportunities and additional support staff within the building and community. He insists that the fibers of racism stem

115

through every facet of the educational processes, especially funding, preventing African American communities from having access to programs, policies, and protocols. Knight (2017) articulates that the lack of school funding in low socioeconomic communities leads to adverse long-term outcomes. This lack of funding limits community resources, which affects every aspect of the school structure. Hence, without these needed supports, the ability to advance education for African- American students to a higher and more fulfilling level of success will become stagnate.

Mr. Hudson also believes that this policy was designed as one size fits all. Although discipline issues come in many shapes and forms, through whiteness as property, the inconsistencies with implementation cause his African American school community to lag behind affluent communities continuously. He refers to this battle as a "survival of the fittest," with the Whiteness of the community being identified as prized property (McCoy & Dirk, 2015). Without equitable components, he is afraid his students may place last in the race for disciplinary progression, widening yet another "educational gap." Mr. Hudson feels that this policy alone is not the end of institutional racism within the schools but just a small piece to the puzzle for eradicating inequity in low socioeconomic school communities.

Although Mr. Hudson is not originally from the school's community, he has served over three decades as an educator, principal, and superintendent. He expressed a deep passion for the Turner Bozeman Middle School community, and most importantly, expressed a love for the students, regardless of their academic, behavioral, or socioeconomic background. Throughout his

interview, he stressed the importance of meeting the needs of the students, but he was a bit disappointed at the attempt P.A. 99-0456 has had to combat those behaviors in his district. He stressed how he agrees with the restorative piece of the act. Song and Swearer (2016) contend that "The restorative justice framework addresses racial inequity and focuses on systematic racism (p. 315). Mr. Hudson believes this is a crucial concept that is relevant to his middle school community. Still, his school lacks access to the framework's professional development and services without the proper funding. He stated that it was difficult to heal a deep wound with only a small band-aid. Unless we recognize the root of our community's problems, no policy will work, at least not as it was designed.

Mr. Hudson also said that my educational background and awareness made his interview run smoothly. He said, "I feel like I have been knowing you for years because you are definitely in tune with the needs of our children." After we concluded the interview, Mr. Hudson expressed his appreciation to me for taking the time to conduct research that will help support African American students' needs. He said, "I can't wait until you are done with your research because you have a lot to offer not only our community but many communities across the state, sister, keep going! We said our goodbyes; I thanked him for the final time and pressed stop on my voice recorder.

Mrs. Shorter

I have known Mrs. Shorter for many years. Although we worked in separate school districts, we always seemed to attend the same professional development sessions and programs. She became aware of my research study at the beginning of my journey and immediately became intrigued. When I asked her if she would be part of my research, she enthusiastically agreed. We had initially planned to meet in person to conduct the interview process, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I had to schedule a Zoom conference. She was also dealing with the e-learning planning and instruction for her district, so we scheduled the interview for the weekend.

As we both logged into the system, Mrs. Shorter was positioned by the window in the dining area of her home. She adjusted her screen several times because the sun was shining through her sheer white curtains, causing her image to have a glare. After this was fixed, we shared small talk about how education was being affected by the pandemic, and Mrs. Shorter asked, "how do you think behavior will be monitored during this e-learning process?" We both shook our heads, and I told her that I hadn't even thought about that. We both agreed that we are all focused on the instructional piece, but how teachers would deal with behaviors in an e-learning environment was not discussed. She said, "add that to the list of e-learning questions!"

After we laughed a few seconds, I read her my introduction, ensuring that her name and identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. She playfully said, "bring it on!" Then, she began to tell her story.

Mrs. Shorter's Story

I have been in administration for about twelve years, and I can say that school discipline has changed significantly. I can recall, when I was a teacher, wait, now that's taking me back to the late 90s, so yeah, that's a bit far back…hold on…Jesus! Discipline back then… I remember students did not want anything to do with the dean, that's for sure because they were suspended if they went down there! I don't know how it all worked, because like I said, that was in the late 90s when I began teaching. But I will say, in my classroom, I tried to work with my students, convince them to do whatever, and then if they just completely would not do whatever it was or start arguing or whatever, it was kind of a last resort for me, to send them to the dean, because there were consequences were mostly suspensions. But I would kind of try to take a motherly approach, so again, that was the last resort for me. It wasn't something that happened every day, but it did seem like it was the same students, more so, who would get sent out than…It was just maybe a handful who would be sent out. These were the students who were more argumentative than anything. Even with these kids, I always talked to them individually, calling their parents, but most importantly, trying to establish relationships with them while trying to implement engaging instruction and really implement culturally relevant pedagogy. Even though it was back then… I feel like that helped a lot.

I remember we had a probation manager; she taught us a lot about really trying to have rigorous instruction. So that was, to me, I wouldn't necessarily call it an intervention, but I would call it something that was in place that should be in place. Like, here are all of the things if I'm

doing, I shouldn't have problems in my classroom because I have rigorous instruction. I have culturally responsive instruction. I had things related to the real world, which could be classified as rigorous, and then I had those relationships, working with parents. And not just for the bad things, but I would call parents and say, "so and so I really doing a good job."Of course, it would be the first time a teacher ever called to say something good, but I found that my students were responsive to that. Especially if they didn't do well sometimes, like that one day, I would be like, "Okay, I'm calling today."That would help a lot. I don't know if this really qualifies, but I think it does; I was also a coach. One of the things I found was that being a coach helped me reach more students than even the students who were in my class, so it helped me form relationships school-wide. Because then, even other teachers would be like, "Your Track student is acting up in my class, can you come to talk to them?" So, I think having a team effort…I always sought out teachers who were good with classroom discipline to do better.

When I became an administrator, I would say that I noticed that teachers didn't have relationships with students, that they didn't have rigorous instruction. Or when they did have rigorous instruction, it went really well, but it wasn't done often. It was only every now and again, and I didn't see that culturally relevant instruction too much either. So, I guess as I shifted from a teacher to an administrator, there were things that I didn't see in place, but then I tried to help teachers put them in place. Because again, there were things that should have been in place to…I don't want to say to prevent discipline issues but to have a quality school and good instruction. I didn't see it as much coming out of the classroom. If students were disruptive or fighting, I would admit that I was that administrator that gave ten-day suspensions; that was just

what we did to tone down the behaviors. I know that I was harsher before SB 100. It was like, "You did what? No, that's ten days." Honestly, we passed ten days out like candy. I even saw kids with IEPs getting ten days, and they have special needs. That was my life as a K-8th administrator and experience before SB 100. Still, when I became an administrator in the middle school, and it was time for the actual rollout, that was a totally different ball game.

I was transitioning into the middle school as being part of the administration team, Oh Jesus! The disciplinary procedures? How would I describe them? Hold on, let me get some water (chuckle). I remember working with the team to create a handbook that outlined…we had a manual that we developed as a team with some parent input. We updated our student handbook to be more aligned with the SB-100 guidelines, almost in anticipation of it. This happened in my first year. It outlined when a student did X, Y, and Z, then this would happen, and we made that little matrix thing that showed what the possible consequences could be. Like in-school, out-of-school suspension, and interventions. We did that! In terms of the day-to-day procedures in the building, it was chaotic.

Everybody was in a different place in terms of how they were able to manage their classroom. Many teachers sent students out of the classroom for disruptive as well as non-disruptive behaviors. So, then we really had to change the procedures too; if a student is misbehaving in class, you call the administration to the room. I felt like teachers would send students out of the room, and the students would just either stand in the hallway, and it was tough to tell if the teacher sent them to the office or if they didn't. So teachers would send students out

of the room, they would either stand in the hallway and then be in the hallway with several other students who were sent out of class, and then trouble would really start. Or they would come to the office, and then we are like, "Why are you in the office?" when they get there. So the teacher sends them out, then they get to the office, and we are talking to them, "What happened?" and they are like, "I don't know, I didn't even do nothing." You have to understand that we were still using the paper discipline tracking system, so now, we were trying to figure out what really happened by either going back to the classroom or emailing the teacher. We would also have the student write out what happened; that was part of the procedure. Based on what the student said, based on what the teacher said, we would determine the next steps.

These decisions were all based on our knowledge of what was coming down the pipeline with SB 100. I specifically remember attending the listening tour hosted by our state senator. However, I didn't tell my teachers because, at the time, I still didn't really know what it was or if it would pass. I do remember wishing there were teachers there because when this rolls out, they are going to be mad, and they are going to be mad at me! Basically, what I know about it is everything written on the website about what you should do, what you shouldn't do, and when you should do it. I felt like when it happened in our district, the district would say one thing, but that's not really necessarily what the law said, so I had to read it for myself. At the same time, I know we didn't do a good job of even rolling it out to the staff. Certain things were supposed to be put in place, like training for the team on why suspensions don't work, that the consequences don't work. The result of it is that students get involved with the justice system, and then it just kinda sends them on a lifetime of being engaged with that, which is not good.

So, we didn't do a good job rolling that out. It was challenging because, you know, we were doing the rollout, and we were a new administrative team in a new school at the same time. Everyone was getting used to the new administration, and it was tough because everything changed, the leadership, change of mindsets, everything. Now we are saying that we are not suspending students; yeah, it was tough. I know that we didn't do any professional developments in terms of the law and what it means. So when I reflect on our work as administrators, I think when I actually saw the law, I was like, "oh, we were supposed to do all of this? Okay, we didn't know." But still then, we never even really came back around to doing that. So, I feel like I knew that we basically were only supposed to suspend as a last resort if all measures were exhausted. I do remember that we worked diligently to ensure that we had several alternatives to suspensions, but again, the culture of the building and the teachers were not having it. I would always refer to that list and say to my staff, "okay, before we suspend somebody, let's go down this list and see what we can do besides suspending them. So, the entire administration team used that. I can see why the teachers felt the way they did because it was not necessarily a teacher thing; it was more like…It wasn't a classroom thing. It was more like once the student gets referred to the office, what can we do besides suspending?

Once we went with this model, we did notice changes in student behavior. We would say that our first year as the administration team, we did a lot of suspensions. We had too in my opinion, but eventually, we stopped suspending students, and you know what, it forced us to communicate more with the students if that's not weird, really listening to them more and to make them talk to each other more. I had one student in my office, she fought, and I was like,

"This is your third fight; what's going on?" She was like, "Nothing." I was like, Okay, well, guess what? You will be in here until you tell me what happened. And you're not going anywhere until that happens. So I don't know what's wrong, but there's something wrong, and you're not leaving until you tell me." And she was like, "Kids make fun of me because I'm fat." Well, it's like, "Oh Sugarplum," and then going through that whole, "Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission." And hugging her and loving on her. In the old days, I probably would have suspended her because she had a fight, but because we are trying to reduce suspensions, again, it's increasing that communication.

So, I think if I think about it…it wasn't just that situation, it was a lot of situations, then it would have just led to more incidents because the students basically are upset about whatever, and their issues are not being resolved. However, we do have students who want to test the waters. Once the students saw that the suspensions ceased, they tried it! We saw an influx of disruptive behaviors and fights, and teachers were outraged. They got the union involved, and it was like, ok, back to the drawing board. Let's look at ways in which we can come together!

Let's be honest here! Our students are not getting the counseling that they need. They are not getting the social work services they need, they're not even…what they just need is somebody to talk to and listen to them. They don't need to be suspended. So I do feel like it made our entire administration team take a different approach, which I feel like I always did, but I had to ask myself, how would I want my child to be treated in this situation? I think really that's the thing that made all the difference, is just how I would want this suspension, or

discipline, or whatever to take place if it were my own child? Like for real, for real! I mean, we do have our social workers in place, but to me, that's not enough! We need more support to ensure that our students are being serviced and that they are getting the tools and strategies necessary to not only not participate in the disruptive behaviors but also to find out what the triggers are so that they self-regulate themselves. We just are missing some of those systems. We have heavy administrator supports in place, like our deans, etc. But that non-administrative piece, like the social workers and those supports, needs more of that! I always thought that social workers and other specialists in the classroom, providing the teacher with support with conflict management, conflict resolution, and communication would be beneficial. Still, our funding doesn't allow for that. With those supports in place, we will be on the right track for improving student behavior and providing more adequate interventions.

Our teachers also need to be able to receive training. We have some teachers who are not fully equipped to handle the struggles that some of our students are facing. When you have that cultural deficit, it is hard for them to identify and relate to the students as far as how to help them. We had the system, whereas the teacher would have to do like five things before they were referred to the office. That was part of our system, but teachers who did not buy into that always challenged the administration like, "so what are you doing and why am I doing your job as well as mine?" Don't get me wrong, the act talks a lot about Restorative Justice, but it's like, yeah, our staff needs training on this. We just don't wake up and say, ok, let's do some restorative justice. Again, that takes a lot, and we can't fully implement P.A. 99-0456 if we can't afford to implement the systems or provide adequate professional development for the staff.

Even though we faced some obstacles for full implementation, we ensured that the students who were suspended had access to their work, right? We made sure that wasn't held against them. I know in the past, it used to be like if the students were suspended, they didn't get their work, and they definitely couldn't make it up. It was zeros in the grade book. That was definitely double jeopardy for them, right? It hit the students twice because they were hit academically when really discipline and academics are separate things. I remember telling kids that they were suspended for ten days, and then they would get ten days' worth of zeros in every single subject; how could they really pass? So, in our circumstances, if we did suspend, we made sure that it was for something…and their parent was called up to the school right away, I would be like, "Oh, I need you to come in so we can talk about this because this is serious" and the students were able to get their work.

The biggest pro I have with this act is that African American kids are no longer being pushed out of school, even for a short time, right? And not that I'm trying to push them out, but in general, it just did. So I think the biggest pro across the board for all schools is that it helped, at least I hope, reduced the number of black kids getting suspended. We know that they were; the rate of suspensions was extremely disproportionate. All of that is… and you know white kids can do the same things, and they don't get the same punishment. I think this act also made us take a step back and listen to our students more, and it made us come up with alternate methods because the more they are in school, the more they learn, which could possibly keep them out of trouble more. Just thinking academically, just keeping kids in school, I think that was the biggest thing… and really listening to the kids and not only dealing with the symptoms.

I had some concerns about the act, though, and one was the implementation piece. I don't think it was necessarily implemented as well as it could have been. In terms of support, we definitely need the funding, like what should this look like, what does professional development look like? I mean, we talk a lot about restorative practices, but what does that look like? We needed more support with the implementation because that was our major weakness. I think the basics of SB 100 applies to every school. However, I believe that professional development should be based on the needs of the school, right? Some things just don't apply to us when dealing with our students and their issues. I think there should be more support around, "this is what the law says, and this is what we are doing, and here is the funding that you may need to ensure that this is fully implemented." It's like, how can we do what we need to do when we don't have what we need in place, right?

I am going to be honest though, I don't think that this act intentionally perpetuates institutional racism, but I feel like it's trying to combat the racism that would put our kids out of school. I am about to be real blunt though, I feel like white people don't believe that black children are educable, and because of that belief, they feel like they really don't deserve to be in school, and then if they do anything, they should receive consequences, which means they shouldn't be in that space. We know that suspensions don't work anyway, so why is this practice continuous? I don't know, but it will require all involved to shift the mindset of administrators, teachers, policymakers, parents, and the community, and I don't know if this will necessarily occur. I'm thinking of other concepts like cultural competency; when that came out, people

didn't know about it, and since they didn't know about it, it didn't exist to them. Let's just be honest, combatting racism is going to be difficult, especially in this case.

I would like to know what other districts have done resource-wise because you can have all the resources to do anything, but if the mindset is not there, then change will not occur. I think that like have to do more studying about restorative justice because I feel like a lot of districts are trying to roll this out, but I have to wonder, how are we supposed to restore our students to a community that they really were never part of, right? This is where the unintentionality of institutional racism lies. What does this look like, and what are we really trying to restore them to be? Like what are we restoring them to? This is the problem I have with this whole thing because I truly want to know what that looks like. How can we actually compare the outcomes of restorative practices in white schools and say, oh, this works.

The interventions they utilize in their school are far different from what we would use in our schools. We have a diverse population of students, and they have different needs. How can we honestly say that these practices are culturally relevant when our students' culture is different from the culture of that community. Our students' experiences and the community is different. How can we actually look at this practice as something that does not represent assimilation? Justice looks different between the cultures; restoration looks different between the cultures. When districts with have "resources," I want to know what they are using, what are they doing; I would really like to know this because I think without any cultural competency or cultural relevance in the interventions, how can we truly restore our students, if there is such thing. To

me, it's like, so they want our kids to act like their kids, right? I have colleagues in other districts that are on the restorative justice bandwagon. They say their districts have done district-wide training, and many have complained that it is not effective…a few colleagues work in mixed-income communities that are challenged with racial issues, and they are saying that this is not working for them. Honestly, I don't know anybody who has done it well, and the consensus is that nothing can be changed if the mind is stagnant. How can a teacher or administrator, who probably feels these black kids shouldn't be here anyway, provide services to keep them in the building learning? Do you see what I'm saying?

The bottom line is this; there needs to be an honest conversation about race, like the historical events that have happened, because I think a lot of people don't know how we were affected, and some just don't care to realize it. I think that's important. And the more people have that historical background information, that could help shift the mindset. For so long, they have been espousing the idea that black people aren't smart…well… I think they believe that, and then I think without critical conversations and understanding, the other parts can't even be addressed. I think that is important. Honestly, I don't believe that people know that suspensions don't work, I mean, it took me a while to figure that out as well, but it has been done for so long. Until we all take the time to learn and understand background information about different cultures that we work with and stop trying to make everybody act the same, then the work can't be done because people don't understand why it's being done. Honestly, I don't think white people know about us; hell, some of us don't even know about ourselves, but they come and try to teach our kids and then don't understand why they don't act like their kids or they don't want

to understand the experiences our kids go through. So right away, they are troubled, and they need to go; they need to get out of the classroom.

So, I think if they know more about us, then they could be like, "oh ok, we understand now, and we are going to take a different approach," and that would be helpful, but at the same time, it's not just about discipline, it is also about the curriculum. If they knew more about our kids and their culture, then they would be more eager to teach our kids about themselves, because I think that if kids are in school and they never learn anything that pertains to who they are and their interests, then they are not interested, they get bored. School then becomes something that doesn't matter to them anymore. We also have to look at how our cultures are being celebrated and acknowledged, like is it only white people on the walls, because of these challenges the entire culture of the school. How do we change that, like how do we acknowledge that our schools are these incubators of institutional racism? If this is not addressed and, most importantly, if we are not truthful about it, we won't be able to change anything.

Mrs. Shorter's Story through CRT Framework

From its origin of civil rights advancements, Critical Race Theory has questioned the legitimization of oppression and focuses on social justice, liberation, and economic empowerment (Tate, 1997; Yosso, 2005; Matsuda et al., 2006; Taylor, 2009). In this study, CRT was applied to analyze Mrs. Shorter's counter-story, noting that her voice is a vehicle for challenging racist institutional structures that she felt lay within the P.A. 99-0456 framework effect on African American students in her building. In my analysis and coding, I found four

tenets of CRT that repeatedly emerged in Mrs. Shorter's story: Permanence of Racism, Interest Convergence, Intersectionality, and Commitment to Social Justice. I believe these tenets reinforced her efforts in explaining why she believes institutional racism is embedded in the disciplinary act's inadequate implementation and its struggle to combat disruptive behaviors.

Permanence of Racism

Delgado (1995) describes racism as a normal entity of our society, and "racial assumptions about minorities pervade our mindset" (p. 6). Mrs. Shorter's story focused on the mindset and how these ideologies on race and racism will be challenging to combat, especially in the school setting. Her doubts about the eradication of discrimination are expressed when she stated, "I feel like white people don't believe that black children are educable, and because of that mindset, they feel like they really don't deserve to be in school, and then if they do anything, then they should receive consequences, which means they shouldn't be in that space" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Taylor (1991) believes that teachers retain negative racial stereotypes and prejudices that black students are frequently at risk for adverse school outcomes. From this, I see that Shorter believes that racist mindsets are the reason why African American kids are labeled as troubled and are more susceptible to harsher consequences, including suspensions and expulsions.

Mrs. Shorter further articulates that it's the personal attitudes that are the driving force for racism in her educational experiences. For African American students, this is a common everyday experience. She questions the idea of racism and mindset by asking, "how can a

teacher or administrator, who probably feels these black kids shouldn't be here anyway, provide

services to keep them in the building learning?" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10,

2020). Shorter's beliefs are also prevalent when she reflects on the non-existent culturally

relevant curriculum. She stated, "I noticed that teachers didn't have relationships with their

students, nor did they have rigorous instruction" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10,

2020). In her interview, she discussed how she visited a teacher's science classroom, and he

refused to display African American scientists on the wall. She said that she was completely

stunned about how teachers, whose student population is mostly African American and Hispanic,

fail to display something as simple as minority scientists to raise connectivity amongst the

content area and their students. Her analysis aligns with the idea of this tenet as being so natural

that racism can most times be invisible to most individuals (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Taylor, 1998,

2009). Mrs. Shorter believes that although this may not completely dismiss negative behaviors in

the classroom, it would show that race is valued across the contents and may improve student

morale.

Interest Convergence

Restorative justice practices within the school setting have been defined as programs that

focus on reducing delinquent behaviors through activities and interventions (Karp & Breslin,

2001). Mrs. Shorter questions the premise of restorative practices as a means of control and

restoring students to a culture in which they have no access, and that culture is based on

Whiteness and White power structure. She stated, "how are we supposed to restore our students

to a school community that they were never part of? What does this look like, and what are we really trying to restore them to be?" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Mrs. Shorter's data aligned with the ideologies of interest convergence in CRT, in which minority's interest in achieving racial equality advances only when those interests "converge" with the interest of the dominant culture (Bell, 1980; Brown & Jackson, 2013; Taylor, 2009).

Though the lack of funding that limits access to supports as well as restorative practices with unclear restoration procedures, Mrs. Shorter believes that the boom for restorative interventions was designed to assist white kids more while controlling black and brown students. Townsend (2000) asserts, "school personnel must revisit rules and expectations that serve only to impose control over students' lives, as opposed to more meaningful codes that will influence students' quality of life" (p. 385). Crenshaw et al. (1995) posit, "Whiteness is an aspect of racial identity surely, but it is much more, it remains a concept based on relations of power, a social construct predicated on white dominance and black subordination" (p. 287). This sense of power provides access to equality, property, neutrality, and rights (Crenshaw et al., 1995; add more).

Mrs. Shorter pushes the envelope further when she states, "when districts have "resources," I want to know what they are using, what are they doing; I would really like to know this because I think without any cultural competency or cultural relevancy in the interventions, how can we truly restore our students, if there is such a thing. To me, it's like, so they want our kids to act like their kids, right?" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Taylor (1998) asserts that white people in the United States have sacrificed People of

Color's well-being for economic self-interests and their continued subordination. Ladson-Billings (2013) refers to this convergence as "alignment, not altruism" (p. 38). Mrs. Shorter's attitude towards the premise of restorative practices, the alternative to punitive consequences, as a means of African American children assimilating to the dominant culture's ideology of proper behavior.

Mrs. Shorter questions the act's reliance on restorative justice as a means of alignment and the lack of culturally relevant interventions that would specifically target African American students' cultural, social, and economic needs in her middle school. She stated, "how can we actually compare the outcomes of restorative practices in white schools and say, oh, this works. The interventions they utilize in their school are far different from what we would use in our schools. We have a different population of students, and they have different needs. How can we honestly say that these practices are culturally relevant when our students' culture is different from theirs. Our students' experiences in the community are different. How can we actually look at this practice as something that does not represent assimilation? Justice looks different between the cultures; restoration looks different between the cultures" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Lustick (2017) posits that if justice never existed, it can never be restored.

Intersectionality

Critical race theorist defined intersectionality as the belief that an individual's race and other subordinate traits such as (class, gender, etc.) intersect to influence their lived experience (Kumasi, 2011; Bartlett &Brayboy, 2005; Jones, et al., 2014; Lynn& Adams, 2002; McCabe,

2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Mrs. Shorter's ideas on oppression in terms of intersectionality are also visible in her argument that the school is located in a low socioeconomic community. Lack of funding prohibited students from having readily available resources that would help combat disruptive behaviors. The National Center of Education Statistics (2000b) found that communities, where student poverty was minimal, received higher district funding than communities that reported higher levels of student poverty rates. Budget, race, and misbehavior have an impact on students in low socioeconomic districts.

Fabelo et al. (2011) posited, "when the relationship of socioeconomic status to disproportionality in the discipline has been explored directly, race continues to make a significant contribution…independent of socioeconomic status." This explanation for the lack of funding highlights how racism is permanent. School districts in high-poverty areas will continue to lag behind affluent communities because their whiteness is more meaningful than black and brown populations. Mrs. Shorter's story highlights the inequities of funding that prevent her students from receiving quality resources based on their zip code. She stated, "we do have our social workers in place, but to me, that's not enough! We need more supports to ensure that our students are being serviced and that they are getting the tools and strategies necessary to not only not engage in disruptive behaviors but also to find out what the triggers are to self-regulate themselves. We are missing these systems" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). She believes that this is the piece that students need because they need someone to listen to them.

Mrs. Shorter argues that until the mindset towards racism and oppression is changed, no matter the number of resources, African American students will continue to face prejudices in the school system. Through policies, perspectives, rhetoric, and lack of funding, she believes African American students will be penalized not only because of their skin color but the location of their zip codes.

Commitment to Social Justice

Mrs. Shorter's commitment to social justice was also prevalent throughout her narrative. She explained how, before the actual implementation of P.A.99-0456, she attended listening tours to try to get ahead of the game because she believed that suspensions do not work for African American students. Therefore, after attending town hall meetings, she directed her administration team to create behavioral matrices that outlined alternative consequences to suspensions and other punitive actions. They also allowed for student voices to be heard. If a student was to receive discipline, her team created a form that allowed the student to tell their side of the story. This enabled the administration team to cross to analyze the teacher and student accounts of the incident. She did admit, however, that the discipline culture remained chaotic because of teacher and community buy-in.

She credits P.A. 99-0456 for opening the dialogue for more communication. She stated, "It forced us to communicate more with the students, if that's not weird, really listening to them more and to make them talk more to each other" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Through this acknowledgment of voice, Mrs. Shorter stated that they also ensured that

those facing consequences also had access to chances for improvement. She believes that if the student has to face the consequences, it is a decision made between the administration, teacher, student, and parent.

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

CRT's tenets, the permanence of racism and interest convergence, commitment to social justice, and intersectionality were utilized to identify how forms of institutional racism are embedded in this policy as well as structures that influence how P.A. 99-0456 is implemented in this low socioeconomic middle school community. Mrs. Shorter appreciates the act's essential goal, which is keeping African American students in school when facing behavioral issues. However, the goals are questioned as she analyzes the processes of this act. Her arguments support the permanence of racism, which suggests that the lack of funding and a negative mindset are significant inequity sources. She believes that if the mindset is set on racism, no matter the resources, African American students will never gain access to behavioral supports because the expectations of their behaviors are embedded in those that service them, negating away from best practices and more so on the old regiment, which includes suspensions and expulsions.

In alignment with interest convergence, Mrs. Shorter also focuses on the notion that the idea of supports for behavioral concerns for African American students only stemmed from the idea that white schools were experiencing a need for behavioral support services. Therefore, the act services their school community more so than the black community. For African American

students to be deemed acceptable, behavioral interventions align them to the dominant community, which, she asserts, are not culturally relevant to the student's culture. These inadequate interventions will cause more harm than good. Until these issues are addressed within this act, the cycle of restoration will benefit those who are intentionally ensuring that black students receive minimal supports and services.

Intersectionality lies within her explanation of how the race of her students and their low socioeconomic status is why the inequities are present in the first place. She reflects on the inconsistencies of funding between her community and affluent white communities and their abundance of resources to provide behavioral services. The most crucial concept Mrs. Shorter portrays is that race and socioeconomic status work together for policies of oppression to present themselves in the educational setting. She indicates that impoverished African American students will still be below the curve, even in comparison to poor white students.

Her fight for social justice was the art of taking the initiative to implement specific components of the act that she felt would deem success within her building. Mrs. Shorter highlighted her work with creating matrices that focused on alternatives to suspensions. She did admit that this caused chaos within her building but expressed that her students had a voice. The open communication this created for the students and their parents paved the way for the village to improve school behavior.

Mrs. Shorter has a deep connection with the Turner-Bozeman school community. She was raised in the neighboring community, Yatesville, in which both communities share similar

demographics. Mrs. Shorter and I share similarities as we are both from the same community, Yatesville. Our education experience differs, as most of Mrs. Shorter's career in education stemmed around the administration. Her rich expertise gave a different insight into education. As I interviewed Mrs. Shorter, she showed an extreme passion for African American students and the ability to achieve at high levels. Mrs. Shorter has always expressed how being an African American female leader was difficult, as people didn't take her seriously when it came to decision making. She expressed this was why she attended the listening tours for the new policy that was going to be implemented. She said, "If I am going to be the administrator that presents such controversial policy to my staff, I have to know what it is and be ready to answer any questions that my staff may have" (Mrs. Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020).

Mrs. Shorter admitted that her biggest failure was not encompassing complete buy-in from the staff. However, Mrs. Shorter did acknowledge that altering the mindset is the most challenging task. She admitted that some of her teachers had an attitude that harped on students being suspended and that they didn't deserve any chances. This is because they didn't take the time to build relationships with their students and only saw them as a means of receiving a paycheck.

As we concluded our interview, I thanked her for taking the time to discuss her thoughts on P.A. 99-0456. She laughed and said it is sad that we didn't have a seminar or something that went into detail. She stated that most of her colleagues know about it based on what is on the internet. She also admitted that administrators have ways around this policy, but when I asked

her to elaborate, she laughed it off, saying there is always a way. However, she did thank me for allowing her a platform for expressing her concerns about the policy. She said, "You are on to something here, and it is going to be interesting to see what others have to say." I smiled and pressed stop on my voice recorder.

Mr. Michaels

I was introduced to Mr. Michaels through a former colleague who was familiar with my research study. Mr. Michaels is a former administrator in my research site, so I contacted him because I knew that his participation in my research would produce a wealth of information. Upon my contact with Mr. Michaels, I briefly introduced myself and my research premises, and he was eager to participate. We initially scheduled a face-to-face meeting for the interview. Still, unfortunately, the world was hit with the Covid-19 Pandemic, halting the interviewing process for not only Mr. Michaels but all of my participants. Due to his current status as a middle school administrator, I had to wait a few weeks for him to handle the crisis at his own institution, including e-learning preparation and planning, stay-at-home orders from the governor, and homeschooling arrangements for his own two children. We eventually were able to arrange a Zoom Conference to complete the interviewing process.

Mr. Michaels' interview reminded me of the realities of life at this moment in time, a technical program that could somehow replace the traditions of in-person conversations. He was positioned at his kitchen table, and I could see the cream-colored kitchen curtains hanging behind him. He had on a blue hooded sweatshirt that represented his current school building. As he adjusted the audio for our Zoom meeting, I could hear two young voices in the background, playing so freely, not truly understanding what was going on outside of the house in which they lived. Then it came, the "daddy look," and the volume of the little voices subsided. He had the "Oh, you saw that" expression on his face, smiled, and gave an "I'm sorry about that" apology.

As we exchanged our greetings, we began sharing small talk about Covid-19 and our fears with the educational system. We also shared our experiences with the day that our District Office leaders decided to close, and the rush for E-Learning and Tech packages to supply to the students and their families began. He again expressed how honored he was to help me. At this moment, I began to inform Mr. Michaels of my research study while giving some background information about myself. I also shared why I felt this research was essential and how his input is beneficial to my study's purpose. He smiled and again expressed that he was eager to participate in my research. I pressed the record button, and then he began to tell his story.

Mr. Michaels' Story

I started my career in education began about thirteen years ago. I started as a TA for the Special Education program and General Ed, then I became a teacher, teaching Math in the elementary school setting. Six years ago, I decided to take a walk on the dark side and become an administrator. I felt like I had a good handle on classroom management and instruction, so it was time for me to take my skillset to a building level. When I look back on my experiences with school discipline as a teacher, though, it was easier because I only dealt with one group of students. If I did have any issues, it was all about the write-up and sending those kids who had discipline issues that could not be handled in class to the office for the administration to handle. Unlike some of my colleagues, I didn't like that because I believed that sometimes, this took away my power as a teacher, so in these situations, I limited office visits for my students. I felt that if it was my job as the teacher to handle it with the student and their parents, I had more control of my classroom, students, and actions.

In reflecting on student discipline and consequences, my students often received consequences such as a phone call home, detention, or in-school or out of school suspension. If they were involved in any physical altercations, such as fighting, they would automatically receive a ten-day suspension, and any work given during that time would be marked as a zero (no credit). Honestly, as I look back on those disciplinary practices, they were not fair to the students. In my opinion, the school was overly punitive, especially for African American students. That is why I took matters into my own hands and just dealt with my classroom behaviors because I just wanted my students in the building learning. I also knew that as a future administrator, I had to think differently about discipline as well.

When I reflect on my approach to discipline as an administrator before implementing the Act, our team put our school and our students in the best position to have a safe environment and feel comfortable learning. When reflecting on my first two years as an administrator, there was always a hierarchy of consequences, of course! I also have to be mindful of students with IEP's (Individualized Educational Plans) to make fair and proper decisions. This hierarchy of consequences included a first offense that may coincide with a warning, and the second offense may include a phone call or etcetera. Then there were some incidences where we would skip over certain steps and immediately forge towards the ten-day suspensions. I know that middle schoolers are in a phase where they are maturing, and a lot of decisions they make don't make sense. But certain behaviors…certain things, call for certain reactions, so I always based it on what the kid did. This is where it could get a little sticky and become inconsistent. This is why I think they implemented the new law to combat these inconsistencies. Administrative decisions of

discipline were too admin heavy, in my opinion, and took power away from our support teams and teachers.

When Senate Bill 100 was created, it is my understanding that is was based on data that was received, they felt that it was a lot of unfair treatment, and they felt like kids were being dismissed from school... for lack of better words... for ridiculous reasons and it wasn't any… There were no incidences and things that were done before a kid received consequences on what they had to be suspended. So, this rule was kind of put in place to place emphasis on making sure that as a school, you have interventions in place before suspensions are levied. Those interventions could be anything from conferences, detentions, lunch detentions, after school detentions, counseling from the social workers. So just… it tries to give the opportunity for a wide variety of interventions before the thought of suspension is put in place. So that's really the gist of what the act is. However, it is definitely a mindset shift when it comes to discipline these days, and this new law caused a lot of confusion amongst my staff at that time.

When I became the principal of the middle school, we were in the full implementation phase, yet we still had some issues. You have to understand that there are teachers in the building who are old school, so they were still questioning the process and why kids were not being "reprimanded." I still had to make sure that there's a realistic understanding of what the act is and not how people hear the act. So automatically, when you hear the act, you assume, oh, a kid can't be suspended. That's the automatic assumption that as a school, as administrators, you can't consequence a student, and that's not the case. So, for me, it was more of just making sure

that we had a clear understanding that the support given from the administrative positions to teachers had a lot to do with the teachers holding their end of the bargain.

It's all about a shift of the mind. This takes time! I get that some people have a way of disciplining their own kids, like, I really don't believe in giving chances, whatever I tell you to do, you do it. No questions asked! But, with the change of procedures, it's like, so if there's an expectation that a student must adhere to, and so forth, okay, what have you (the teacher) done up until this point, to redirect this student or help this student get back on the right track. And if you can't provide five or more instances of interventions, then there's really no conversation about why the student needs to be suspended. So that was kind of my directives that I wanted with the staff is that we are clear on what the expectations are across the board, not just from an administrative position because yes, there are times where we'd have to make a lot of different decisions that staff will never understand or know about. But what I need them to know is that they are accountable. They are just as responsible for the student's maturation as we are.

They have to be willing to go above and beyond in some aspects to say that they've done these multiple things for it to be sufficient enough to move to that next step. Some of my teachers did not like this at all because they were like, so now we gotta do extra work. It was crazy, but they had to understand that it was necessary. I don't know if they thought that things would change and go back to the old way of doing things because I was the new administrator, but it's like, no, the work must continue!

You have to remember that this mind shift for discipline was on a district level as well. With the…the exciting thing about being an administrator, or a building administrator is that you also have to… Is that you also have to correlate decisions with district-level administrators as well. At times it can be difficult to agree on certain things because, as a building administrator, you are in the fire every day. As a district administrator, they hear about things, but they are not there every day to actually know what's occurring. Don't get me wrong; our district administrator is hands-on, but some disagreements happen from that level regarding what I would believe the consequences should be. But in the same regard, I do think that there has been a…The one thing that I would say that I've noticed from a student perspective, is that there's been an understanding or sense of understanding that they will be provided an opportunity to curb behaviors, especially minor ones and for the most part, they do a pretty good job of doing that. There are also the students that will take advantage of that because they know that it kind of has to happen that way, so they'll take advantage of that because they know they have to be given chances.

From a staff perspective, I've noticed that teachers are more, I would say that they are more hands-on with trying to handle certain things themselves instead of giving it to administrators because that is again part of their responsibility. However, there is still a push back. Classroom management is what it is, and it's called classroom management for a reason. When it gets to an administrator, when it gets to the administrator's desk, it should be where, there it was done where it was tried, or tried to be managed in the classroom. And suppose it wasn't and these things were done, and it hasn't worked, then yes. In that case, we can move on

to the next thing, so what I've noticed is that teachers are taking more responsibility and improving their classroom management skills, which we all know having classroom management correlates to some good things academically as well. So, I would say that some of them have made an effort to improve their classroom management skills, so it has made a difference.

So, it has changed me in a sense. It has changed the entire building in a sense, and I credit my approach to this new shift in dealing with discipline. It was more about having those discussions and having a clear understanding of what this means. So, they have their responsibilities that they know needs to be taken care of. So, they know that parent contacts need to be had; they know that there needs to be some time to spend with the students. If a student is acting up in your class and not acting up in anybody else's class, that tells you a little something about what needs to happen with you; you need to take a stronger stance on what your expectations are in your class. And then think about what you are presenting to the student, like is it fair? Does the student feel like they are maybe fairly addressed in your room like you treat individual students differently from you do them, and that's why they act out? It causes you to think about how your room is, what is the culture of your classroom? So along with that, we have our…We have social workers in the building, our student support team who are there to push in, there to meet teachers and ask students to have conferences about behaviors and what they can do and the plans they could put in their place to move forward. We already have our deans in the buildings as well to assist with that.

The point is, I want the teachers to be supported by our other layers before it actually gets to the top. But just being present… Like as an administrator, I'm present in the hallway every day. I'm present in classrooms. I'm present in the lunchroom as well. So just being present, having conversations with students, reiterating expectations, talking about being a better person, being a better student, all of these things coincide with the Act. So that's what helps guide it. So, it's about having that conversation with them and giving them hope, like, "Okay, these are the things that we're going to do moving forward to try to make sure that we are doing this with fidelity."

I was not an administrator at this building during the transition into P.A. 99-0456, but what I can say is that I hear from the teachers that this is what they were already doing already. I will say that sure, we are working with a few supports in the building, but I don't look at our building as going through a transition. Many of the things that the Act called for, we were doing, kind of. So, what the Act just…What the act really did was, it just placed the focus on what the things that we were doing and what it really meant. Thanks to the previous administration, it wasn't like none of this stuff was going on, now we got to come from ground zero and make a whole new hierarchy and make a whole new… How do we do this step-by-step? We didn't have to do that. We just had to refine what we already had and define what that meant. So, a lot of things we were already doing. We already had it…like certain incidentals in place…The things that we look at as incidentals, we have them in place already. But it was more so like, "Where's the documentation?" So, if anything, if anything, the process in it became, it was more thorough documentation on what was done. And that just came through the different behavior systems that

we use; we document it in our discipline system. This was one of the biggest struggles because this also took a lot of work and a lot of tracking, which our staff was not used to doing.

With all of this, you have to understand that there are pros and cons to this thing, and our staff knew that I acknowledged it as well. I will say that this Act makes us more accountable for the decisions that we make. I think that it helps assist in some of the disparities that have taken place because… I mean, it's happening. We know that there are clear disparities in discipline, especially with our African American students. Is it not even just the boys anymore, you understand? So that's not anything that anybody could really fight or justify that it's not true. We know that it's definitely true. So, it does help to know the disparities to an extent. I think it also assists with students. It helps us, as administrators, to kind of relate more to students. You get a more global feeling of who the student is. Like what are they actually going through internally and externally because those things are really what drives behaviors? So, I think that the positive thing with this Act is it forces you to be more thoughtful. If I could generalize the positive piece, it forces you to be more thoughtful in your…in what you do. So yeah, I mean, that's what I will say from the positive side.

The concerns are that…I will say the cons are that if you really don't take the time to understand it, then you're going to… it's going to come with some combative behaviors, from the students, from the teachers, and the community. This really doesn't have to do with the Act itself, but if we don't take the time as administrators to really talk about what the Act means, your staff will feel that they are not supported. Understand that I came in as the administrator

149

after the implementation process (although I feel like we are still implementing it), but I don't think I did such a great job in doing that because there really wasn't a lot of resources to support it. This was really out of my hands, but as the building principal, staff members look at me as if I am the one making those big decisions, and a true leader will bite the bullet and not shift the blame right? I mean, yeah, we got the extra bodies in the building, but there was still this, so what now a culture in the building, because it's like, we have been doing this for years, and we have not seen much progress.

Plus, I still had many ole-school teachers in my building, vets, who are used to the old way of handling discipline and are looking at this "new way" and saying, this is not working. The frustration levels now are tremendous, and they look to administrators as "Here, you fix it. I come to teach, not deal with these behaviors." It was a battle because they were not interested in any interventions. They felt interventions were putting more work on them. It was like, "If I'm teaching and disciplining, then what the hell are you doing?" I'm like, "Hey, you all are doing this already." So yeah, it was definitely a struggle. Like, I tell my staff all the time, there are things that come down that even I don't really agree with as an administrator, but it's my job to uphold it. I have to do it. Whether you agree with it or not, it's really not what we're battling right now.

What we're trying to get to the point of right now is, do you understand what we're asking you to do in regards to that? It became problematic for all of us because it's like, so are we consistent, and how is that measured? Then I had to ask myself, was my staff really trained

on this? That was their biggest complaint. They had no training on restorative practices and distribution of interventions so I was asking a lot from them. Yeah, we had open discussions but were they really prepared? There was no guide in how to do this. These were the issues that were not covered in the documents. Again, this goes back to the funding issue. I didn't have the budget to bring in these resources to ensure that my staff was adequately addressing the behaviors they were facing. We talked about the frustrations, but again, I can't really say, oh, restorative justice really worked here, or this is where we can improve because it wasn't in the budget. I can say that my staff was frustrated with the behaviors and my data reflected this lack of training.

Also, I saw behaviors increase, but our suspension rates decreased. Kids are much smarter than adults sometimes give them credit for. So, I think kids who have that kind of conniving type of attitude…they know they have to be or they are going to be worked with. So, they will do things because they know they are going to be worked with. They know that suspension is not something that is the first option, so they push the envelope. Some don't tend to take it seriously, like your level 3 students; those are the ones that have learned how to play the system. They know that, oh, I can get away with this, or I can get away with that, so they act out. Some do have legit diagnoses that they can't control, but others just play the system, so I think that this has somehow empowered them to act out. I have definitely seen an increase in behaviors because it's contagious. The kids talk, and they watch. They see kids fighting and return to class, and there it goes. They see kids disrespecting the teacher and return to class, and there it goes. They see misbehaviors in the hall, and there it goes. So, our culture has shifted.

Now we are getting kids who want to test the waters. They don't see the interventions that occur. They just see their friends returning to class, and it starts. Yes, I believe the interventions are essential, but they do not combat these behaviors as I expected them to.

This also makes me think of the parents and how the Act doesn't really talk much about how the parents are involved. Again, it's a school to school basis, but it's like, so how are they being held accountable? I mean, a good administrator knows that you have to have a good relationship with your parents. It helps you as an administrator to do what you have to do regularly. You will always have parents who disagree with what you are saying, but the ultimate goal is for the majority to feel that you have the best interest at heart for their child. But as for the Act, it seems like a lot of the responsibility falls on the school as a whole. Do I think our parents at the time were well versed on the Act, no. We did hold parent meetings that talked about it, but the attendance was meager. Some parents really don't know what it really means; they just think oh, the kids can't get suspended. Some parents said, "Oh yeah, they're always making new laws, I don't need to show up for that. I ain't trying to hear nothing about that." But then, as the year went on, some of those parents who had students with excessive behaviors thought, oh, maybe I should pay attention now. But again, the Act seems to dismiss the role of the parent and how they could assist in curbing these behaviors. We get the parents who even block the school's number so that if something happens, we cannot contact them. It's like seriously, so how do we stay consistent if this is taking place? We do have parents who have a good understanding, but again, it is a struggle.

I think this Act means well, but there are a lot of components missing, and if you really think about it, it's really hard to say it's effective. I wouldn't go as far as saying that this Act perpetuates institutional racism because when I think of institutional racism, I think of disparities. These disparities run deeper than the Act. These disparities run in the community with funding based on property taxes and so forth. So, what does this mean for the African American community? Right! The policies surrounding funding is a big one as affluent districts are allocated more money per student. So, you already know that means they have more resources and along with the money is the attitude! It's like, white kids are worth more than our kids, so they have the resources to ensure that they are kept in the school, while we have to figure it out with the limited resources that we have. This whole attitude about our kids goes deeper than suspensions, and I believe that institutional racism is the reason for this Act coming into existence. But if you think about it, it's going to always be this way. It's going to always be where students in poverty-stricken areas will receive less funding, which makes them have restricted access to resources that could probably help them end the cycle. But this inequity is going to always exist, even with how the students are being consequenced.

Think about it, you have white districts whose students usually get a slap on the wrist or the behaviors are swept under the rug. It usually doesn't end in suspensions, but the black and brown students receive harsher punishments for the same behaviors. I think the Act has good intentions. I believe it forces teachers and administrators to take a different approach and reaction to the behaviors. I don't think the Act is depressing black or brown students to an extent. However, I believe that it gives black and brown kids a false sense of the real world and reality

153

for their behaviors. First of all, there are certain behaviors that are not in any way ok, where interventions are necessary, but our interventions don't match the real world that our kids come from. So, it's like, we have don't have anything that is culturally relevant. How can our students relate to something that wants them to denounce who they are or their upbringing? I think that's where we fail them. Like is it really restoring or replacing, restructuring or renovating? Can interventions really help them if they don't fit the bill? I'm just saying!

For example, if a kid brings drugs or guns into my school, are there really interventions that can help them? Probably not, especially if this behavior stems from the family environment. At that point, it's more about protecting the hundreds of kids that didn't bring the drugs or the weapon. Is there something my social workers can do to help with these behaviors? To an extent, but again, if the student is released back into the family that encourages these behaviors, then our hands are tied. At the end of the day, am I going to keep this kid in a learning environment, only to make it unstable for other learners? I do know in these situations, the Act ensures that the student can attend an alternative learning environment if they are caught in these incidences, and I do like how they work their way back into their original learning environment. So, then I'm left asking myself, what is the real message behind this? Is this helping or harming them?

However, what the Act also lacks is resources and funding. I believe the lack of professional development hindered the continuation process from my teachers. We had open discussions, but again, my teachers did not get professional developments, such as Restorative Practices or anything that coincides with this new approach. Therefore, some of our in-place

procedures were not consistent, and fidelity was questioned. Hiring was also a concern. I was fortunate enough to be in a district that can provide some supports… In other words, we received social workers, but there are other forms of interventionist and specialists that could assist in our attempt to combat behaviors we faced daily. We just didn't have the funding to support this, and it limited the staff that was hired for these pertinent services.

I also think about other districts that don't have the money to hire additional staff or pay for additional professional development? Then what? I believe that an affluent district has way more resources to deal with these situations and have the funding for professional developments and programs for their youth with behavioral concerns. For districts that don't have the resources, this Act becomes rhetoric, and students are being removed from the environment through suspensions because it's cheaper to do so. Or worse, these districts are not recording these incidences so they can keep their numbers down. In the end, students are not receiving the help that they need. It's all a facade. In this instance, we are right back to square one.

In the real world and looking at policies or even getting hired, certain rules and behaviors can lead to termination. I look at this act the same way; there are minor behaviors, like skipping class. Yes, instead of suspending a kid for skipping class, we as a school have an obligation to figure out what is going on with the student. I believe this Act remedies consequences for minor behaviors, like grades and etc. Like you stealing from their employer, behaviors that spill into the real world means they don't want you working for them. There are no interventions at the job;

you are fired! No questions asked. You get caught with a weapon or drugs on the job, and there are no interventions.

I feel like this Act is good for minor consequences, but I don't think it is 100% effective for the heavy hitters. Accountability is not clearly defined here. Who is really being held accountable for student behavior? It should not just fall on the school. It should not just fall on what is happening from the entry bell to the dismissal bell. Our kids need help, and they are crying out for a solution. Don't get me wrong, the Act has good relevance, but we need to continue to shift what we are trying to do. It's definitely not the solution, but it's a start in trying to build a system that could positively impact the majority of the students.

Mr. Michaels' Story through the CRT Framework

Taylor (2009) defines CRT as the theoretical framework that "examines the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources along political, economic, racial and gendered lines" (p. 1). In this study, CRT was applied to analyze Mr. Michaels' data. Through his narrative, Mr. Michaels also challenged the racist institutional structures that he felt lay within the P.A.99-0456 framework. In my analysis and coding, I found four tenets of CRT that repeatedly emerged in Mr. Michaels' counter-story: the permanence of racism, intersectionality, and critique of liberalism. Based on his accounts and experiences, I believe these tenets were fluid throughout his narrative to provide an explanation on why institutional racism hinders this disciplinary policy to produce the results it was designed during his years as an administrator at Turner Bozeman Middle School.

Intersectionality and Permanence of Racism

The tenets of intersectionality and permanence of racism were combined here due to both Mr. Michaels' response to intersectionality issues of race, class, and funding. Crenshaw (1989) defined intersectionality as the intersection between race and other subordinate classifications (such as gender and class) discrimination. In alignment with this analysis, Mr. Michaels' concerns with funding also focused not only on the racial aspect but also on the community's socioeconomic status. He stated, "the policies surrounding funding is a big one as affluent districts are allocated more money per student, so you already know that means they have more resources" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). He defines resources based not solely on monetary but also on professional development for teachers and support staff and programs and outsourced services for youths in need of behavioral support. Mr. Michaels pushes the envelope further to suggest that this form of racism is blatant because they are explicitly saying that white students are more valuable than African American students.

Jackson & Persico (2015) assert that money matters in education, and students of poverty who attend schools in better-funded schools earn higher wages and have lower poverty chances as an adult. With school funding, districts rely on federal and state funding and local revenue sources, which are property taxes. According to Gartner (2019), property tax revenue to support schools "reinforces inequity by ensuring that wealthier communities have better-funded schools." This perpetuation of inequity mirrors the tenet of the permanence of racism, the idea that racism is interwoven into the fabric of American society. Moreover, Knoff (2020) posits that

157

school districts in "high poverty white communities receive one hundred fifty dollars less per student than the national average, but still receive fifteen hundred dollars more than high poverty non-white school districts." Mr. Michaels believes that these inequities provide affluent districts the privilege to maintain power and wealth, while poverty-stricken communities preserve the status of the subordinate. He stated, "…but if you think about it, it's going to always be this way. It's going to always be where students in poverty-stricken areas will receive less funding, which makes them have restricted access to resources that could probably help them end the cycle" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

The intersectionality of race and class speaks to the inequities with funding and its negative effect on quality teacher training programs and professional development opportunities for teachers in low socioeconomic districts and those minority teachers who wind up teaching in those schools. This lack of training puts teachers at a deficit when attempting to combat disruptive behaviors. Mr. Michaels asserts, "I had to ask myself, was my staff really trained on this…they had no training on restorative practices and distributions of behavioral intervention, so I was asking a lot from them" (Michaels', personal communication, April 29, 2020). Knoff (2020) asserts that "these high poverty schools have fewer resources than middle and upper-class districts and have less access to the needed multi-tiered academic, social, emotional, and behavioral services, supports, programs, and interventions." In some instances, some students may need immediate supports at the onset of the school year, and funding may limit access to these services.

Critique of Liberalism

Although critical race scholars challenge the concepts of this tenet: color blindness, race neutrality, equal opportunity, meritocracy, objectivity, and incremental change, they act as a "camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of the dominant groups in U.S. society (p. 473). Mr. Michaels centered his argument on this tenet when he discussed the lack of culturally relevant interventions. He asserts, "First of all, there are certain behaviors that are not in any way ok, where interventions are necessary, but our interventions don't match the real world that our kids come from" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). Worthington et al., 2008, suggest that colorblindness in the presence of race fails to consider the permanence of racism as an issue. Mr. Michaels reflects on longing for interventions that support the students' internal and external needs because he believes this is what drives behaviors.

The lack of culturally relevant interventions could be considered ineffective when applied to African American students. Mr. Michaels believes that the interventions give his students a false sense of how the real world will respond to them in different circumstances. He focuses on their future by stating, "In the real world and looking at policies or even getting hired, certain rules and behaviors can lead to termination. There are no interventions at the job; you are fired! No questions asked" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). Because their use of interventions is not culturally relevant, Mr. Michaels insists that these interventions are suitable for students in other communities or those in his school who may experience minor consequences. Decuir and Dixson (2004) supports Mr. Michaels' claim by articulating, "color

159

blindness ignores that inequity, opportunity, and oppression are historical artifacts that will not easily be remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society" (p. 29).

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

CRT's tenets, the permanence of racism, intersectionality, commitment to social justice, and critique of liberalism were utilized to identify how forms of institutional racism are embedded in this policy as well as structures that influence how P.A. 99-0456 is implemented in this low socioeconomic middle school community. As permanence of racism and intersectionality combined in the data, Mr. Michaels believes that the disparities of school funding are the means of perpetuating inequities in his middle school. Throughout his narrative, he focused on how his students and staff would benefit if the budget were on an equal playing field. He argued that funding would provide the necessary resources for teacher training and professional opportunities, more support services for students who are experiencing disruptive or trauma behaviors, and proper community supports that enhance the learning community of Turner Bozeman Middle school. He firmly believes that as long as high poverty districts lack funding, the cycle of disproportionate access to resources will continuously plague the community, leaving African American kids to fight a battle they were destined to lose based on their race and socioeconomic status.

At the end of the interview, Mr. Michaels did express that he was nervous about becoming an administrator and continuing the act's implementation process. He said that when he had a listening tour with the teachers, they expressed their concerns about how this would

continue. He was also concerned with the staff's lack of knowledge about the act and their lack

of motivation in utilizing interventions. He stated, "But I get it, and I get why they feel the way

they do, this act needs some work and right now, it's not working, no matter how we try to put

some positivity on it, right now, it's just not working" (Michaels, personal communication, April

29, 2020).

Before we ended our interview, he thanked me for allowing him to participate and then

asked me was I nervous about receiving any backlash for my research. I hesitated to answer but

then told him that I am doing this for my community. Although I am a product of the

neighboring community, I feel we have to find a way to ensure that our students are prepared for

what lies ahead. He smiled and said if there was anything else I needed to let him know. We said

our goodbyes, and I press stop on my voice recorder.

DO LIKE MINDS THINK ALIKE? ADMINISTRATORS THEMES

Three administrators, each serving in different eras of the implementation process,

exhibited similar sentiments about the disciplinary policy that was created to combat disruptive

behavior and decrease suspensions and expulsions of African American students. From Mr.

Hudson, Mrs. Shorter, and Mr. Michaels' narrative, the following themes emerged: experiences

with discipline before P.A. 99-0456, journey through implementation, good intentions with

inadequate outcomes, and instructional reconstruction or restorative racism. These themes are

reflected through their perspectives, the research literature on zero tolerance policies, as well as

their existence in local terms when it comes to policy reform on P.A. 99-0456. Whether it was a

lack of funding for their school for teacher training and student support services, racism

embedded within the mindsets of teachers and staff, or the lack of culturally responsive programs

and policies, the administrators at Turner Bozeman Middle School shared these commonalities in

their experiences and their hopes to improve quality programming in handling disruptive

behaviors within their building.

Theme 1: Experiences with discipline prior to P.A. 99-0456

The first thematic category was determined by responses related to the experiences with

discipline before P.A. 99-0456. Key factors included communal changes that influenced school

behaviors, cultural relevancy in the curriculum, punitive consequences, and displaced

empowerment amongst teachers and support staff. Table 1 (Appendix E) illustrates the responses

of the administrator participants and the highlighted common responses of the three participants.

Mr. Hudson subtly mentions the idea of white flight, a phrase used to refer to the sudden

migration of white people from areas and communities to more racially homogenous areas. He

notes that this migration influenced a change in the community. He stressed the "white flight"

syndrome, in which Grodzins (1958) defined as the need of whites to move from a neighborhood

once the limits of interracial living are exceeded. A massive influx of African American families

represented single-parent homes, absentee fathers, leaving mom to raising kids alone. He also

stated that this change in the family structure brought parents who fought against the school's

established protocols and students bucking the system because there were no established

protocols at home. Mr. Hudson admitted that although they were witnessing dramatic changes in

student behaviors, they knew there was a need for restructuring discipline policies because they were rigid and inflexible.

Mr. Hudson also reflects on the disciplinary policies prior to P.A. 99-0456 as well. He stated, "one thing that I saw as a young administrator was leaders whose focus was on just throwing kids out of school. It was like, if you don't follow the established rules that we have in place, we're just gonna put you out" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). The battle between home and school policies became prevalent in the school building as behaviors escalated, causing a need for behavioral reform with building and district policies and protocols. Mr. Hudson stressed the importance of acknowledging students as humans, something that punitive consequences failed to recognize. He stated, "we have to look at ways to be more productive so that the return on the investment is going to…it's going to proliferate a message that everybody if given or we are putting the right people in front of them, can be saved" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020).

Although Mrs. Shorter discusses her teaching role with discipline as a collaborative experience, leaning more so on her colleagues for assistance, she asserts that discipline correlated more with curricular relatability. She stated, "Here are all of the things if I'm doing; I shouldn't have problems in my classroom because I had rigorous instruction. I had culturally responsive instruction, and I had things related to real-world experiences" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Mrs. Shorter believed that this is how she kept her students engaged and had menial amounts of disciplinary issues in her room.

However, her administrative experiences were quite different. She emphasized that her early years as an administrator reflected more punitive consequences for students. She asserts, "if students were disruptive or fighting, I would admit that I was that administrator that gave ten-day suspensions; that was just what we did to tone down the behaviors. I know I was harsher before SB 100" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Her attitude about suspensions remained constant when she entered middle school as well. Mrs. Shorter reflected on her practices with the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, yet she admits these practices as chaotic. She stated that many teachers sent students out of the classroom for disruptive as well as non-disruptive behaviors.

Mr. Michaels reflected on his teaching career and discussed how punitive the experience was for students. He stated, "As I look back on those disciplinary practices, they were not fair to the students, and that is why I took matters into my own hands and just dealt with the behaviors in my classroom because I wanted my students in the building learning" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). Mr. Michaels recalls a time when students were written up and suspended by the office on several occasions. He also noted that fighting and other physical altercations warranted ten-day suspensions. He credited his ability to maintain control of his classroom and felt that his journey into administration would be a smooth transition based on his success with classroom management.

As an administrator, he kept that mindset and ensured that the students' safety was the number one priority. Yet, the consequences he utilized for combatting behaviors reflected the

punitive approach. He stated, "there were some incidences where I would skip over certain steps and immediately forge towards the ten-day suspensions" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). At this moment, he admitted that this approach perpetuated inconsistencies and unfair treatment. He believes that these actions were administrator-heavy and displaced empowerment amongst the teachers and other support staff. Mr. Michaels articulated that the best way to ensure that students were safe and eager to learn in his building included suspending students who threatened that culture.

Summary

The use of punitive consequences was prevalent throughout the participants' experiences with school discipline before implementing P.A. 99-0456. All three administrators discussed their experiences in dealing with disruptive behavior and its effects on the students and the community they served. They also agreed that the disciplinary processes for handling disruptive behaviors created more harm than good for African American students. Morgan et al. (2014) assert that the punitive overreach in schools transformed school as an opportunity for success into a pathway to the criminal system.

As the administrators reflected on their experiences with punitive discipline, they all highlighted their teaching experiences, yet Mrs. Shorter and Mr. Michaels' attitudes changed upon becoming administrators. Both administrators focused on school safety as the key to justifying utilizing punitive measures. Morgan et al. (2014) suggest that zero-tolerance policies were created to ensure that school environments were conducive to safety and student

productivity; however, they also admitted that these procedures caused more confusion. Mr. Hudson's attitude towards punitive consequences was reflected by community changes in family structure, hinting that social structures influence school discipline procedures. Due to these social structures, African American students are looked upon as "aggressive, sexual, dangerous, prone to violence, lacking discipline, unwilling to take responsibility for their offending behaviors" (Leiber, 2003; Tittle & Curran, 1988, p. 52). Changes in social structures influenced school policies to promote zero-tolerance procedures, which led to the use of punitive consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions. In conclusion, all administrators felt that discipline reform was needed to improve the outcomes of the students and community they serviced.

Theme 2: Processes of Implementation

The second thematic category was determined by responses related to implementation processes of the policies of P.A. 99-0456 in middle school. Key factors included the need for proactive interventions, a quest for teacher buy-in, misconceptions of implementation, and the creation of school-based procedures and practices. Table 2 (Appendix E) illustrates the administrator participants' responses and the highlighted common responses of the three participants.

Mr. Hudson's journey through the implementation process differed from Mrs. Shorter and Mr. Michaels. Mr. Hudson was the administrator of Turner Bozeman Middle School during the introductory phase of Senate Bill 100, latterly known as P.A.99-0456. He described his enthusiasm for the bill, highlighting students' benefits of utilizing restorative justice practices to

combat disruptive behaviors in the school setting. He stated, " I think that if we don't give kids second and third opportunities to develop themselves, we're taking a society of people and we're putting them away, and I just assume we, we will never get those people back" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Mr. Hudson focuses on the ideology of human capital and the importance of investing in our future generations. His belief for student restoration stemmed from childhood experiences, in which he was labeled as a child who would fail. It was through his success that he believes children have the right to resources that will provide those second chances.

Mr. Hudson credits his philosophy of education as a means of rolling out the ideas of P.A. 99-0456 to his staff at the time of his leadership. He asserts, "If you are not about the kids, God has given me an internal beacon to see it. I can feel right off the bat, and I don't care how many, how often you come in with theoretical epistemologies and educational buzzwords…I'm not impressed; what I am impressed with is your walk with children and their development" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). He noted that since he believes in the advancement of student success, he leads from the same notion. He explained how his ability to obtain teacher buy-in was a simple task because his personal beliefs of student success are immolated in his expectations of himself and his staff. He believes that you cannot expect others to do something if you are not doing it yourself. Therefore, he prides himself on "walking the walk," and he elicits that since his staff believed in his leadership, they believed in his visions of implementation.

Mrs. Shorter's walk through the implementation process was a bit different from Mr. Hudson's. Being the new administration team handling the implementation processes and creating disciplinary practices within the building and aligning support services to the guidance of the act was challenging. Mrs. Shorter acknowledges that this was the toughest part for her administrative team because there were many moving parts to the process that they were not ready for. She reflected on attending listening tours hosted by the state senator but still didn't have a good handle on the expectations for implementation. She asserts, "I know we didn't do a good job of even rolling it out to the staff because there were certain things that were supposed to be put in place, like training for the staff on why suspensions didn't work…it was difficult because our administration team was new and the mindset of the teachers changed as well" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Mrs. Shorter discussed how her team focused solely on creating practices and protocols but did not include teacher input. She admits that her focus was on the administration's role in implementation but lacked teacher buy-in.

Mrs. Shorter also discusses her misconceptions of the act, which caused the climate of the teachers to dissipate. She explained that everything she knew about the act was what the website stated but had a difficult time with implementation due to the district office being at odds with the actual document. Consequently, her team focused more on issuing alternatives to suspensions but failed to administer supports to assist with these interventions. As a result, she posits, "teachers began sending kids out of class, and they would either stand in the hallway…or we would have an office full of kids who didn't have any documentation of why they were sent to

the office" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). She articulated that not suspending students, yet having no supports for interventions created a chaotic environment.

Mr. Michaels administration transpired within the full implementation of P.A. 99-0456. Although he didn't initially "roll out" the policies in his school, he experienced issues with the processes. He admitted that the staff was fully aware that there were alternatives to suspensions, but he still had concerns with teacher buy-in. He stated, "you have to understand that there are teachers in the building who are old school, so they were still questioning the process, and why kids were not being reprimanded" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). Mr. Michaels felt that having a realistic understanding of the definition of the act and the processes of suspensions and providing interventions affected how teachers accepted the changes in how discipline was handled. He asserted, "If you can't provide five or more instances of interventions, then there's really no conversation about why the students needed to be suspended" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

He also reflected on the teachers' attitudes and their misconception of suspensions, believing that students cannot be suspended, no matter their disciplinary actions. Mr. Michaels explained that one of his major tasks was providing clear understandings of what the act suggested and how teachers and administrators were actually held accountable. Even though teachers didn't agree with these notions, he said, "they are just as accountable for the student's maturation as we are. So, they have to be willing to go above and beyond in some aspects to say

they've done these multiple things for it to be sufficient enough to move to that next step"

(Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Summary

The administrators' experiences with the implementation of P.A. 99-0456 had different

outcomes. All three administrators discussed how their approaches created a pathway for

misinterpretations and misconceptions of the policy. However, their outcomes indicated that

teacher buy-in was the challenge that caused a chaotic environment for change. Evans and Lester

(2012) articulated that "the need for structure, order, and compliance by teachers who work with

black children is often positioned as a need for safety, security, and a well-managed classroom"

(p. 223). The teachers of Turner Bozeman Middle school had a difficult time transitioning from

the punitive discipline processes, which hindered implementation and interventions.

Theme 3: Good intentions with questionable outcomes

The third thematic category was determined by the responses centered around

questionable outcomes and inconsistencies with interventions. Key factors included witnessing

an increase in student behaviors, increased usage of alternatives to suspensions, and lack of

culturally responsive interventions. Table 3 (Appendix E) illustrates the response of the

administrator participants.

Mr. Hudson believes this is the breakdown of the policy he experienced as the building

administrator in a low socioeconomic community. He posits, "the framework is good, but the

implementation and the follow-through are what we just don't have the energy to continue, to keep it rolling and the funding for full implementation" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Mr. Hudson agrees with the restorative practices that are embedded in the Act. Still, the lack of funding permits his district from proceeding with proper student services and supports and critical workshops that would assist the staff and administration in providing more suitable forms of interventions for combatting disruptive behaviors and communicative strategies for interacting with parents and the community.

This, again, led to him protesting the lack of funding that prohibits the black and brown population from having full access to the amenities that the bill promises. Moreover, without the proper professional developments, curriculum, support services, teachers are left to deal with behaviors that they cannot handle, causing the cycle of non-quality instruction to continue amongst his black and brown population of students. He stated that we have the support to diagnose the behaviors, but we don't have the funding to provide support.

Mr. Hudson focuses on the instructional aspect of this cycle while eliciting that student behaviors have also increased. Although there are systems in place, he suggests that students understand and interpret the change in disciplinary policies and are quick to increase disruptive behaviors. He stated, "The student is now realizing, hey, there is little static here when I get to school because there are no institutionalized rules that they are gonna change for me. I'm not changing to acclimate to the rules" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). He believes that the lack of adequate interventions has created mayhem and madness and believes

that if the act's implementation processes were more defined, there would be more success with disruptive behaviors in the building.

Mrs. Shorter provides details on how her administration team set up procedures and practices to ensure that the building was ready for the rollout. She notes that her team created a handbook designed to guide the consequences to ensure that students were receiving alternative consequences to suspensions. However, the teachers' frustration lay as they were left untrained, unguided, and unsatisfied with the consequences. With this procedure, Mrs. Shorter notes, "We saw an influx of disruptive behaviors and fights, and teachers were outraged. They got the union involved, and it was like, "ok, back to the drawing board. Let's look at ways in which we can come together" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020).

Mrs. Shorter also recognizes that the lack of funding halted the implementation process, one that she believes prohibits students from having access to individualized supports. She posits, "I always thought that with social workers and other specialists having access to the classroom, providing teachers with supports with conflict management, conflict resolution, and communication, this would be beneficial, but our funding doesn't allow for that" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Funding would also be significant for teacher training and professional development opportunities. She feels if teachers are trained and the school is staffed with proper supports, teachers will feel more capable of handling issues that may arise in their classrooms, empowering them to create innovative and adaptive interventions that can assist in disruptive behaviors.

Mrs. Shorter credits P.A. 99-0456 for its notion of decreasing the suspension and expulsion rates of African American students but also for creating a culture of communication and opportunities for learning more about the students and their underlying traumas. Mrs. Shorter reflects on a time that a student was always in fights. Before she suspended her, she found that the student was dealing with internal issues triggered by other students' bullying. This battle caused the student to act out, utilizing fighting to deal with the trauma. She reflects on this communication by stating, "so if I think about it…it wasn't just that situation, it was a lot of situations, then it would have only led to more incidents because the students basically are upset about whatever, and their issues are not being resolved" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020).

Mrs. Shorter believes, however, there are pitfalls to this act. Throughout her story, she discussed how funding plays a significant role in implementing P.A. 99-0456. She argues, "we do have our social workers in place, but to me, that's not enough! We need more supports to ensure that our students are being serviced and that they are getting the tools and strategies necessary to not only not engage in disruptive behaviors but to find out what the triggers are so that they can self-regulate themselves" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). Funding is also essential for providing professional development and teacher training in dealing with disruptive behaviors. Mrs. Shorter notes that there are staff members who are not equipped to deal with these behaviors. It would be beneficial to the school community if specialists in the building could assist teachers with intervention supports. She stated, "I think there should be more support around, "this is what the law says, and this is what we are doing, and here is the

funding that you may need to ensure that this is fully implemented. It's like, how can we do what we need to do for the kids when we don't have what we need in place, right?" (Shorter, personal communication, April 1, 2020).

Mr. Michaels expressed that he was the principal of Turner-Bozeman after the act's onset and implementation process but was still experiencing concerns with the continuation of the interventions and practices that the bill entails. He reflected on the attitude of the teachers and their concerns on the process of consequences for students. Mr. Michaels credits the inability to alter the mindset that has created setbacks in this disciplinary process. He stated, "I get that some people have a way of disciplining their own children, like, I personally don't believe in giving chances, and whatever I tell you to do, you do it, no questions asked! But with the change of procedures, it's like, so if there is an expectation that a student must adhere to, what have you (the teacher) done up until this point to redirect this student or help them get back on track" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020).

Mr. Michaels also reflects on the school climate and culture as an ongoing struggle for the students and the staff. He acknowledges that the lack of funding limited teacher access to restorative practice and procedures. This has led to frustration amongst his staff, which he noted, "teachers look to administrators as here you fix it. I come to teach, not deal with these behaviors" (Michaels, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Teachers are versed in the intervention process, but the lack of funding has limited student support services. Mr. Michaels expressed concern that without full implementation of support services, the students are not receiving the

support they need to succeed. This lack of services forces administrators to handle behavioral concerns, which may lead to disciplinary practices that reflect more punitive results, which negates the ideology of P.A. 99-0456.

He reflects on his biggest challenge, the increase in student behaviors. Mr. Michaels admitted that his data reflected lower levels of suspensions, but his behavioral infraction rates increased significantly. He stated, "the students know that suspension is not something that is the first option, so they push the envelope. Some don't tend to take it seriously, like your tier three students; those are the ones that have learned how to play the system. They say, oh, I can get away with this, or I can get away with that, so they act out" (Michaels, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Mr. Michaels suggests that his building's behavioral culture is off, and although interventions are meant to combat such behaviors, his building and staff have a long way to go to achieve these goals.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The administrators agreed that the act had good intentions, such as increasing the communication between students and parents; however, there were many pitfalls. The participants agreed that the implementation of the act caused more harm than good. The inequities of funding in the low socioeconomic school district were a major concern with all three administrators. Jackson et al. (2014) articulated that students in "high-poverty districts who experience a decline in spending of around ten percent would see a meaningful impact on their life outcomes" (p. 173). The administrators felt that inadequate funding limits their ability to

implement P.A. 99-0456 to its full capacity. These fiscal limits discredit the Act's intentions, causing supports to provide services to the students inadequately. Consequently, unserviced students lose access to interventions that may improve disruptive behaviors. The following excerpts highlight their experiences.

Theme 4: Instructional reconstruction or restorative racism

The fourth thematic category that emerged from the data as *if the act was a form of an instructional reconstruction or a process of restoring racism in the school setting.* Key factors included the administrator's attitude towards restorative justice practices, lack of culturally relevant interventions, and institutional racism embedded within the act. Table 4 (Appendix E) illustrates the administrator participants' responses and the highlighted common responses of the three participants.

Mr. Hudson believes that although P.A. 99-0456 has good intentions, such as providing more opportunities for a more humanistic approach to discipline, highlights his appreciation for restorative justice schools. He stated, "I look at the restorative practices that are embedded in this act, and I have subscribed one-thousand percent…in our schools, the restorative justice aspects were representative in our proactive pieces" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020).

He still believes institutional racism is embedded within the policy's implementation processes and not necessarily the act's rhetoric. He articulated, "I'm sick of laws that put nice

hairdressings on it to make it look pretty, but when you tear back the layers, and you see what's

really under it, the stench is sometimes too unbearable to even breathe in. It's just that to me; it's

just that" (Hudson, personal communication, March 26, 2020). Again, Mr. Hudson focuses on

the disproportionate allocation of funding, especially to low socioeconomic areas. This, in turn,

prohibits districts from fully implementing and providing adequate support services to the

students it serves. Without these special programs, students are left without interventions that

could curb such behaviors and eliminate disruptions that will enhance students' quality learning

environments, especially those in low socioeconomic communities.

      Mrs. Shorter does not believe that the act perpetuates racism intentionally. Although its

primary goal is to eliminate disproportionate suspensions and expulsions of black and brown

students, her concerns focus on the mindset of those who are administering these policies. She

argues, "I don't know, but it will definitely require all involved to shift the mindset of

administrators, teachers, policymakers, parents, and the community, and I don't know if this will

necessarily occur" (Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020). She believes that if the

mindset is not changed, racism will continue to be prevalent in the school system and will

eventually silence the structures of P.A. 99-0456 as if they never existed. Although she

expressed her doubts, she believes conversations about race and tackling historical events that

sustained racism's idealisms should be held. She noted, "until we all take the time to learn and

understand background information about different cultures that we work with, and stop trying to

make everybody act the same; then the work can't be done because people don't understand why

it's being done" (Mrs. Shorter, personal communication, April 10, 2020).

Restorative justice practices were also a concern for Mrs. Shorter. She believes this is where the unintentionality of racism distorts the structures of P.A. 99-0456. She questions restorative practices with wondering how are we supposed to restore our students to a school community that they are really never part of? She acknowledges that many districts are now utilizing the concepts of restorative practices, but some colleagues in other districts are reporting that it is not effective.

Mr. Michaels believes that P.A. 99-0456 has good intentions, as it creates a positive, proactive response to disruptive behaviors. Moreover, Mr. Michaels believes that this Act is in response to the ongoing institutional racism that has hindered African American students with disproportionate behavioral consequences. However, he believes that the intervention system must reflect more culturally relevant responses to behaviors because students are receiving a false sense of what consequences are and their effect on the realities of their behavioral outcomes. He questions the restorative process by stating, "there are certain behaviors that are not in any way ok, where interventions are necessary, but our intervention systems don't match the real world that our kids come from. How can our students relate to an intervention that wants them to denounce who they are or their upbringing? I think that's where we fail them" (Michaels, personal communication, April 29, 2020). Mr. Michaels credits this Act for combatting minor consequences but insists that more is needed in combatting behaviors that require deeper analysis and more culturally relevant interventions.

Summary

      Anyon et al. (2016) described restorative approaches to school discipline as "a variety of practices on the prevention-intervention continuum" (p. 1666). However, this theme had the administrators questioning the relevancy of the interventions, the school community's mindset, and funding to support student behaviors. The battle over the usage of restorative approaches was the highlight as they admitted that funding prevented the staff from receiving professional development. Therefore, it was difficult to assess how this practice was effective when it was absent within behavioral practices.

CHAPTER V: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF THE EDUCATORS

Ms. Vanessa Coleman

I heard many wonderful things about Vanessa Banks. She has studied and specializes in behavior and has a passion for ensuring her students are successful. I knew that I wanted to include her in my research because she expressed to me on several different occasions her disdain for the behavioral intervention systems and how they needed to be improved for African American and Hispanic students. When I found that she was working at the middle school of my research site, I knew that I had to ask her about participating in my study.

Our interview took place during the Summer of COVID. Although there were many safety restrictions and health protocols placed by the state's governor, we were able to meet at a restaurant that had outdoor dining. Luckily for me, it was a bright sunny, eighty-five degree with zero percent chances of rain, which meant that I didn't have to worry about rescheduling due to inclement weather. I arrived at the restaurant first and was able to choose a great place to sit, preferably in the shade. I waited for about ten minutes and then Vanessa arrived. She was talking on the phone with her supervisor, planning a problem-solving meeting.

When her call was complete, we greeted each other as if we were old friends. She stated that she was excited about assisting me with my study. After we ordered our food, I read her my introduction, and then, she began to tell her story.

180

Ms. Coleman's Story

Education was not my first passion nor my first love. I was Pre-Med and knew that I wanted to help black and brown kids that had physical disabilities. But life happened, and I went to an HBCU and so what you did was if you couldn't do Pre-Med, you went into the Education department. Once I started taking educational classes, I was like, this shit is so boring, like I had absolutely no interest in it, until I took abnormal psychology. After that, I was sold, hook line, and sinker. My question was, how can I work with the kids that are like me that are terrible, and nobody thinks they can be taught, and so the Sped Ed (Special Education) bug bit me, and it didn't let go. I taught sped right after college. My first teaching job was in a trailer in Atlanta, where literally, I was trapped in this trailer with ten kids who were a lot bigger than me, and nobody cared about. The saddest part is, they knew no one cared about them. So it was like, how does this straight out of college girl convince these kids that not only do I care about them but that they are capable of learning?

These kids were forgotten. They were already removed from the public school and placed in an alternative setting. They had experienced a myriad of suspensions and threats of expulsions, all for silly reasons. I remember I had a student in my class that was suspended because he has horrible attendance. I had a couple of girls who fought all the time, so they were removed from the local high school and placed in my school. It was strange because these girls had hard exteriors, but they really didn't give me a hard time. They did have attitudes, but they did what I asked them to do. One boy had threatened his teacher because he said that the teacher

threatened him first and lied about it, so they stuck him at my school because they felt he was a threat. I had students who were placed because of drugs and gang violence, as well. It was sad because all of these kids were suspended and then brought to my school like they were thrown away and knew they were.

So, it was trial by fire; I mean, there were a lot of days where I was like, I cannot do this, like is this for me, but I just remember thinking, if not me, then who? As I got older, I took a break from education to really figure out what I liked about my job, and I really wanted to know more about behaviors and really understand more about why people perform the way they perform, like why are those who are successful in school different from those who are not. So, I got a master's in it because that behavioral aspect kept gnawing at me. But I missed the kids, and I missed watching their light bulbs and teaching them how to function in a society that is going to hold them at the same standards and not teach them the same life lessons.

My first opportunity to do what I am still doing to this day was an assistant superintendent who believed in my philosophy that every child can learn and the badder they are, that just means that when you do reach them, the more eager they will be to learn. My sped background led me here, and now I can create a program for students who were previously outplaced because of their behaviors. The transition program truly was creating a self-contained sped environment where you are teaching and training students with different coping skills and reshaping their actions to be socially appropriate, reach academic instruction, and love that. I love teaching kids how to build their toolbox and reaching their own destinies. I remember

growing and hearing, as being the bad child, that she ain't never gon change; well you are right, I am not, because you haven't given me a reason to, so why should I? What's in it for me? So really taking that into heart and all the kids that I work with know I will come down on them like a ton of bricks but I'm also going to be their biggest cheerleader and be in their corner too.

Now do I understand the social-emotional piece of behaviors, but I have the cognitive capacity of behaviors background. Now I can look at how behaviors are applied in everyday life. I look at the world differently now, and I just see everyone has behaviors; some are more socially appropriate than others, but everybody lives every day having behaviors and so in education, it's helping students and staff recognize that their behaviors are a cause and effect situation. I always question teachers with if your behavior is causing a student to succeed or fail? For the students, I ask, is your behavior causing a teacher to want to continue to support and help you or pushing them further and further away to say you are helpless. Right now, I am trying to figure out how to get kids to believe in themselves when they are still sitting in classes when often times they know that the person instructing the class doesn't believe in them. I came here because I wanted to help the students gain a voice.

I never had a desire to work in white neighborhoods. The white communities have resources for their kids, get to go to camp, get to join different programs, and get all these cultural immersions and experiences, and they are also talking about other parts of the world. Who is talking to our kids about other parts of the world because all they know is the 15 or so radius blocks that encompass their community? That's all they know. There is more out there,

and our kids just don't know it. They have to know that everybody is not living like they are, you know? It's all racism, if you ask me.

And they are hardly given a chance, especially with this broken system that is constantly questioned for perpetuating racism? Now, they are trying to have an act or law that is supposed to… I don't know if people are afraid to answer this question or if the question is too finite. Right? It's making them choose what the act is doing when it's just a piece of the puzzle. It's not the whole thing like, if you took this act away, racism would still exist. Like if the act was no more, you would still have the same issues; there will always be some type of inequality in education. Honestly, I don't think this act helps; maybe that's the answer. I don't think this act permits equity. I don't think this act is based on like it's not realistic, I don't think it applies to real life.

Let me not say that… it's not applicable to real-life scenarios. I mean, it could work in certain communities, but it doesn't work in all communities. Like honestly, I don't see it working in our community. Ok, how about…so tell me in an ideal world what this act would look like? Because it's easier to tell where the gaps are and what I see in my building and our school district. I've never seen it…I don't know the true magnitude of what it is supposed to be; I just know how I have seen it done, and I don't know if I could say that it's not effective until I can fully understand what it is supposed to really do. (Laughter). You know what I mean, because in an ideal world, with all the resources and money and whatever, I still can't fully tell you what it would look like. That's my issue because I don't know, because I have never been in that

situation, and I don't know anything about education in that realm to know. I can't see…I only see one side of it, I guess that is what I am trying to say.

My idea of discipline and what it should look like should be determined by the population it serves. I think that there is a, you know, in terms of PBIS and other programs that are supposed to, you know, implement positive reinforcement, are too broad. I don't think like, in a community like ours, I don't think our kids are going to respond in a way that is going to deter negative behavior only from this cookie-cutter idea of positive reinforcement and basically still receiving punitive consequences for negative behavior. And so, I don't think the bill allows for flexibility to support different demographic makeups, but then again, I don't know.

When I worked in a more affluent district, it was way different. You know, we had a plethora of resources, but our demographics were also very different. Our kids were not dealing with having their basic needs met. You know, our homeless population was families who lived with grandparents because they chose to, not because they didn't have any other place to go. And so I think the approach is different because… if you look at environmental factors, I don't think the Act was set by environmental factors; I guess that's the easy way to say that. It doesn't look at the rate of violence that students in specific environments and communities are exposed to on a daily. It doesn't give rise to dealing with the social-emotional… and the discipline act... it doesn't require you to approach a specific population with a specific approach. To me, it's too cookie-cutter; hey only praise good behavior, and you will see no negative behavior; that's not

realistic. And so I would say to the people who created this bill, that it was created for a specific population that I don't currently work with.

This act was created for population and students and communities that were having problems that they defined as disciplinary problems and wanted to take into consideration with developmental stages of staff wasn't being trained on the number of students who were being penalized and consequence and the offenses didn't necessarily fit the sentence. Too many punitive responses were things that may not have needed that level of consequence, I guess. And I think the intention was for people to look more at reinforcement and less at consequences, to encourage educators to take a general overall approach to discipline and behavior.

Now what I don't think was considered was that again, your life experiences make who you are and what you are going to respond to, as well as resources contribute to that notion 100%. You know, we look at PBIS and how we implement it, and it's not a thing. It has not really been a thing since I started in my current district, and that has been some years; I have not seen it being done with integrity or fidelity, and a lot of that is through the lack of resources. We don't have systems, and we can't afford the systems that are already created to be able to track and monitor and provide positive and consistent incentives and rewards for our students. It's inconsistent, and everything that I know about behavior says that consistency is the most effective way to reshape behavior. So, what happens when you don't have that. This bill definitely doesn't take into consideration the level of access. The equity piece is just not there. Every district does not have access to the same tools, outcomes, or incomes that will look vastly

different, and there is no flexibility in it. I think the intentions are good, but it is very contextualized and very narrow-minded like all the other educational laws and referendums passed, and then we have to implement.

When I was in the more affluent district, I still think there was room for improvement than what was intended, but it was more successful because we had more resources. I mean, we had the availability of our PBIS daily by everyone. All staff wanted it, and it was complete buy-in. Staff was not expected to come out of their pockets to provide those tangible incentives and rewards. The community was involved in terms of parents, and all of the administrators bought into it. There was a high level of consistency that was just the expectation of the norm. I mean, not giving positive, I mean the mascot was the dolphin, so they gave out dolphins, you didn't have to tell the teacher you must give these out when they saw a student make a good decision, they wanted to do it. This was not only the culture of the building but the culture in which they came from. That is not the same as where I currently am employed.

From my experiences, I honestly think that some of it is discriminatory, we don't employ…the people who are employed and educated to work with our children, they don't look like our kids, they are not from the same neighborhood or similar neighborhood, they can't draw from any of the same experiences that our kids are coming from, so that relatability factor is almost non-existent. And I think that is a huge variable for a lot, not just for our kids but for our staff. Many of our staff think that you should respect me because I am the adult; our kids don't subscribe to that notion. Respect is earned, and our staff doesn't necessarily believe in that. And

so when I saw it being attempted to be implemented in our district, it comes off disingenuine, and I think if there is anything our students hate more than being patronized, is someone who is fake, or who they perceive as fake, and so then they don't want nothing from anybody that don't care, it's not an incentive because they don't care about you because they don't feel like you care about them.

For instance, we have a teacher that relates to the kids, he puts time and energy into the kids, but also building a homeroom community and so he doesn't have behavioral problems because they are a community they know that they are cared about. Sometimes he has to break the rules to make sure that this doesn't change and that the students have what they need. Like he will steal extra breakfasts but then when the kids come in late to class, and they are hungry, he is going to have something to feed them. So, when he tells the kids that he is proud of them or good job, or here is this pencil or whatever, they believe him. But then you have other teachers that may say, oh I will buy you lunch if you do this that or the other, the kids would be like, fuck you and that lunch because you don't care about me any other time, now all of a sudden or now because you don't want me to get in trouble. I feel like it's less about…it's like talking to our students, they often have the perception of when teachers are trying to convince them to make better decisions, they feel like it's more for the teachers instead of for the students. The kids say you don't really care about me; you just don't want me to get kicked out because you don't feel like filling out all the paperwork; you don't want your class to look bad. So, I think that has a lot to do with that, but again, I don't have a good understanding of how or what the expectations of the bill account for those types of real issues like I don't think it's based in reality. The reality is,

children are taught every day by some people that do not have a general interest in their well-being.

Applying interventions to students that you really don't care about is even a more difficult task. So one of the things that I definitely stick to my guns about is, and even am a stickler with my own team is, when it comes to interventions, people look at what happens in my office, and they say, oh they act right because it's you, and I'm like, its because the interventions are consistent. At the beginning of the school year, I work very hard at the front end, building relationships. So when I go to implement an intervention, one they trust me, two, it's consistent, I don't waver. You can be as crazy as you want to be, but you will know that if you act out, this will happen. Every time, all day long, for the whole year. And it's not just because it's you, but they also see that same level of intervention and effort for the next person. One of the things I did when I did workshops for the staff for providing interventions and supports is what I do; now, how do you relate this to your children? How do you do this based on your teaching style? How do you teach this based on your personality? Because you can't take what I do and do it the way that I do it because you are not me, and you will not get the same results. So it's like looking at the interventions and not making them individualized for the student and the teacher trying to implement them in that current learning environment.

One of the things that frustrate me the most is the expectation that I can sit in a staff meeting, and teachers are complaining that this student is doing x-y and z. Fix it. I can't because I have to come into that environment and look at the whole picture. Right? There is not one cause

and effect when we are talking about behaviors. So when you are looking at interventions, you have to be willing to change and compromise as well, and I haven't found that to be something many teachers are doing in my current building. This is the problem because they don't have to do this in my building, and I think this is a reflection of both the administration and the teachers.

So pretty much, the whole implementation of this is pertinent to ensuring that this is successful. I would also challenge this to say that I would poll teachers in the middle school building to ask them if they actually know what it is. I would bet a million to say half of the staff knows because it's not required. They don't want to know, especially if it is not attached to their evaluations. Again, you are looking at a building, whereas some teachers do not have a vested interest in the students they are providing education. This act is just missing many components.

If I could add anything to this bill, there would have to be some accountability for the adults. There need to be some other implementation methods other than resources because if it comes down to something that is mandated, they need to provide supplies, we need a solid curriculum, I mean, let's be real. When you are talking about equity, every district should have the same resources. Let's go deeper with this; equal and the same is not the same thing. Every district should get per student 100 dollars a year for PBIS lets choose the best way to spend that 100 dollars for positive reinforcement for our population. I would make it so that teachers are required; not only do you have to know what the bill is, you have to talk about how you are going to implement it in your environment every year. Not necessarily, every single detail, but there should be a plan. Yearly. What is your system for creating a positive learning environment

in dealing with behaviors, both punitively and positively? How do you plan on being proactive? I think that should be something that is submitted and reviewed, just like lesson plans. I think this is a major part of teaching that is not necessarily required, especially in our community.

I do know that Charlotte Danielson has the domains, but again, that is not a plan. It's general and vague in its nature, and there needs to be more. I know that's part of the evaluation, but some teachers don't even have a system—especially not one that they are implementing with integrity and fidelity. Admin also needs to poll the students and ask them if they feel safe, what are some positive ways your teacher is rewarding good behavior, what do they do to make you feel welcomed. I would be shocked if the majority of the students would give positive feedback. I wanted to do a culture and climate survey on the students, and the teachers wanted to go to the union about it because the student results were not what they anticipated. 50% of the population said they didn't have a teacher that made them feel like they genuinely cared about them. That says a lot. The staff was offended because it's like love language. If you don't know somebody's love language, you could be doing everything in the world and still feel completely isolated and unloved and unappreciated.

So if they don't take the time to understand and know what your students need to feel loved and encouraged, you will miss the mark every time. I think a lot of times, teachers are looking for… they feel like the students shouldn't feel this way because I show up to work every day. I'm here every day. I'm trying to teach you every day. That doesn't work in our demographics and our population. They need more than just the teacher showing up. And I don't

know how many teachers are actually invested in that. No one is trying to get to the root of why our kids behave the way they do. It's just if you don't behave, or what I like to say, act white, you are out! This mostly comes from the white teachers that are in front of our kids daily. I can say that I see this more in the black community that I serve versus the affluent district of my previous employment. I also think that there is a disproportionate number of minority staff in my building, especially since most black and brown students are in my building.

It's sad, right? When the dismissal bell rings, the staff leaves as well. So it's not just tangible things; the resources are in the staff as well. Our class sizes are super big, and it's hard to build relationships, especially with teachers that really don't want to anyway. It's like everyone is in survival mode, just trying to get by. I know that the bill provided more support bodies in the building, but I don't think those additions were quality additions. They hired people who had behaviors as their expertise, but they now don't know if this is something they want to do when they get here. Most just come to get a paycheck. And what's worse, our salaries are not close to being competitive...so you know what that's about. What breaks my heart the most is that my building is comprised of many teachers who probably would not be able to get a job anywhere else. With that being said, yes, we have the bodies, but do we have the bodies that are equipped and skilled enough to work with students who have such huge deficits. Not just academically, but social-emotional, environmentally, and culturally, do they really have the skills to build them up? I would say no. so yeah, we had money to add staff, but not quality staff.

So yes, it is a perpetuation of institutional racism, policies that are half-implemented in low-socioeconomic districts yet expected spectacular results. Yeah, it was definitely implemented to support more affluent districts than districts like ours. I mean, it looks good on paper, especially in affluent districts that have the buy-in, money, resources, curriculum, you name it. Therefore, our kids are still behind the ball. Which I have questioned, is it really to combat suspensions of our black and brown kids? I feel like that just sounds good because the areas with full implementation holistically don't have a high population of black and brown kids. I just feel like… for instance… I worked in an affluent district for eight years before my current position, but I never heard of any child being expelled in those eight years.

Suspensions were (laughs)… let's just say the population I worked with..I got bitten, stabbed with pencils, verbally abused, and none of them got suspended. It was more like, what can we do to provide them with a higher level of support. The suspensions were for stuff like bringing a lighter to school and when you talk about disproportionate, so Ricky and Bobby, one brown one black, they throwing pens and they get sent home, yet, Jake and Derrick, who are white, get into a fight, and you talking about sitting down and having a peace talk. Like I don't think the bill is going to fix that because white adults perception is that if the black and brown boys are fighting they are dangerous and aggressive, not taking into consideration that some of them culturally, we can throw those hands and then turn around and be best friends after that, that is how some of us communicate, that is how some our kids are taught how to deal with conflict. No different than Jake and Derrick calling each other expletives.

So there is no understanding; there is no room on this Bill's scale for cultural consideration. So that why I said, I don't know what this bill would look like, ideally, like for real, who is it for? What should this really look like if it is fully implemented? Honestly, I have no idea. Honestly, I don't know, and I don't know if I can contextualize what it was intended to look like. I mean I get it; we cant suspend them because that shit doesn't work. Like for real, and then what? Then in the interim, it's like, what are they doing when they are suspended? It is so crazy because what do they learn from suspensions? It's not enough because that ain't teaching our kids nothing. I get it! But yeah…even for those who truly understand the disparities and have good intentions, I don't know if anything will truly make a difference long term.

Ms. Coleman's Story through CRT Framework

Sleeter (2017) credits CRT for providing conceptual tools for examining how race and racism have maintained their institutionalized status in education. The idea of institutionalized racism within the implementation of the behavioral system of P.A. 99-0456 was prevalent throughout Ms. Coleman's data. In my analysis and coding, I found four tenets of CRT that repeatedly emerged within Ms. Coleman's counternarrative: The permanence of racism, intersectionality, whiteness as property, and interest convergence. Based on her accounts and experiences, I believe these tenets were fluid throughout her narrative to explain why she believes this disciplinary act fails to reshape behaviors and eliminate inequities within her school system.

Intersectionality and Permanence of Racism

The tenets intersectionality and permanence of racism were combined due to both tenets overlapping in respect to Ms. Coleman's data on race, class, and funding. In alignment with the idea that racism is a permanent fixture in U.S. society, Ms. Coleman's data with the permanence of racism coexists with intersectionality, as the low-socioeconomic communities are affected by the lack of resources and program inequities. Lund and Dearing (2013) argued that low-socioeconomic communities experience high behavioral delinquency levels amongst boys and girls. In the study *Moving to Opportunity,* high poverty-stricken communities showed an increase in behavioral problems and crime (Kling, Ludwig, & Katz, 2005; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2011). Ms. Coleman believes that this act is just a small piece of the puzzle and does not represent ridding racism from school policy. She reflects on her current experience by stating, "We don't have systems, and we can't afford the systems that are already created to be able to track, monitor, and provide positive and consistent incentives and interventions for our students. It's inconsistent, and everything that I know about behavior says that consistency is the most effective way to reshape behavior" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020).

The lack of funding is also a prevalent argument for disruptive behaviors and lack of resources and services in her counter-story. The resolution to the funding gap is not pushing a magic button to offer equal funding. Morgan and Amerikaner (2018) stated, "the funding gaps between high and low poverty districts look even worse when we consider that students in poverty are likely to need additional supports in order to succeed academically (p. 3). Ms.

Coleman believes that for students to reap the full benefits of implementation, schools need to be provided with supplies and a solid curriculum. She argues for equity, as she stated that equal and the same are not the same thing. She posited, "Every district does not have access to the same tools, the outcomes or the incomes of this is going to look vastly different, and there is no flexibility in it"(Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020).

Studies conducted by Morgan and Amierkaner (2018) showed that Illinois ranked nearly last amongst the fifty states in funding between affluent and low socioeconomic districts. In 2017, Illinois implemented an equitable funding distribution approach to the neediest districts. Consequently, eighty-five percent of students in Illinois still attend underfunded schools, despite these efforts (Morgan & Amierkaner, 2018). She asserts that if schools were all allocated an equal amount of funding per student dedicated to the behavioral services, programs, and resources, schools in low socioeconomic communities would be able to be proactive and create sufficient behavioral plans that support all behavioral needs while creating positive learning environments.

Ms. Coleman also believes that her school district's low-socioeconomic status perpetuates this permanence of racism, which stems from the teaching staff's low quality. She argues, "the people who are employed and educated to work with our children, they don't look like our kids, they are not from the same neighborhood or similar neighborhood…, probably couldn't get a job anywhere else, they can't draw from any of the same experiences that our kids are coming from, so that relatability factor is almost non-existent"(Coleman, personal communication, June 11,

2020). Neal et al. (2015) suggested that when teacher diversity increases, students of color become empowered to eradicate the institutional barriers that keep them out of school in the first place (pp. 8-9). She continues her argument, positing that this non-relatability and low expectations lead to low morale levels between the teachers and the students. Rosen (2017) argues that African American student bodies have already been designated with racialized meanings, instituted by perpetuating negative stereotypes and preconceived notions from their teachers.

Ms. Coleman reflects on her current experiences, stressing that students are being taught by some teachers who do not have an invested interest in their well-being nor their ability to improve their academic and behavioral journey. Her ideologies align with Kunjufu (2013), who believes these preconceived notions justify low expectations for African American students. Therefore, applying interventions from a teacher who has no vested interest in their students perpetuates the cycle of disruptive behaviors and punitive consequences that put students out of the learning environment.

Whiteness as Property

Manning (2013) articulated whiteness as "privilege exchanged for access to high-paying careers, better neighborhoods (such as majority-white suburban neighborhoods), and higher-quality schools" (p. 57). In conjunction with Manning's ideology on whiteness, Ms. Coleman's experience in working in an affluent school district mirrors this concept. She stated, "The white neighborhoods have resources for their kids, they get to go to camp, they get to join different

programs, and they get all this cultural immersions and experiences, and they are also talking

about other parts of the world" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020). Ms.

Coleman noted that the affluent school district had access to resources, programs, teacher buy-in,

and other services that assisted students with behavioral needs. She also mentioned that the

expectation in the white schools was higher, as staff and the community not only bought into the

policies and practices for discipline, but they were instrumental in ensuring that the policies were

done with fidelity and consistency.

In comparison to her current school district, Ms. Coleman acknowledged that her current

administrators did not require this of their staff. She speaks to the administrator's inability to

advance systemic change by stating, "the adults have to be willing to change and compromise as

well, and I haven't found that to be something many teachers are doing in my current building.

This is the problem" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020). She also argues that

the weak implementation of the restorative approach to discipline was intentional. She believes

that just sounds good because the communities with full implementation holistically don't have a

high population of black and brown kids. Ms. Coleman's arguments align with Lustick's (2017)

notion that those in charge of the implementation of restorative practices must, with a critical

eye, reverse traditional aspects of control and order. She fears that the weak implementation will

only limit black and brown student's access to the non-punitive approach. She stated, "no one is

trying to get to the root of why our kids behave the way they do; it's just if you don't behave, or

what I like to say, act white, you are out! This mostly comes from the white teachers that are in

front of our kids daily" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020). This form of

198

identifying whiteness is a source of "privilege and protection" (Harris, 1993) and in the white student's case, protection from suspension and other punitive consequences. Anyon et al., (2018) contend that as long as Whiteness is used as a means to judge African American students, it is unlikely that student-teacher relationships or the reduction of biases will be successful.

Interest Convergence

Bell (1987) argued that the interests of people of color only advanced when those interests converged with the interests of the dominant culture. Ms. Coleman believes that this act was created for a population that she currently does not service. She discusses the differences in not only the demographics of students but their behavioral needs. She stated, "I don't think our kids are going to respond in a way that is going to deter negative behavior only from this cookie-cutter idea of positive reinforcement and basically still receiving punitive consequences for negative behaviors" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020). Ms. Coleman's argument with interest convergence suggests that the act's disciplinary policies benefit white, affluent districts, and schools in low socioeconomic districts with limited resources continue to distribute punitive consequences, unable to afford restorative training for teachers and practices for students.

When Ms. Coleman reflects on her experience in the affluent district, she recounts the support and services allotted to those students. She believes the act is easier to implement in affluent areas because those students' basic needs are met. She discusses the Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS) that focuses on good behavior to eradicate negative behaviors. Ms.

Coleman argued that this was not only the culture of the building but the culture in which they came from, which is a stark contrast from where she is currently employed. She believes the act fails students in low socioeconomic communities because it doesn't tackle the environmental factors, such as the rate of violence and social-emotional concepts. She also believes the PBIS approach is unrealistic in these communities and when students act according to the definition of "good," only then are they rewarded for their behaviors. Interest convergence is active in this analysis because the act is conditioning students to act as their white peers to be rewarded. Anyon et al. (2017) denote, "school policies limiting forms of student expression to White standards, without validating non-dominant ways of being, or offering youth the opportunity to learn code-switching strategies, may actually worsen discipline problems and related disparities" (p. 395).

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

CRT's tenets, interest convergence, whiteness as property, intersectionality, and permanence of racism were utilized to identify how forms of institutional racism are embedded in this policy and structures that influence how P.A. 99-0456 is implemented in this low socioeconomic middle school community. As permanence of racism and intersectionality combined in the data, Ms. Coleman aligned the two components to argue that race, along with the community's low-socioeconomic status, is the reason for the inaccessibility to behavioral resources and services for students facing challenges. She insists that this lack of equity is the

driving force that promotes the racial and opportunity divide between white and African American school communities.

Her experiences in working in a white, affluent district illustrate the whiteness a property tenet by highlighting the supports and services that are allocated to the students and the community. Ms. Coleman also acknowledges that the affluent community's expectations and teacher buy-in are the gateways to ensuring that all students receive consistent interventions and services. As for her current place of employment, she believes that the lack of moral and teacher buy-in stems from the administrators, suggesting that until the adults change the way they perceive discipline, the students will continue to lag behind.

Interest convergence also played a major role in her data analysis. She considers this tenet to be pertinent to how this act will benefit African American students. Ms. Coleman argues that this policy was not designed for low-socioeconomic populations, and the lack of culturally relevant interventions creates challenges for students in impoverished communities. She insists that the PBIS intervention systems used in affluent areas, which rewards students of color to be rewarded for acting white, are not beneficial to students of color. The idea of acknowledging positive behavior to rid a student of negative behavior may work with other populations and lends an unrealistic sense of the real world punitive consequences.

At the end of her interview, Ms. Coleman expressed her frustration with teachers' and administrators' attitudes when working with students in the low-socioeconomic school district. She stated, "I don't understand why teachers and administrators in my building have this attitude

where the kids are supposed to automatically know what to do, but they fail to direct them on what the right way is." She reflected on her experience in the affluent district, in which everyone made an effort to ensure that the students were successful. Yet, in her current position, the opposite is occurring. As she finished her food, she appeared to have tears in her eyes. She asserted, "Why is it so hard for them to care for our kids too? They are just as special and talented, and it is so frustrating that many teachers and some administrators don't feel that our babies are worth it, like how hard do we fight and when do we decide to give up" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020).

I remained quiet as she continued to vent. She repeatedly expressed her disgust for the policy and its ability to look one way yet to be implemented to resemble the old patterns of injustice and inconsistencies in the African American school districts. As we concluded the interview, she thanked me for allowing her to express her disdain for the policy without judgment. She stated, "Enough is enough! Our kids deserve more, and I am tired of policymakers creating things that make no sense to the community it is supposed to serve. I'm tired of our kids being penalized because of their zip code. When is enough enough" (Coleman, personal communication, June 11, 2020). I passed her a napkin to wipe her eyes, and after we shared the same sentiments about the injustices that our students and communities faced, I pressed stop on my voice recorder.

Mrs. Joann Barry

I distributed flyers at Turner-Bozeman school in hopes that educators would agree to participate in my study. After waiting a few weeks, I received an email from Mrs. Joann Barry, stating that she wanted to participate in my study. She left her phone number, and I immediately called her when I got home.

When we spoke on the phone, she expressed that she definitely wanted to participate in my study because she had a story to tell. She said, "Our story needs to be heard; there are so many things that are right and wrong about the implementation of this act, and if no one knows what is really going on, how can we change anything" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). I thanked her for being so candid and explained that this is the exact reason that I wanted to complete this study, especially here at Turner Bozeman. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we arranged a Zoom conference interview for the following week.

Before I began her interview, I gave her some information about who I am and where I was from. We began a friendly banter because I am from Yatesville, and she is from Shoreville[7], two sister towns that share a deep rivalry. Being from the same township, we both attended rival high schools, I attended Promenade East, and she attended Promenade West. I remember saying, "I guess I can rely on your interview even though you went to Promenade West." We both laughed, and she stated, "I was just about to say the same thing about you."

---

[7] Shoreville is the community home to Turner Bozeman Middle School.

I thanked her for participating in my study and begin reading her my introduction. She said, are you ready for what's really going on?" We laughed, and I said, yes, I'm ready, and then, she began to tell her story.

Mrs. Barry's Story

For the last seventeen years, I have taught ELA to eighth-graders at Turner-Bozeman Middle school. I grew up in Shoreville. My love for Shoreville runs deep because I am an alumnus of this middle school and the local high school, Promenade West. I have fond memories of my days as a student at Turner Bozeman middle school. It has a rich history, and academics and discipline were at the forefront of our success, and the community was proud of the fantastic achievements that came from this school. It was an honor to come back and teach here.

When I began my teaching career here, we had a stable discipline code. When there was a disciplinary issue with a student, we would write it up, and I believe the first one was a verbal warning, the second one was a phone call home, the third one was the detention, and then fourth, it was taken to the Principal for further review. That was pretty much how it was for a nice while. However, within the last three to four years, it has changed dramatically. It's like, ok, right before now, the previous two years, the admin office didn't do anything with disciplinary issues, they may ask if the teachers make phone calls, they kinda put it more so on the teacher to take care of the things.

We had in-school suspension, which worked, or they used a lot in the previous years. Still, as we came to the newer years now, we don't use it as much. That was the last couple of years, so now this year, it's like the kids don't have any discipline, no structure, so we were told that we could write them up, but it has to be the same thing ten times. The rule is, well, the reason behind this is because the teacher can hold grudges, so you don't want to keep piling things on them, and I got that. Still, so like, if the kid had to do something ten times, you have to write them up for that same thing ten times, then you send it to the office, and it is taken care of, but it's still isn't handled. Admin believed that this is their way of empowering us, but it's like, no, this is us doing your job!

I like the old way of handling discipline because it was effective, and it worked because there was a process, and everyone knew it. The teachers knew it, and students knew it; they would be like, aww, this is my third, they would beg and plead, can we talk about it, can this be my verbal warning, or can you not call home or I will do my detention, they knew the role, they knew the process and the order. So it kept it going. The teachers also had a detention club. Basically, we rotated, so no one had to deal with their own kids the entire time. We rotated so that you may have had detention this week or these couple of days, and then it rotated to the next teacher, so we all signed up for it. This plan worked pretty well because this gave us time with the students, and it didn't feel like we had repeat offenders.

When we sent students to the office, they were prepared to work on it to say ok, did the verbal, did the detention, did the phone call home, so now, let me step in as the administrator

does the necessary procedures. So it just made it easier for the administration, I think, to handle the discipline. But like, even when, this year, when we went into our meeting, they had a list of minor and major events, and some of the minor events I felt were major, so it felt like they were putting a lot of things on the teachers. For example, one of the items was gang affiliation and association; they had that one as a teacher issue like so I'm calling home saying I think your son or daughter is involved with a gang? I didn't see how that is a teacher issue. Yeah, like some of the protocols that we had that were major and minor, I felt like that could have been major; it seems like they put everything on the teacher. Did you call home? Did you do this? Did you do that? It's like yes, I did that, now what?

The interventions from back in the day worked. They did; not only did they have that, but they had in-school suspension. Our Principal had writing assignments, so like she would have them do writing assignments, ok, you might not have gotten suspended, but you make sure you get those writing assignments to kinda back it up. No one wanted to do the writing assignments. They did not. She had them writing from Nikki Giovanni, a portion of their poems, and kids knew it, and even if they got in trouble, they would barter and negotiate what they wanted to do for their punishment. But, it just seemed like it worked. The Principal seemed like discipline was her thing, and the order was there. She always had order, she always had the discipline, and if you had an issue, she had no problem coming to the classroom as she would stop in.

Like this year, I am serious, I'm honest, we were told don't come to the office, umm, yeah, we can't come in the office, and there were certain things we were not allowed to do. It felt

like it wasn't a lot of back up for the teachers. Like, I had an incident with a kid that was physical. I called the office, I buzzed the office, and nobody came. I had to call a colleague on her cell phone, and she called the Principal, then the Principal finally came down, and I'm like, I can't have this! I have a room full of sixteen boys in that classroom and four girls, so I said I couldn't be approached in that way, and we need to make sure that we follow the proper protocols. I know it's out of order, but he became physical with me. I need to make sure, I mean, I sent the paperwork down, and he got suspended for three days but came back to school on day two, and he came out of dress code.

I don't know. When I informed the admin, I said I don't know that you know that Davion[8] is here, and I thought he had three days. The Principal said, oh, I know, and I will look into it. But my thing was, he can't come back until we have a conversation, we need a parent contact like you know, we need a conference, with the parent and the student to sit down and get this together. He was like, I agree, but the kid came back before the conference. Sometimes, it's like, when a kid is suspended now, and they come back, there's no meeting with parents, there's no meeting with social workers, there's no meeting with student services, nothing! It varies with each student, but I don't think it's always that case where there is a parent-teacher conference.

I know with the old staff, there was always a parent coming up; that was always the case. Her initial response was, "oh, you got written up the third time, and now your parents are coming up here. I have to call, and we need to have a conference." I believe that worked a lot because we

---

[8] Pseudonym used to protect the identity of the participant.

did many parent-teacher conferences under that leadership. This particular leadership, and even the one before that, we didn't have many parent-teacher conferences, which is just me being honest. I don't think, and I don't know if they are afraid of the parents, because the parents can…we have had some difficult parents in our time, but no one wants to sit down with them. They just put it off with, oh, did you call, and I'm like, I don't mind meeting with them, but can you be in there with me, especially when we know that this is a confrontational parent or something. There is definitely…it's not a lot of support.

When our district implemented the disciplinary act, it was to keep the suspension and jail pipeline down. Instead of going right into suspensions, there were supposed to be some more restorative acts that we can do. That's how I summed it up. But we didn't really have access to those restorative practices, and we don't have a set plan in place. It was chaotic! Despite all this, though, I think the students still got suspended more back in the day. I think it was more of, I wouldn't say some cases deserved a suspension, so like now, there were cases that should be suspensions, and they didn't get anything. They might have gotten a talking to and a piece of candy and sent back to class. Maybe they think this is restorative, but I beg to differ.

I have even heard our Principal say, well, you know the Senate bill said we couldn't suspend, so… and then I'm like, so then what is the plan? If we can't suspend, then we need to have a plan in place. Nobody's ever come up with a solid plan. At one point, the in-school suspension was the plan… then it wasn't the plan because it's part of the suspension. I'm like, ok, I get that, so what do we have in place? I think one Principal tried to come up with a reward

center. Hence, we concentrated more on them doing correct or them doing more positive behavior, so we had a little bit more incentives for them. I don't know if that would count, but I guess not if they got in trouble, but it curbed some behaviors because they had to get so many points or bulldog buck to do this. Now, there is nothing in place.

This lasted for about a year and a half. Some of it was up, and some of it wasn't like we had times where they would be able to play video games, but that place never fully came into fruition because some of that was academic as well. So it was a combination, and I know from my previous years, everything was kind of laid out, and the kids understood. The teachers knew what it was because even when we had ice cream socials, that was more of a positive behavior so that dealt with discipline in the building. We also did some things like a skate party, but that dealt with academics as well. We didn't have too many positive behavior resources set up, so I guess we didn't have a restorative…there is no set plan

I am really surprised, though, because honestly, if I'm not mistaken, we were given in-service. The administration presented a PowerPoint of what the Senate bill was and just said that things were going to be different. That was pretty much it from them. I believe we worked together as a team to try to find different avenues we could use versus suspension. We tried to come up with a peer group. During lunchtime, they could come together to decide if the behavior was worthy of detention but sit down with their peer and talk about what prompted this action and what could have been prevented. This gave them peer intervention, like, oh you could have

done this or that. That worked a little bit during lunchtime. It was just hard getting the kids to actually come and be open and honest. That was one way.

We also had the teacher setups, where like individual teachers could mentor certain students. They could say, "Hey, what's going on? Let's kinda talk this out ok, I understand why you feel that way, so do you see why she felt that way the teacher, do you think an apology is owed? We had that kind of set up as well, so we never got further between peer and teachers than those two. We really didn't see changes in student behaviors, and unfortunately, we really didn't get the extra supports we needed. As a matter of fact, student behaviors got worse!

The students…they kinda don't care. It's like you can't touch them. We tell them, imma call your mama, and they say, ok call my mama it doesn't matter, or when you call them they gon come up here and get you, so it's like ok we have gotten into that situation, so no they have no fear, it appears to be no fear, nothing! The teachers were just unsure how this helped us because some of the behaviors needed to be suspended. We didn't see it. Some teachers will not write them up, so now the culture is, we will not waste our time writing them up when nothing is going to happen. So a lot of teachers felt a certain way about the senate bill because we didn't quite understand what it was, and there was nothing in place to help in the middle with that.

I personally have a problem with this act. It's hard because it goes both ways because, in predominately white schools, black kids are easily suspended at the drop of the dime. In our community schools, they are getting suspended, but the pipeline from school to prison is hard. Honestly, we need discipline because if we don't have it, we don't have structure. Not saying

that all schools need that, but in our African American schools, we need structure, and we need discipline because it is one of the forms of structure, especially when it is noted. The lack of discipline almost gives the kids the sense that you can do what you want to do; there are no rules to follow. However, there are rules in real life, and when they leave school thinking that they have no rules to follow, that's how they get caught up in that pipeline to prison. Sometimes I feel like it's set up to believe that it's ok, you know it almost like when they took punishment out the school, or they try to keep parents away, I don't want to say, but you know keeping them from disciplining their children, relinquishing some things whereas they feel like they don't have anything to worry about it. The world doesn't work that way for us.

I guess what is missing is there have to be some resources and the restorative acts. So, leaving it on a school per school is rough because some schools won't care about that. If you are going to have to put that bill out there, then here are some resources available for your schools, is the restorative act plans that you can come up to follow so that they are consistent. So yeah, like we have no suspensions, but the reproach behind it is not consistent. For example, I know that the act has provisions for what would happen if the kids are suspended, but when our kids are suspended, they don't have any services for reentry; they just come back! They are required to complete their homework and come pick up work before they leave for their suspension. Most times, they pick up their work, or they tell the teachers to prepare work, and the parent will be there to pick it up. The only students that I know to get services are the Sped students. They do get the support and resources, but the gen ed students, no, I haven't seen any reentry services for them.

The positive things that I have seen are that it keeps the teachers mindful of consequences and keeps them from nitpicking or finding small things to pin kids up. That's a positive thing. You look at behaviors and say, ok, that's minor, I can handle that, even if it means I have to talk to the kid 3, 4, 5 times, we can talk about that. I'm not going to write you up and suspend you for gum chewing that's minor, or ok, and you are using profanity, ok why are you using profanity? I like it evokes a conversation with the teacher and the student to figure out what is going on; then you can say ok, let's figure this out. This makes sense; here is a different way of handling it. Now do all teachers do that? I am not sure, but that's the part that I do like.

The cons behind it are, I think it's more of not having the knowledge of the dos and dont's and things in place because I am all for kids being in school and learning versus being out of school for something minor. What are the realms, like being clear cut on what we are suspending for and not suspending for. It almost seems like it's a matter of how many kids you are suspending because we have reached our maximum. Therefore, the kids will get a slap on the wrist, or that kid will not get disciplined at all. You know they are picking and choosing which one, and when they go to picking and choosing, it is not consistent, and kids find that out in a heartbeat. They are like, oh, you can do this, or you can do that and not get any consequences? It becomes unfair because now your number got called to get suspended on the same thing that Johnnie did two weeks ago. It creates chaos.

If I could rate this act, I would probably give it a four. Why? Because you have teachers, even when they write kids up, they are still like, why are they not suspended? They want to

know, but it's almost like they are pushing to be suspended, and they are upset because the kids are just being talked to. It's like you don't understand the bill or don't understand the process they are doing. It's like they are suspended on a case by case situation, and we are trying to get to the bottom of the situation. They realize that suspension is not good for every case, so I think because the admin didn't do a good job of explaining what the bill is and what this means for Turner Bozeman, and how this is going to look, this is why I gave it a four because not everyone understands what's going on.

I wish we had a say in what the interventions are for handling discipline as well. The first principal, she created everything, created the matrix, created it in everyone's classroom, and we all knew it and went through it with the kids. Not only was it in the classroom, but it was in the lunchroom as well. When the Senate bill came, we went to PBIS, which took the matrix and compacted it. It was like, here are the three rules, here are the rules for the hallway, here are the rules for the classroom, these are the rules for the lunchroom, and it just condensed everything. I don't recall us having an input. They might have just taken the matrix that was already created and took it from there because I am pretty much involved with everything and anything in the building, and I don't recall anybody asking for help with that.

No, it wasn't any creation, and then when we did create it, I was on the school improvement plan, but that one is mixed because it was geared towards academics and discipline. They talked about it, but no one ever put anything in place but PBIS and focusing on positive behaviors. I went to the workshop, and I realized that PBIS is so much bigger than what

we were offering, and I think that maybe the admin didn't understand PBIS either. It is not just

positive incentives. It also dealt with why teachers had biases and dealt with things that dealt

with suspension. That made sense to me. It's like, if you are going to have sb100, then we have to

dig deeper to understand why these kids are being suspended so much. This all made sense, and

then it's like we have to deal with hidden biases that teachers have, even if they don't realize they

have them, and now we have to talk about them. We all know people don't want to talk about

those things, and whenever I would start bringing those things up, they would say, no, we are

doing PBIS. I'm like, no, we are only doing one side of it. We are only dealing with positive

behaviors and not dealing with the reasons why our kids are acting the way they do. That was my

thing.

I think that we don't have enough information. I got it from going through PBIS training,

and then it made me look at the SB100 differently, like, ok, this makes sense now. Our school

plan was to enter PBIS to kinda cover SB100, but no one took to time to even break down what

PBIS was. I think about times in education when you get all these bills, acts, programs, and

curriculum, and nobody takes the time to break it down. When the one time when someone does,

they are the enemy because they are like no, we are not ready to tackle that, or no, we can't talk

about that now.

We are missing that restorative piece, that self-regulation and self-control piece. We are

not teaching our kids how to do this. This is huge. The teachers have no idea what is going on

when the kid interacts with the admin when they are receiving consequences. Other than

whatever they say in the Principal's office with the kid, you don't know. That has also been the issue at Turner-Bozeman. We don't know what the outcome was. They go in the room, and they had a discussion, but you don't get the suspension card back that says this is how it was handled, and we know that we are supposed to know, and then when we ask, we get the, oh you checking up on me, and its but how do we continue with the intervention? How do I know how to handle this? If you went there and handled that, what came from that conversation to know what to do, so I won't do this, or I won't say that. I will be sensitive to that particular situation because that may have peaked something.

Like the kid who had physical contact with me, after we had a conversation, it made sense. He said that he was having a bad day. He found out somebody had died, his favorite family member, and he wasn't in the headspace to be in school. I knew it wasn't like him, so I was like, ok, next time, all you have to say is Mrs. Barry, or you don't have to say anything. Just give me a look, and I will already know that you are having a bad day. My next question would be, do you need to go to the bathroom, do you need to get water, do you need to step out for a minute? He expressed that he was angry and sad at the same time, and I told him that I completely understand him. Somebody got to feel the wrath of the anger sometimes. He admitted that he just took it out on me as well as three other teachers. That conversation brought us closer, but unfortunately, I know that many teachers don't have that conversation with their students.

Despite all this, there are still missing components. He does see the social worker, and we talk, the social worker and I talk, and she is like, I don't know what's going on with him. Some

days he asks if he can see her, and I'm like, go ahead, and other days he says he is good. On that particular day, he didn't want to see anybody; he just wanted everybody to feel it, so that was the kid that came back in two instead of three days out of uniform. So to me, it's…something is not happening, and all the pieces are not together. When he returned, he was still out of order. I just feel like he is slipping through the cracks, like, oh, it's just him, don't worry about it, and each teacher feels a certain way. Even with that one student and again, he had a way with like three different teachers, so one of the teachers was like, did you know that he is back, and I was like, yeah, I did, I notified the office, and they will take care of it. And asked, when did you notify the office and I'm like this morning at eight, and she said, oh, I just talked to him, and he said they didn't know he was here. So communication is not the best tool at Turner Bozeman. We have communication gaps all the time, so I can even understand the Senate bill being a communication gap. It was not given, so there is no room for a plan because no one knows that there is a plan in place.

Mrs. Barry's Story through CRT Framework

CRT in Mrs. Barry's data examined racism through the implementation processes of P.A. 99-0456. In my analysis and coding, I found three tenets of CRT that repeatedly emerged in Mrs. Barry's counter-story: The permanence of racism, commitment to social justice, and critique of liberalism. Based on her accounts and experiences, I believe these tenets resonated throughout her data to explain why she believes institutional racism is perpetuated through Turner-Bozeman's implementation processes of this disciplinary reform, not necessarily the act itself.

Permanence of Racism

Solórzano et al. (2000) refer to the permanence of racism as a power that people of color never had access to. In her approach to providing an analysis for the outcomes of P.A. 99-0456, Mrs. Barry criticizes the implementation processes more so than the actual act itself. She believes the lack of communication with the implementation process at Turner Bozeman is a significant factor in the continuation of institutional racism within their discipline policies. Throughout her counter-story, she explains how administration changes have steered disciplinary structures in different directions. She reflects on her earlier administrator having a strong handle on discipline, creating a visible behavior matrix throughout the entire building. She reminisces, "The principal seemed like discipline was her thing, and order was there. She always had order, she always had the discipline, and if we had an issue in the classroom, she had no problem coming to the classroom" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). Mrs. Barry believes that this form of discipline worked in the school, as students knew what was expected. However, she later confessed that students receiving these forms of punitive consequences received more suspensions and other exclusionary disciplinary consequences. Lustick (2017) described these forms of discipline as "sorting and controlling."

Mrs. Barry stressed that the implementation of P.A. 99-0456 was unclear, unsupported, and unpopular from the teacher's perspective. She reflected on the actual rollout, which consisted of a PowerPoint presentation, but no other information was provided. She admitted that the teachers were left to create interventions and services for students who needed extra

behavioral supports. She listed programs such as peer interventions and teacher mentoring services, but the behaviors increased. Consequently, she stated that the staff did not receive any support from the administration. As the behaviors increased, the students were not being reprimanded for their actions, and there was no plan in place to combat these behaviors. In fact, her administration at that time misinterpreted the act by stating that they could not suspend students.

Due to the above non-support, the teachers of Turner Bozeman rebelled against the act itself. She said, "a lot of teachers felt a certain way about the act because we didn't quite understand what it was, and there was nothing in place to help in the middle with that." Mrs. Barry was clear on the school to prison pipeline that the act was attempting to eradicate but feels that this implementation process was a set-up. She asserted, "I feel like it's a set-up…this gives our kids the sense that you can do what you want to do; there are no rules to follow…the world doesn't work that way for us" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). Mrs. Barry's concern suggests that ignoring these behaviors opens the door to the juvenile justice system. African American juveniles are often viewed as "prone to violence, dangerous, unwilling to take responsibility for their offending behaviors and other fear or resentment provoking attributes (Leiber, 2003; Tittle & Curran, 1988, p. 52). These prejudices and stereotypes towards black bodies ignite the existing racial disparities that enhance greater social control of African Americans through detainment and other extralegal factors (DeJong & Jackson, 1998; Rodriguez, 2010; Peck & Jennings, 2016).

The lack of resources was also an argument for Mrs. Barry. She believes that the unavailability of resources and services prevents the students of Turner Bozeman from receiving the support services needed to combat disruptive behaviors. She admitted that the staff was not trained on restorative practices, a key component highlighted within the disciplinary act. She argued, "Leaving it on a school to school basis is rough because some districts won't care about certain components. If you are going to have to put that bill out there, then there should be some resources that all schools have access to, and this must be consistent throughout" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). She believes the lack of implementation, lack of support, and resources will funnel more students into the pipeline instead of keeping them out.

Critique of Liberalism and Commitment to Social Justice

Mrs. Barry's data combined the tenets critique of liberalism and commitment to social justice to identify how the disciplinary policies and protocols are ineffective because they ignore disciplinary issues on a deeper surface. Her ideology aligns with the concept of colorblindness, which Manning (2009) suggests the inequality of people of color is disregarded. This disregard is prevalent throughout her interpretation of how positive behavior interventions are being utilized at Turner-Bozeman. She is concerned that the implementation of PBIS is misguiding because it is only focusing on positive behaviors and not engaging in understanding the root causes of disruptive behaviors. She asserted, "We have to have to dig deeper and understand why these kids are being suspended so much…we have to deal with hidden biases that teachers have, even if they don't realize they have them, and now, we have to talk about them" (Barry, personal

communication, May 8, 2020). Mrs. Barry argument reflects Bonillia-Silva (1997, 2001, 2003) which calls for the understanding of the "new racism," in which the subordination of minorities have become more covert, subtle and ambiguous in this racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva and Lewis, 2000; Smith, 1995). The weight of race should not solely lie on the teachers. Stoll (2013) believes that educational institutions endorse these color-blind policies, "offering no encouragement for staff to meaningfully address racial barriers and related issues within the schools (p. 8).

Mrs. Barry mentioned that she has, on several occasions, brought the issue up to teachers, but their misinterpretation of PBIS stagnates her advocacy. Teachers believe that PBIS is only about focusing on positive behaviors; meanwhile, disruptive behaviors increase steadily. Mrs. Barry's challenged administrators on how race affects these attempts, yet, she was informed that the issue of race could not be addressed. In this case, Mrs. Barry's school environment represents what Gramsci (1971) labels organic or traditional intellectuals. In her case, she is a "member of an oppressed class who understands the plight of their peers and decides to take action against the reality" (Lustick, 2017). Her advocacy has become a challenge because, when questioning race and disruptive behaviors, the traditional intellectuals, "those who perpetuate the existing structures of domination," fail to tackle these issues (Gramsci, 1971). She believes disruptive behaviors are not being targeted because administrators want quick solutions that protect the adults while ignoring the needs of the students. She is an active participant in school-wide committees focusing on behaviors, including the school improvement committee. She reflected

on the activities and mentioned that no one, including the administration, asked for any input from the teachers when challenges and concerns were mentioned.

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

CRT tenets, critique of liberalism, commitment to social justice and permanence of racism were utilized to identify how this act's implementation has been ineffective in combatting disruptive behaviors at Turner Bozeman Middle School.

Through the lens of the permanence of racism, she reflects on how both approaches, the more punitive as well as the least supportive, were not beneficial in improving the disruptive behaviors. This lack of support and overindulgence of disciplinary consequences prohibits students from receiving proper interventions and behavioral supports that are reflected in P.A. 99-0456. This keeps the progression of positive behaviors stagnant amongst the African American population of students. She believes this lack of support from the administration and services has pinned the staff against the act, creating a more chaotic environment for addressing behaviors.

With the combination of critique of liberalism and commitment to social justice, the war between the idea of colorblindness and positive intervention strategies' effectiveness was at the forefront of the challenges that arise with the behavioral structures of Turner Bozeman. She believes that race must be acknowledged through teacher-student relationships, examining why behaviors occur, and open discussions of race and culture amongst staff and the community in

order for these structures to work. Until this is established at Turner Bozeman, behavioral reforms will continue to be a disservice to the students and their behavioral needs.

At the end of the interview, Mrs. Barry expressed a light-hearted tone about her interview. I asked her did she want to add anything else, and she stated, "I can't even get upset because I am used to this. That is sad to say that I am used to so much chaos and the fact that our students are not getting the services they deserve" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). She continued, "The fact that they want to dismiss that race is an issue, it just blows my mind. Like, they are so scared of offending the white people that come to work that they dismiss the black kids' needs who actually live and families pay taxes in this community. It's mind-boggling" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). She admitted that although a lot of classmates have left the community, she is proud that she actually stayed and is giving back and fighting for the students who are here on the same journey she once was on.

As we approached the end of the interview, she asked me how my interviews were going. I expressed to her that it was a slow process and that teachers really were not lining up to participate. She expressed that the staff was on edge with the changes occurring, and the trust factor was null and void. Being an educator, I told her I understand entirely but will wait patiently to see if other staff members will respond. I thanked her for participating in my study. She said, "This wasn't bad at all. I am impressed, even though you are a Promenade East graduate" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). We laughed, said our goodbyes, and I pressed stop on my voice recorder.

MR. ALWIN TERRY

I received an email from Mr. Terry expressing interest in participating in my study. In his email, he stated that he had a few questions before he could fully engage in the interview. I was very eager to speak to him because I wanted to know what his apprehensions were. I immediately contacted him that same evening because I was done with interviewing, so

When we spoke on the phone, he stated that he was eager to participate but wanted to know his current position's ramifications. I was a little taken aback by his concerns and began telling him about my study and its purpose. He sighed, stating that he just wanted to make sure because he didn't want his answers to create a tense environment for him at work. I assured him that his responses are entirely anonymous and that he didn't have to share anything with me that he felt was too invasive. With that, he said, "Ok, I'm all in." We both laughed, and I told him that I just wanted to get his perspective, nothing more, nothing less. We scheduled an interview for the following week at the local coffee shop.

Two days before we were scheduled to meet, Mr. Terry called and asked if we could schedule our interview on Zoom. He stated that he had a possible exposure to COVID-19 and wanted to take the necessary precautions for our safety. I agreed and thanked him. We decided to keep our same date and time for the zoom interview. As scheduled, we met on zoom two days later. I asked him how he felt, and he stated that he was feeling fine, just waiting on his test results. I asked him if he wanted to proceed with the interview, and he said, "Absolutely, I am a man of my word." He gave a quick wink and then began to tell his story.

Mr. Terry's Story

I started my career in education about ten years ago. Who would have ever thought that I would be a teacher? I have to tell you about my journey to education because it is a trip. I didn't grow up around here, I grew up out West, and I hated school when I was a kid, absolutely hated it! I was what you would consider that kid, you know, the one that the teacher would always roll her eyes when my name was mentioned, or the one that the teachers gossiped about in the teacher's lounge. I was horrible. That's why everybody that knew me from my childhood found it absolutely hilarious that I am a teacher now, like; who would have ever thought that. The funny thing is I was smart as hell, though. Man, I knew all the answers, especially in Math, which was my favorite subject. I liked math because it was always one way to get the answer. No matter what, two plus two is four; no matter how you look at it, there wasn't any other way to get around to that. But the other subjects… I hated reading, uggghhh and my teacher Ms. Crowder, I hated that lady. It was so boring, and the stories were so lame, had nothing to do with me or my family situation, so I acted up in her class. Hell, I acted up in any class that I had to read. I just hated that stuff.

It wasn't until I got into the higher grades, like seventh and eighth grade, that I figured I actually needed reading. Ugghh (laughter), and my teacher, Mr. Blythe, made sure that all the boys in his class read. He would bring in everything from short stories to sports magazines, whatever he thought we would be interested in. He was extremely strict on the black boys, telling us that we are the reason that he was teaching. I didn't really know what he meant by that until

much later, but yeah, he didn't let up on us. Unfortunately for me, there were really no Mr.

Blythes in high school. I went to a high school known for creating NBA prospects, so it was like

if you didn't hoop, you wasn't shit. Those were the years where I just…you know, those are the

days that I am lucky that I am here to talk about. I grew up in a house full of women; I was the

only male besides my Uncle Elfred. He was like a dad to me, but my real dad, well, I really

didn't have a relationship with him. He came around every now and then, but once I turned

twelve, I was pretty much through with homey. That's another story. Anyway, I did some things

that my own mama don't know. I remember she let me work at the local candy store, and the

dude who owned the place was selling as a side hustle. So I'm selling candy in the front and he

served in the back, yeah, that was crazy. When I got about fifteen, he started letting me serve too,

and I was able to buy all kinds of shoes, clothes. My mom never questioned me about where I

was getting all this money, like how can a lil homey afford Jordans[9] every time they drop off a

candy store salary right? (Laughter) Man, I kept that secret for a long ass time, but I kept my

grades at a decent level, so nobody was on my back about school or anything.

I really didn't do the gang thing cuz I was just trying to be a lil doughboy, but I knew that

had to come to an end, and it did my Senior Year of high school. One night I was working at the

store, and the owner was serving in the back. Things went left, and all I know is, there were

gunshots. I ran out the back of the store into the alley, and I swear, I bent down and felt the wind

of the bullet fly over my head! That scared the living shit out of me. The police had the store

---

[9] Referencing Nike Air Jordan Sneakers

surrounded in like seconds, and I just ran through the alley all the way home. I knew that was God saying, boy, get yo act together! I dropped everything at that point and laid low for the rest of the school year. It was at that that I was like, ok, I gotta get out of here for a bit, and I enrolled that next year at an HBCU. Being a city boy all my life, I knew that the South would bore me to death. But with everything going on, I was like; I got to do something different. So off to Louisiana, I went me and my Nike duffel bag.

I don't know, but the south had a different swag to it like it was different. The women were different (laughter); it was just different. I think that HBCU saved me because I was around black people that wanted to do something. I am at a school with men my age who wanted to be doctors and lawyers, black men my age who had their life goals mapped out. I was also around black men that was just on that…you know… but it was like, hell, we all in school for something so damn. It was cool. I wanted to go into computers, but it wasn't until I volunteered at the local community center that changed all that for me. I ain't gon lie, I ain't no volunteering type dude, and I initially signed up because I was volunteering with a Greek organization. I was on that, so part of that whole thing was doing volunteer work, and I'm glad I did it because that is where I found my love for teaching. I saw these kids who looked like me, and they were in similar situations as me. At that moment, I knew that this whole process was on purpose, and I knew that teaching was what I was supposed to do. Five years later, I graduated and made my way back to a place that I felt needed me the most, home.

So my first job was on the South Side, and when I tell you, (laughter) those kids were buck for real. I was like, what the entire hell is going on here? They were running the school. It seemed like the teachers didn't really have control. Man, one day, some girls got into a fight, and the principal had them in the office. Their parents showed up, and they started throwing hands right in the office. The principal had to call the police, and it was crazy. It was like, nothing was happening there! They didn't have any structures in place, kids were getting suspended, but came back worse than when they left. It was stressful. The administration did not support the teachers at all. The kids can say whatever they wanted, and the principal would believe the students. One time, the kid lied on the teacher and said that the teacher cussed at him. The principal didn't even ask the teachers what happened, just told that he was getting written up. It was bad. The kids would say, "You better not say nothing to me, or I will have you fired." The kids ran that school. But it was crazy because they were getting suspended left and right. Like I said before, they ran it, but they were also sent home, and they came back worse than when they left. I knew I had to get out of there or find me another career. I only stayed there that one year, and then I was like, I'm out! One of my frat brothers worked in Yatesville, the town over from here, and was saying that they had openings. I went online and filled out the application for Shoreville and Yatesville; both had positions available. I said to myself, whoever bites first, I'm going, and Shoreville responded first, so here I am nine years later.

Discipline at Turner-Bozeman was way different from my South Side adventure (laughter). I ain't gonna sit here and say the kids were angels because we have our share of the Lord Have Mercies…but how it was handled was way different. Our administrators at the time

supported us through consequences and the write-ups. They served their detentions and stuff; sometimes, if it really went left, they would get suspended. That often happened, though. We always had parent meetings as well. But real talk, most of the time, the kids were getting suspended. At the time, it was like, ok, you gotta go! You are doing some stupid stuff right now, or your behavior is out of control; you need some time off. When they would get suspended, that would be that. We did the in-school suspension thing as well. But I'm about to be honest though. The same kids seemed to get suspended or stayed in trouble. And it got to the point where it was like, oh he suspended again, or she was fighting again, well, see you in ten days. It was a cycle.

I always tried to mentor the kids because I hated it when they got suspended. It was like damn, now what are they going to do all this time they are away. I would always let them make up work and tests because I didn't think that was fair at all. I also tried to get all the kids who reminded me of myself in my class. I can't tell you how many fights I stopped or how many behaviors I curbed just because I knew that it was going to go left if they were suspended. I had to also have cool relationships with the parents because that would help me out a lot. I always believed in advocating for my kids because I know that the world will not give them a second look. I know what is out there, and I know that the streets are waiting to swallow them up. I can't let that happen. If it does, I know I didn't do my part, and I know it takes more than interventions to help with that.

When you discuss interventions, I don't really recall interventions back in the day. Suspensions were the interventions. I do remember our kids doing writing assignments. Do I

really think that was effective? Naw, not really. I know the kids hated it because they were super long and usually written by famous African Americans. I remember one time, the principal made one of my girls write the poem by Maya Angelou, Phenomenal Woman. I remember she cursed under her breath as she wrote it during her in-school suspension, but I get what the principal was trying to do. But she did have a fight the next week, though (Laughter), but I understood what the principal was trying to do. It seemed like the kids were controlled under fear, they hated getting in trouble, but it's like, they didn't know how to stay out of trouble. I remember this one parent, man, oh man. She told her son and daughter they better fight because if they got beaten up at school, she was going to whip them ass when they got home. Can you imagine trying to mentor these two, trying to convince them not to fight when momma is telling them otherwise? Their own momma, who do you think they wound up listening to?

I mean, I get why discipline needed to be reformed; I just wish the implementation process was different here. I am about to be real candid right now. In the last few years, the discipline has changed. We went from the support of the administration to, don't come to the office. We went from, let's call and set up a parent meeting to if the kid did something x amount of times, then what do you do next. It's like, so you tell me what is next. Teachers are frustrated, and the admin is posted up in the office. What are they doing? I can't call it! But I will say, this new thing, whatever it is, is making our school worse, real talk. I remember when they rolled out SB100, which is now something else. I didn't take it seriously because they brushed through it so fast that I was like, oh, this shit ain't gon last. As years went on, it was like ok, so this is sticking around, but then it was like, yeah, by the way, we can't suspend kids. It is cool with me, but I'm

like, so how do we keep them in without the extra drama? Crickets! I remember going to one of my former administrators and asking what the plan is because this kid is super disrespectful and something needs to be done. You have to understand if I complain about a kid, it's serious.

Anyway, she looked at me and said, "what do you think you need to do?" I was done, and I never approached her again about discipline. That was the craziest thing I have ever heard. Many of us tried to create programs and other things for the kids, but it was an uphill battle without support. We did the detention thing, and we even tried to inquire about restorative justice. We were supposed to have some professional development on it, but we are still waiting on that. I can't tell you if that will work, because we haven't done it. I have read up on it, and as I reflect on it, I can say that I tried before there was a name to it. But I think if more teachers had a passion for teaching, they would be able to build those relationships with their kids and make it happen.

When they rolled this thing out, it was a quick presentation. They showed us the current data and basically gave us a tongue lashing. The biggest concern was that we had way too many suspensions, and the State was looking down on districts that had these astronomical numbers. We knew our numbers were up there, because like I said, our kids were being suspended left and right. So in my head, I'm thinking ok, cool, what are we going to put in place to help out with this. I'm still really waiting, and that was some years ago. I mean, I get it. There are more than just suspensions, but it's like, so what else? Don't get me wrong, we have some supports like our social workers and deans, but that is not enough. The presentation was nice, full of charts and

graphs, but what else? Our principal at the time kept saying that we cant suspend the kids, so it was left up to us to implement those "interventions."

I really don't care for this act because honestly, like I see why they attempted to do it, but come on now, people, how can we forge ahead with this when we don't have the tools to pull this off? Man, these kids are wild! They know that ain't nothing happening, no suspensions, so now, they are just doing whatever! Its chaos. My heart aches at the fact that these kids don't realize that accountability is going to slap them in the face one way or the other. There is no such thing as, oh, I can do whatever I want and serve no consequences in the real world. Let me go rob a bank; I am going to jail. No one is going to do restorative talks with me or ask me what I would have done differently. As a black man in this society? Please, you already know what the outcome could be! Watch the news every night! So why do they think that it is ok to have these kids thinking that ain't shit gonna happen to do. We talk about the school to prison pipeline! Ha, ok, we are really feeding them to the pipeline with this mentality. Like, is this their way of making sure that these kids lag behind everybody else? It's like, we gotta make sure they don't catch up to the white kids? I always believed that school fuel racism! Just me on my soapbox.

I just think if you gonna enact something, there needs to be equal access. I can't even say that schools in impoverished communities don't have access, but my Frat brother, who works in the neighboring district, doesn't have restorative training at their middle school either. We laugh about it now because he jokes all the time with I guess we are supposed to do this by magic and hard wishing. They also are in need of supports, like behavioral specialists and more student

231

services. I can't say that schools in impoverished communities don't have access, but I can say that we don't have it. I can only speak for us and what I know! And we ain't got it! They are asking us to do something that we are not trained to do, they are not providing us with the necessary resources, yet are expecting all these great things to happen. Our kids cant tell you what restorative justice is because we don't do it. We don't have access to it. Yet, we are supposed to use restorative interventions? This is a joke."

I also just wish we had clear expectations that everyone believed in. Our teachers laugh at this policy because we don't live it. They don't suspend to make it look good, I guess, but we don't really have anything in place. I think what holds the building together is the teachers who are trying. There are some teachers who will stay late and get to work early. They go above and beyond despite the lack of administrative support. They build relationships with the families and try to get down to the bottom of what is really going on. We just need more administrative support, and they have to back us! They have to support us! I have noticed that the Superintendent has been in the building a lot this year, so maybe they are looking at how discipline is being handled. I don't know, but something needs to be done.

As for this act or whatever, we need help! I have no problem fighting for the kids because that is what I do daily. I do all of the above to ensure that the students that enter my classroom get what they need. I try my hardest every day to give it to them. That is why I came back. I wanted to reach the kids who look like me, who had my struggles. I don't want any of my kids to face gunfire or have to worry about other factors that control their days. It's tough out here, and

the community needs to be involved in ensuring that the kids have a fair chance. That is why I came back. I always believe that if our kids had help with the real issues that they are dealing with, they would have a better school relationship. But as long as we leave these issues unaddressed, the cycle will continue. That's just my opinion.

Mr. Terry's Story through CRT Framework

The tenets of CRT in Mr. Terry's data highlighted his ideals of racism through the implementation processes of P.A. 99-0456. In my analysis and coding, I found two tenets of CRT that repeatedly emerged in Mr. Terry's counter-story: the permanence of racism and critique of liberalism. Based on his accounts and experiences, I believe these tenets resonated throughout his data to explain why institutional racism has perpetuated through Turner-Bozeman's implementation of this disciplinary reform, including the act itself.

Permanence of Racism

Yosso (2002) described the permanence of racism as this Eurocentric construct that propels one racial group over another. Through his accounts, Mr. Terry criticizes the lack of accountability the act holds for disruptive behaviors and consequences, fueling the pipeline between school and prison for African American students. He portrays this act as a failure to African American youth and their dealings in the real world. Frazier et al.(1992) articulate that communal factors such as poverty, income inequality, and urbanization increases minority youth's interaction with the juvenile justice system. Lewis and Diamon (2015) denoted that

African-American students carry a racial penalty that increases their chances of experiencing "increased surveillance, restricted freedom and suspicion about intentions" (p.78). These stereotypes are what Mr. Terry believes the lack of accountability will further damage the student's future. He stated, "My heart aches at the fact that these kids don't realize that accountability is going to slap them in the face one way or the other" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

Mr. Terry's argument for the permanence of institutional racism stems from his ideology of resource inaccessibility due to the lack of resource funding. He is concerned that African American students will lag behind the curve due to Turner Bozeman's inability to achieve the act's expectations. He also expressed that his school lacked resources, such as additional behavioral supports and student services. He believes that funding limits their ability to ensure that their students receive proper behavioral support and services. He believes that due to the lack of funding and professional development opportunities for enhancing the restorative piece, the school may revert to punitive and exclusionary practices. He stated, "Our teachers laugh at this policy because we don't live it. They [administrators] don't suspend to make it look good, I guess, but we don't have anything in place" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020). He believes the lack of structures and student support services is due to the lack of funding, continuing institutional racism within the school's disciplinary policies. Milner and Williams (2008) found that when African-American students encounter inequitable school policies and practices, their educational experiences and future opportunities are negatively impacted.

Critique of Liberalism

Although he believes that restorative practices are somewhat essential in combatting disruptive behaviors for his students, he feels that the color blind disciplinary policy is the driving force that advances African American students' institutional racism experiences. Stoll (2013) believes, "teachers fail to address the persistent realities of racism and tend to draw on color-blind discursive strategies when racial matters surface in school, dismissing racial episodes when they occur." Mr. Terry questions the validity of the act by stating, "Is this their way of making sure that the kids lag behind everybody else? It's like, we gotta make sure they don't catch up to the white kids. I always believed school fuels racism" (Terry, personal communication, June, 6, 2020). Mr. Terry believes that turning a blind eye to these disruptive behaviors will widen the discipline gap between the students of Turner-Bozeman and their white peers. Alvaré (2018) stated that these forms of color-blind policies ignore structural barriers. When race is not viewed as a factor, these policies are portrayed as remedies to the problem, which safeguards these inequitable practices (Solomona et al., 2005). Mr. Terry stated, "I know what is out there, and I know that the streets are waiting to swallow them up. I can't let that happen. If it does, I know I didn't do my part, and I know it takes more than one size fits all interventions to help with that" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

Through CRT, Mr. Terry's data highlighted the critique of liberalism and the permanence of racism to identify how institutional racism plays a role in the disciplinary policy of Turner

Bozeman. Mr. Terry's usage of the permanence of racism focused on the lack of accountability that may escalate disruptive student behaviors. In his interview, he noted that he had observed an increase in disruptive behaviors at Turner Bozeman, and the lack of student accountability was the main culprit. He fears that without proper funding for culturally responsive interventions and resources, this act hinders student behavioral advancements, causing the school to continue the prison pipeline in low socioeconomic communities like Shoreville. He also believes that these circumstances are intentional, deliberately in place to ensure that African American students are left behind when it comes to discipline. He also acknowledges that race plays a significant role in addressing student behavior, and without proper accountability, African American students will not be able to compete with their white peers.

At the end of the interview, I asked Mr. Terry what took him so long to respond to my emails. He said, "Honestly, I wasn't going to. I saw it when you posted it, and I was like, nope, this is a trap. But then I kept thinking about it, and I said to myself, I have to help this sister out. I can't say that I am for the kids and then be scared to share a story that can help them. I didn't sign up for teaching to be silent. This is not the time for silence because it's like I am creating violence against them if I don't speak out" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020). He continued, "We do have a lot going on, and I am sure that many teachers want to speak out, but they don't know who they are speaking to. They don't know if this is a trap to see who is…the trust factor is dead for real." He took a long sigh and asked, "Can I just say that all this is just about racism? I mean, look at our current situation and who our leaders are. It's all racist, and I don't care what policy they want to put in place. Race is the driving force of it. White kids are

236

always going to be the group that receives the benefits. Always! I don't care who created this. White people are the beneficiaries of it all" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

As we approached the end of the interview, he thanked me for allowing him to participate and apologized for acting on it so late. I told him not to worry about that and that I am grateful that he decided to contact me. I thanked him for being part of my study, and he said, "You know, at first, I was nervous about if they would know this is me, but sometimes the truth hurts, and people need to hear when their game is not on point. It's time for our kids to get what they deserve" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020). I told him that his students were lucky to have him, we said our goodbyes, and I pressed stop on my voice recorder.

MRS. KAJAH OCASIO-MATTHEWS

I can honestly say that Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews was the most eager participant of all. When I posted my request for teacher participants, she was the first to respond. However, we ended up playing phone tag for a few days due to busy schedules. When finally connected, we set up our Zoom conference due to the strict guidelines of COVID-19.

When the interview began, I provided her with the standard intro and purpose of my study. I could tell that although she was excited about participating, she had many wonderings, especially about who I was, who I knew, and how did I know them, and so on. It became a bit peculiar to me until I asked her why she was asking me so many questions. She stated that at this time, there were so many things going on that she just wanted to make sure that she answered the questions correctly. I didn't want to pry further because I wanted to ensure her comfort with my study. So, I left it alone.

Before I dived into the interview, I asked Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews if she needed to be answered before we began. She said, "No, I'm okay now, really, I am." I thanked her again for participating, re-read the introduction, and heavily stressed the part on anonymity. She thanked me, and then, she began to tell her story.

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews' Story

My teaching journey may have taken a different approach than other educators. I started teaching later in life. I am in my 50s, but I have only been teaching for a few years. I started in an affluent district, and then I sought a Catholic school position, don't ask me why. My experience in the affluent neighborhood was ok, but there really wasn't a challenge. The kids have the resources and support, so it was just something that I didn't find fulfilling. From there, I got the call from our Superintendent about a position here. I was married at 23. I dropped out of college, and I got married. I was a housewife and a mother. It gave me so much personal gratification. It just filled me with so much on so many levels to be a full-time mom, a stay-at-home mom. The whole role of motherhood and the stay-at-home… I know some people don't have that opportunity.

My parents were business owners in Chicago when I was growing up, so I had a fairly comfortable childhood and upbringing. I had a live-in nanny. That's something that I don't like to talk about, but I'm not ashamed of it. But when I mention it to people, they don't understand. I am one of ten children. But my parents were prominent business owners, so they provided a very comfortable and secure childhood. There was really nothing that I didn't go without growing up. But as an adult, I live as a minimalist. So I've been there, done that, and there's nothing that I can say, "Oh, my heart wants for this or I desire for that." I know its value, so I live as a minimalist, like, I have the very bare minimum to live, like a couch, a TV, a bed, and my clothing, that's it.

But my journey is just different, like I really didn't have a pot to piss in when I got

divorced, so I went back to school. I contacted an older teacher and inquired about teaching, and

he gave me the information, so I went back. I was like relearning everything, and so I worked

two jobs, working at night and going to school during the day. I was packing grocery shelves,

cleaning bathrooms, mopping, and sweeping. I did it, and it humbled me. I would say from what

I came from, and now I'm sweeping and mopping floors and cleaning toilets. I am not tooting

my own horn, but I think that having had that life experience has helped shape who I am today as

a teacher. I have had challenges, though. I work with students in grades sixth through eight, and

they are constantly trying to test and push and test my patience. But it's fun! My journey at

Turner Bozeman began last year, and I was hired as a Spanish teacher. I did that because that's

what I love to do. But this past school year, I was approached by the bilingual coordinator to take

a new role of being a bilingual teacher.

Being in this role, I see the entire school, students in all grade levels, and the inner

workings of each classroom and teacher practices. This also includes discipline. We have

African American students as well as Hispanics. There are many variables that play into how the

children will respond to discipline that we have in place and how much the parents support that.

That is probably the most important thing that has a direct effect on how the children react and

respect the discipline that we have in place. I believe if you don't have parental support, it's like a

rat race. It really is. I would say that..I can only speak for myself because within the four walls of

my classroom, I enforce and support the school discipline program that we have in place. I also

have classroom rules that I expect every single student to adhere. Because I am a stickler for

rules in my own classroom, I tend to support the discipline program at my school because I am an extension of that school.

Some teachers in my building have an ego trip, and they like to exercise that power, and that's not cool. So I think that by interpreting the rules set in stone by my school and my district, to interpret them in a way that makes it relevant for them and so that they understand. I think my students respond to me that way, and I hope that they understand. We talk through each problem. If I need support, I go for help. But lately, the behaviors have escalated, especially in the hallway. The kids have three minutes to go from point A to point B. They have a tendency to take upon it themselves to congregate in the hallway, and there are little pockets where there are no cameras, and they use the stairwell to do as they please. There is a lot of pushing and shoving and touching, which is not appropriate. They are so used to testing the boundaries, and some students believe that the rules don't apply to them. If they have that type of attitude, it is clear that there are no rules at home.

We also have parents that tell the kids that they don't have to listen to the teachers. This gives the students the momentum and permission to engage in disruptive behaviors because their parents encourage it. That is not good, because we're working…we tell parents we are your partner, we support you, but we also need you to support us. I know that that's been repeated time and time during conferences, etc., but it's not registering with the parents, especially the young parents. You can tell the students whose parents really don't have an interest in school discipline. Those are the ones that come to school and cause havoc. Those are the disrespectful ones. Their parents probably had a difficult time as a student with school rules, so the cycle

continues. Again, children will test the boundaries. I think for me as a teacher, I find myself repeating expectations every day. Although I don't mind it, if it was reiterated and expected at home, we would find ourselves spending less time doing it and having more time for teaching.

We do have a system in place, but most of us think that it's not really effective. Teachers have a form that we fill out, and it's like an incident report for lack of a better word. I can't think of the name offhand, but it's like if two children decide to fight, I would write that up and send them to the office. From there, the principal or deans would handle that. You just send that form down to the office, and the administrators would eventually handle it. I have definitely seen a surge in violence at our school. It's to the point where the kids are fighting because they are looking at each other wrong. I think girls are worse than boys. I don't know why. The boys disagree and tend to forget about it, but the girls…they let it stew and simmer. They ponder on it, plot and then pounce! It can last for months, while the boys… two boys fought at lunch, and by the end of the day, they were friends. They literally moved on. I guess women and men are wired differently!

The behaviors have escalated, and from what I have seen, I mean, you know, I do periodically go down and check my mailbox between periods. I see chairs in the office being filled by children called in for fighting or whatever. Our deans are completely inundated with these problems, disciplinary problems. I have seen parents being called in, and I have seen many kids being suspended, and I'm like, what good is that going to do? That's just my opinion. I understand that they have to remove the child from school, maybe, but I don't know… I'm just honest. I'm not pointing fingers, but I just think it's gotta be revamped. We have to see a change

because it's not getting any better. Of my time here, it's mostly the African American children, and I have seen a disparity where they are called in more and suspended more.

I had a student whose mom worked two jobs, and she is a single mother. Sometimes our parents are tired and overwhelmed. The sad part is when our students are called in the office, and sometimes you can see the huge disconnect they have with their parents. The body language gives it away. One time, I saw the disrespect from this young girl to her mother. The mother had no handle on it and had no control over her child…her own child. And again, you have to think as a mother, as a woman, what is she doing all of these years? How were you raising or not raising your daughter? How did it get this bad? So now, teachers are receiving the tail end of those problems. It can seem like children are not being raised properly. You don't need a two-parent household to raise a child properly, though. I just think about my experiences, and I got divorced after seventeen years of marriage. I raised my daughter as my child, not my friend. A parent has to set those specific and clear boundaries. Some of our parents believe that they have to be their child's best friend so that they won't lose this connection, but I beg to differ. Kids need parents, and the problems we face as teachers is that these parents want an extended friendship with their kids, which is extremely unhealthy. The parents need to understand that their job is to be the child's guide. Kids need to be set on a straight path because if the parents don't do it, they will search outside their house for guidance, which opens up another set of troubles.

This is proof that when you hear the adage, it starts at home; it really does. You have to be a parent first. There is definitely a disconnect because the parents don't even come in

243

anymore, nor do they respond to emails and phone calls. So, unfortunately, the discipline issues are sometimes never resolved. I can speak from experience that when I speak with Hispanic parents, I have received more respect and more understanding, there is a better rapport. They feel embarrassed when I call home. Some of the African American homes that I contact, they are offended that I am calling, and the barrier goes up. They wanna fight me, and they become extremely argumentative. I have to let them know that I am supporting the family constantly, and if we work together, the outcome will be great for their children.

I do have concerns, though, because our disciplinary policies are a bit punitive and systematic. The deans do their best to try to de-escalate situations, but they get disrespected in the process. I was also taught to respect authority but not fear it, but these kids do not respect or fear it. They use profanity, and they don't think before they speak. But the deans have the students fill out the "my story" sheets and then deal with the issue from there. They attempt to do the conflict resolution. Our staff has done a tremendous job of trying to keep the students safe and showing them how to show respect for self and respect for others. But it is definitely a challenge. I know that there is some form of behavioral reform that we should be following, but honestly, I only knew very little. I hear small talk in the teacher's lounge. That's when I hear, as I am warming up my food, teachers saying, "What good is it to have a disciplinary thing in place when they're not even being suspended? They are coming back to school, and nothing is being done."

Our teachers look at this whatever, and they feel like it's a joke. They feel that we've lost grip, and the children see this. We have students smoking in the bathroom, and nothing is being

done about it. There were students actually smoking weed in the bathroom, and it's a joke. But I fault not only the school's policy but the parents. What are the parents doing at home to enforce and support the disciplinary actions of the school? I cannot honestly sit here and tell you that they are not calling parents, but I can say that the parents are not responding or reacting in support of the school. It's a joke, and we are losing this battle. Actually, this has made it worse. It makes us teachers look weak. The students look at us like we are a joke. They come in, and they don't have on a proper uniform; they are breaking the rules. I have heard them say, "I can keep breaking the rules, nothing is going to happen to me, you can call my mama, she doesn't care either."

We have our social workers, but they are not focused on these kinds of behaviors because they are dealing with girls cutting themselves or our issues with suicide attempts. It's mostly our Hispanic girls that are doing the cutting, so our social workers and psychologists are busy working with that. So when our student bathrooms are destroyed at least three to four times a week, we are relying on the deans for that. I'm not saying graffiti; I'm talking about physically removing attachments, like the soap dispensers being ripped out the wall and shoes being shoved down the toilets. And are the parents held accountable for this? Absolutely not! There is no accountability for the students or their parents. It's really a joke. These kids are defacing public property with malintent, and nothing is being done. It's unfortunate because these students have no respect for themselves, they have no respect for others, and this bill does nothing to address that here at Turner Bozeman. When are the parents going to be held accountable?

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews' Story through CRT Framework

Intersectionality and the Permanence of Racism

Unlike my previous participants, Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews' data took a different path

through my use of CRT as a theoretical framework of CRT. In my analysis and coding, I

combined the tenets of intersectionality and the permanence of racism to identify how

institutional racism influences disciplinary policies and the parent's ability to support school-

wide behavioral reform. Based on her accounts and experiences, I believe these tenets repeatedly

emerged throughout her narrative to explain why the absence of parental accountability offsets

the outcomes designed by P.A. 99-0456. Through these tenets, she examines the relationship

between race, family, and school to determine the act's ineffectiveness on disruptive behaviors.

Critical race theorists have suggested that when racism and other forms of oppression

intersect, it "influences the lived experiences of People of Color" (Bartlett & Brayboy, 2005;

Parker & Lynn, 2002; Crenshaw, 1988). Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews focuses on the lives of the

parents and their role in disciplining their children. She aligns their socioeconomic status and

race to their attitude towards discipline. She suggests that children are not appropriately raised

due to their low socioeconomic status. She noted how many of her students are from single-

parent households, and often mom is working two jobs to support the family. Blaisdell's (2015)

study on race and teacher preparation and training found that cultural deficiency arguments

blamed students, their families, and cultural orientation for their education shortcomings. She

believes this factor explains the disconnect between parents and children, often leading to

students interpreting rules without proper support and guidance from home. She commented, "A parent has to set those specific and clear boundaries. Some of our parents believe that they have to be their child's best friend so that they won't lose this connection, but I beg to differ" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). Consequently, the parents are advocating for their children with limited opportunities yet are still assigned blame for their child's disciplinary challenges, often becoming alienated from the school community (Anyon et al., 2018).

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews criticized the act's ability to acknowledge the communal effects that hinder the school's ability to combat disruptive behaviors. In fact, she alludes to this act as a source for perpetuating the same racist disciplinary practices that were present before the reform. She stated, "Of my time here, which has only been a year, it's mostly the African American children, and I have seen a disparity where they are called in more and suspended more" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). She also referred to the current disciplinary practices in her building as punitive and a bit unsystematic. She believes that disruptive behaviors' lack of consequences presents a false sense of reality, which widens the disciplinary gap between African American and white students.

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews reoccurring concern lies within a lack of parental accountability. She believes this is the barrier that hinders the African American population in her building from improving their behavioral status. She reflects on her experiences at Turner-Bozeman, stressing how the parent's negative attitudes towards school policies are reflective in their child's

247

behavior. She stated, "You can tell the students whose parents really don't have an interest in school discipline; those are the ones that come to school and cause havoc. Those are the disrespectful ones. Their parents probably had a difficult time as a student with school rules, so the cycle continues" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). Her argument reflects the permanence of racism by assuming that African American parents are not actively involved because they don't want to be held accountable. Harry e al., (1995) longitudinal study found that inner-city African American parent involvement was low, not due to the lack of caring for their children, but school imposed limitations and barriers that caused frustration and anxiety. Abrams and Gibbs's (2002) study showed that African American parents felt ignored, dismissed, and even insulted by their child's teacher or an administrator. Watson-Hill (2013) notes that "formidable barriers such as culture, parents' past experiences, parent workload, and time constraints are inhibiting parents from being fully involved" (p. 16). Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) identify this form of racism as institutional power that African Americans have never obtained.

Still, Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews believes this ideology is evident through their lack of responses to emails, phone calls, and other communication outlets when dealing with student disruptive behaviors. She relives her experiences by suggesting that some African American families are offended and argumentative when she contacts them for behaviors.

Summary and Reflective Thoughts

The CRT tenets of the permanence of racism and intersectionality were combined to identify how race and socioeconomic status influence institutional racist practices within disciplinary practices at Turner-Bozeman middle school. Through her narrative, she expresses concerns about school discipline's attitudes and its alignment to the community's high poverty levels. She believes that these factors explain why combatting discipline is difficult because parents are not fully engaged in student behavior, but more so in providing funding for the household. In doing so, student behaviors are increasing because of this parental disconnect. Although Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews is concerned about the school's implementation process, her focus centralized on the parent's role and how this behavioral reform fails to hold parents accountable for their children's actions.

Towards the end of the interview, Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews expressed her frustration with parent accountability. She stated, "I don't know, but I am just at my wit's end with this. Everything is on the school, and it's all about what the teachers are doing, and if things go wrong, oh, it's the teacher's fault. When are the policymakers going to wake up and realize that it's not the teachers that should be responsible for these behaviors? When are the parents going to be held accountable" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). She expressed her disappointment in the act because she believed there is nothing written that includes parents as a source for interventions as well. She stated, "there must be something that the parents have to do, like a mandatory parent university or mandatory parent meeting whereas if their child gets

in trouble, they have to come and participate in coaching or counseling with their child" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). She believes that students will still act out no matter what is implemented, especially if they know their parents are not actively engaged in their academic and behavioral success.

I mentioned to Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews that her concerns were quite different than other participants in my research study. She laughed, saying that she wasn't surprised. She admitted that she didn't believe in blaming her administrators or teachers for behavioral issues. She reiterated that there are rules in place, and they are in place for a reason. It's not natural for students to come into a building, destroy and deface property, disrespect teachers, and get away with it. She continued to stress that parents are the reason why these behaviors are present, and no reform will change the way parents are ignoring the needs of their children. She stated that our practices would continue on the path of exclusion because our hands are tied at this time.

After we shared small talk about the interview process's next steps, I thanked her for her participation. She said, "I hope I wasn't too long-winded." I reassured her that it was ok, we said our goodbyes, and I pressed stop on my voice recorder.

DO LIKE MINDS THINK ALIKE? EDUCATORS' THEMES

Four educators, each having different experiences and journeys into education, exhibited similar sentiments about the disciplinary policy that was created to combat disruptive behaviors and decrease suspensions and expulsions of African American students. From the narratives of Ms. Coleman, Mrs. Barry, Mr. Terry, and Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews, the following themes emerged:

experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456, the process of implementation, and restorative racism or restorative practices. These themes are reflected through their perspectives, the research literature on zero-tolerance policies, and their existence in local terms when it comes to policy reform of P.A. 99-0456. Whether it was a lack of support from the administration, inconsistencies with the implementation of school discipline policies, or lack of parental involvement and accountability, the educators at Turner Bozeman Middle School shared these commonalities in their experiences and their hopes to behavioral practices in handling disruptive behaviors within their building.

Theme 1: Experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456

The first thematic category was determined by responses related to the experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456. Key factors included experiences with punitive consequences, the use of culturally relevant interventions, inconsistencies with failing systematic procedures, and ineffective rules. Table 1 (Appendix F) illustrates the educator's responses and highlighted common responses. This table outlines the educators experiences with discipline before P.A.99-0456 was implemented, including punitive consequences, disruptive behaviors and school climate.

Ms. Coleman reflected on her experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456 as a time of punitive action to students who needed additional supports. She takes the reader on a journey through her first years of teaching, highlighting students in her alternative learning class that was excluded from the public school setting due to severe behaviors. Consequently, she noted, "the

saddest part is, they knew no one cared about them" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020). This sentiment was evident as she described the learning environment as a trailer and not a welcoming classroom.

Mrs. Barry had a different perspective and experience about discipline before the onset of P.A. 99-0456 due to her connection to Turner Bozeman. She believed that discipline and consequences before the new disciplinary reform were more effective because it provided more structure and order. She believes that the protocols that were in place centered around the administration's level of authority. She credited the administrator's role at the time for providing culturally relevant interventions and meaningful consequences. Mrs. Barry reflects, "our principal had writing assignments as consequences, and no one wanted to do that…it seemed like discipline was her thing, and order was there"(Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). She also reflected on the hands-on approach but stressed that this produced more suspensions for students, especially African American students, yet, she argued that this system of consequences worked.

Mr. Terry's two experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456 were quite different in the approach, yet the outcome was similar, African American students were getting suspended on a constant basis. He discussed how his earliest experience with school discipline as a teacher mostly consisted of punitive consequences. He stated that students were suspended, yet they came back from their suspension worse than before they participated in the disruptive behaviors. He complained that the school environment lacked structure and support for the educators.

252

When he became employed at Turner Bozeman, he explained that there was more order and support. However, the students were still being suspended. Mr. Terry asserted, "the same kids seemed to get suspended or stayed in trouble…it was a cycle" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020). He admitted that even though Turner Bozeman had more supports in place, like parent conferences and more administrative involvement, there is still something missing from the process. He stated that this became the norm, and it wasn't being remedied.

<u>Summary</u>

The use of punitive measures and consequences resonated throughout the educator's experiences with discipline before implementing P.A. 99-0456. Their experiences mirrored the same outcome, student behaviors were not being addressed, and student behaviors worsened instead of improving. These experiences correlate with the administrators' experiences as causing more harm than good for combatting disruptive behaviors. In most instances, suspensions and punitive consequences caused more chaos.

Theme 2: Processes of Implementation

The second thematic category, the implementation process, was determined by the responses related to the implementation of P.A. 99-0456. Key factors included lack of effective systems, inaccuracies with the meaning of the act regarding student discipline and consequences,

lack support from administration. Table 2 (Appendix F) illustrates the teacher's responses and the highlighted common themes of two of four participants[10].

Mrs. Barry reflected on the implementation process as a quick informational, covering concepts, and reassuring the staff that things were going to be different. She noted that they worked as a team, trying to develop various programs and procedures to combat the disruptive behaviors they were experiencing. However, Mrs. Barry stated that the misinterpretation of the act from the administration turned this promise into chaos. She asserted, "I have even heard our Principal at the time say, well, you know the Senate Bill said we couldn't suspend, so…and then I'm like, so what the plan? If we can't suspend, then we need to have a plan in place. Nobody's ever come up with a solid plan" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). This lack of planning and preparation caused a rift between the teachers and the administration. Mrs. Barry concluded, "We really didn't see changes in student behaviors, and unfortunately, we really didn't get extra supports we needed. As a matter of fact, student behaviors got worse" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020).

In conjunction with Mrs. Barry, Mr. Terry was also employed at Turner Bozeman during the implementation process. He admitted that discipline approaches were different from his previous experience, but the implementation faltered in combatting disruptive behaviors. He stated, "When they rolled this thing out, it was a quick presentation. They showed us the current

---

[10] Note- Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews and Ms. Coleman responses are not recorded in this section because they were not employed at Turner-Bozeman during the implementation process.

data and basically gave us a tongue lashing. The biggest concern was that we had way too many suspensions, and the State was looking down on districts that had these astronomical numbers" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020). Mr. Terry insists that the administration spent its time reprimanding the staff on the discipline data but failed to move forward with a school-wide discipline plan. He believes because the administration did not have a solid implementation plan, the teaching staff didn't take the reform seriously, mostly assuming that this would blow over. He reflected when he had a disrespectful student, and he sought direction from an administration. He mentioned that the administration told him to reflect on his current actions, determining how he should handle the disruptive situation. This lack of guidance forced the staff to resume punitive avenues for these behaviors. Mr. Terry admitted that teachers gave up on the idea of discipline reform when the administration failed to provide the necessary supports, such as restorative practice in-services and assistance with interventions.

Summary

Both participants stressed that the lack of preparation and implementation created more problems to combatting student behaviors than solutions. They admitted that these misinterpretations of the policy increased punitive outcomes and hindered teacher buy-in. The focus centered more on what the teachers were not doing and less on the needs of the students.

255

Theme 3: Good intentions with questionable outcomes

The third thematic category was determined by the responses centered around the lack of teacher buy-in, lack of student accountability and resources, and teacher's perspective of lack of discipline and consequences. It prompted the teacher participants in this study to question the outcomes of this discipline reform. Table 3 (Appendix F) illustrates the responses of the teacher participants.

Ms. Coleman notes that this act could have good intentions if the right staff members were educating the students of Turner Bozeman Middle School. She believes that student behaviors do not decrease because they do not share their students' same cultural experiences. This inability to relate to their students creates an irreparable wedge between both components. Mrs. Coleman reflected on the concept of respect being earned and the staff's definition of respect being received only because they are adults. She stated, "when I saw this reform being implemented in our district, it comes off disingenuine, and I think if there is anything our students hate more than being patronized, is someone who is fake, or who they perceive as fake. They don't want nothing from nobody that don't care; it's not an incentive because they don't care about you because they don't feel like you care about them" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020). She concluded that she believes students are taught every day by individuals that do not have a general interest in their wellbeing.

Ms. Coleman also believes that the lack of expectations of implementation from the administration team has halted teacher buy-in. She discussed how this reform is significant if the

mindset of discipline has changed, and the idea of compromise is in play. Still, Ms. Coleman asserted that neither the teachers nor the administrators were on that level. This change of mindset is difficult when the administrators did a poor job, ensuring that the teachers were fully aware of the actual reform and how it will benefit the students of Turner Bozeman Middle School. She affirmed, "I would bet a million to say half of the staff knows, but are not required to do it. They don't want to know, especially if it is not attached to their evaluations. Again you are looking at a building whereas some teachers do not have a vested interest in the students they provide an education" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

Mrs. Barry shares her disdain for the act but believes that it lacks the proper consequences needed for combatting disruptive behaviors. She believes that some sort of behavioral structure is required in middle school. She stated, "The lack of discipline almost gives the kids the sense that you can do what you want to do; there are no rules to follow" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). Mrs. Barry provides the reader with a host of examples of how behaviors have escalated since the implementation of P.A. 99-0456. Her major concern is the student's false sense of accountability. She posited, "There are rules in real life, and when they leave school thinking that they have no rules to follow, that's how they get caught up in that pipeline to prison" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020).

Mrs. Barry also discusses how the lack of teacher buy-in stems deeper than just the act's thin layered implementation process. She reminisced on the past discipline policies, stating that her school decided to only focus on positive behavioral interventions, which lacked the teachers'

input when the discipline reform surfaced. She mentioned that the act is essential, but during the implementation phases, the administration did nothing to identify why the students were getting suspended in the first place. She also reflected on how teacher biases were ignored. She asserted, "This all made sense, and then it's like, we have to deal with the hidden biases that teachers have, even if they don't realize they have them…but no one wanted to talk about this" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). Hence, disruptive behaviors were brushed under the carpet, and since teachers do not have an input on the behavioral outcomes, they fail to buy-in to the discipline system.

Mr. Terry's analysis of discipline with the reform reflects the sentiment of Mrs. Barry. He believes that students are going to have a rude awakening when they are hit with accountability in the real world. He complains about the current system, in which students are allowed to get away with negative behaviors and are not held accountable for their actions. He stated that we are really feeding them to the pipeline with this mentality. Mr. Terry believes that this mentality goes deeper than the act itself. He argues, "Is this their way of making sure that our kids lag behind everybody else? It's like, we gotta make sure they don't catch up to the white kids behaviorally too. School is the educational foundation for racism" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

Mr. Terry also blames the school district's lack of resources for its stagnating progress with disruptive behaviors. He believes that if they are required to enact a policy, there should be supports and resources available for assistance. He also talks about the restorative justice portion

of the act, which he says they don't have access to. Mr. Terry acknowledges that this lack of access hinders teacher buy-in, which lowers the staff and students' expectations. He stated, "I just wish we had clear expectations and resources that everyone had access to and believed in. Our teachers laugh at this policy because we don't live it" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews view on school discipline after the implementation of P.A. 99-0456 reflects the ideologies of her colleagues, but she also believes there is something missing. She noted that she knows very little about the systems in place because she doesn't see it. After all, the parents are not being held accountable. She questions the parental role in this process. She stated, "I cannot honestly sit here and tell you that they are not calling parents, but I can say that the parents are not responding or reacting in support of the school. It's a joke, and we are losing the battle"(Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). She believes that if the parents are not held accountable, no reform will wane disruptive behaviors. She added, "Kids need to be set on a straight path because if the parents don't do it, they will search outside their house for guidance, which opens up another set of troubles" (Ocasio-Matthews, personal communication, June 17, 2020). Her argument corresponds with Blaisdell's (2015) study that found that teachers and administrators of students of color blamed their low achievement and behavioral deficits on their cultural and family orientation. However, Anyon et al. (2018) asserted that these parents are assigned blame because of their lack of power in fighting school policies. Research also found that these parents also have fewer resources and are often looked upon as insignificant in challenging disciplinary decisions (Reyes, 2006; Kupchik, 2009).

She also believes that the supports that are in the schools are overwhelmed. Without additional supports, student disruptive behaviors have escalated. She informs the reader of the role and hardships of the social worker and the school psychologist. Even though she listed ways the administrators have tried to intervene, such as conflict resolution tactics and staff interventions, the students' behavioral needs are not being met, causing more harm than good.

Summary

In this chapter, the educators all agreed that there were many pitfalls in the disciplinary policies of Turner Bozeman. Through their experiences, the educators felt that this policy caused more harm than good. The concerns of student accountability and teacher buy-in centered around the idea of a flawed implementation process. The educators agreed that unless a more in-depth analysis of student behaviors, patterns, trends, and higher expectations from the administrators accompanied with accountability for students and parents, this discipline reform would be invalid to the Turner Bozeman population. Hence, student consequences will either be non-existent or return to punitive status.

Theme 4: Instructional reconstruction or restorative racism

The fourth thematic category that emerged from the data was if teachers believed this act was a form of an instructional reconstruction or a process of restoring racism in the school setting. Key factors included low expectations, lack of culturally relevant interventions, lack of

communication, resources, and accountability. Table 4 (Appendix F) illustrates the educators'

responses.

Ms. Coleman believes that because this policy was poorly implemented, it is a

perpetuation of institutional racism. Due to her experiences working in an affluent district before

her employment at Turner-Bozeman Middle School, she noted that this policy works with

students and communities with the buy-in, money, resources, and the curriculum. Her concern is

that this policy fails to address the students' basic needs in her district, a low socioeconomic

community. For Ms. Coleman, this means environmental factors such as the rate of violence, the

inability to support demographic makeup, social-emotional components, and life experiences.

She stated that "I would say to the people who created this bill that it was created for a specific

population that I don't currently work with" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

Therefore, the cycle of disruptive behavior continues.

Ms. Coleman also argues against this act's inability to provide access to low

socioeconomic school districts. She asserted, "Every district does not have access to the same

tools, the outcomes or the incomes of that is going to look vastly different, and there is no

flexibility in it" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020). Throughout her narrative,

she discussed programs that the school did not have access to and complained about how

inconsistent the process was for the students. This inconsistency makes it impossible for students

to receive proper interventions, especially interventions that are considered "culturally relevant."

Ms. Coleman believes with these factors in place; this act is just another way of perpetuating

racism. She concluded, "Like if the act were no more, you would still have the same issues, there is always going to be some type of inequality in education. Honestly, I don't think this act helps" (Coleman, personal communication, May 19, 2020).

Mrs. Barry believes that this act perpetuates racism because race is never addressed. She mentioned in the previous theme that the administrators never dealt with teacher biases or race issues. She believes that the act doesn't require this to be done; thereby, this issue will not be addressed. She also mentioned that when she spoke to these issues, she was always ignored. She believes that as long as race is ignored, there is no way any act can remedy the behavioral issues of the student population.

She believes that this act, along with other disciplinary policies, is one-sided. She believes that they are only dealing with positive behaviors and not dealing with the reasons why our kids are acting the way they do. Mrs. Barry also stressed that without this analysis, students at Turner Bozeman were not receiving services and supports that the act promises. She argues, "I know that the act has provisions for what would happen if the kids are suspended, but when our kids are suspended, they don't have any services for reentry; they just come back" (Barry, personal communication, May 8, 2020). She also noted that students who are labeled general education[11] are not allotted any support services, which causes the disruptive discipline gap to

---

[11] Students in general education are without an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan-as labeled for Special Education Services)

widen with this population. Like Ms. Coleman's argument, Mrs. Barry believes that their basic needs are not being met as well.

Mr. Terry's biggest argument about the perpetuation of racism is equity. Throughout his narrative, Mr. Terry suggested that for students to gain full access to this act's objective, his school, which is located in a low socioeconomic community, must have access to the resources involved. He discusses how this act references restorative practices, yet, his school does not have access to this program. He also argues that additional resources and supports are not available; therefore, the students and teachers are not well-equipped to deal with disruptive behaviors. He mentioned that the behaviors in his school had increased tremendously. He stated, "They are asking us to do something that we are not trained to do, they are not providing us with the necessary resources, yet are expecting all these great things to happen. Our kids cant tell you what restorative justice is because we don't do it. We don't have access to it. Yet, we are supposed to use restorative interventions? This is a joke" (Terry, personal communication, June 6, 2020).

Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews's ideology on institutional racism was quite different from her colleagues. She didn't mention the word "institutional racism" in her narrative. Still, her preconceived biases of African American parents' attitudes on handling discipline perpetuate this notion, especially when she stated that speaking to Hispanic parents garners more respect for her. Anyon et al. (2018) posited that "ultimately, the behaviors of students of color are viewed as problematic when in reality, they may be an expression of racial identity (p. 395). Like her

colleagues, Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews mentioned that the lack of focusing on the causes of student behaviors has led to an increase in disruptive behaviors. Castella (2003) stated, "punishment negatively affects those who are already negatively affected by poverty, racism, academic failure, and other realities" (p. 879). However, she acknowledged that nothing is being done with the rise of behaviors and that the act "does nothing to address what is happening at Turner Bozeman" (Ocasio-Matthew, personal communication, June 17, 2020).

Summary

In this theme, the educators believed that there is some form of inequity within the disciplinary policy that prevents Turner Bozeman's students from gaining full access to the services of P.A. 99-0456. This lack of equity is responsible for inconsistency with interventions and non-existent additional support and resource usage. Consequently, Ms. Coleman, Mrs. Barry, and Mr. Terry believed that due to the school's low socioeconomic community status, this lack of equity is purposely positioned to perpetuate the discipline gap between African American students and their white peers.

CHAPTER VI: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA OF THE STUDENTS

I met with the current administration to gain access to the voices of the student body. My original plan was to petition the seventh and eighth graders with a survey to gain their perspective of the disciplinary policies of Turner Bozeman. After following extensive protocols, I had sixty student participants, and I planned to return the next week to begin the first cycle of surveys. Then COVID-19 caused Turner Bozeman Middle School to enter into the e-Learning phase, meaning schools were now closed, and I had lost access to my participants. Fortunately, I was able to convert my surveys to an online outlet (APPENDIX G). With the assistance of a colleague and approval from the administration team and parents, the student participants were able to complete their surveys online during non-instructional block times.

Results

Of the sixty original participants, forty-six were able to complete the survey. Consequently, twelve participants did not have access to a technological device at home and could not participate. However, of the 46 participants, 47.8% were males, and 52.1% were females. 97.8% of the participants were in the eighth grade, and 2.1% were seventh graders. 89.2% of the student participants were African American, and 10.8% were Hispanic. Over half of the student participants admitted that misbehaviors are always occurring at Turner Bozeman (SEE APPENDIX G). This aligns with the teacher data, which indicates that there has been an increase in student misbehaviors. Moreover, students are reporting that they are witnessing these behaviors as well. Despite having a lack of behavioral support to assist in managing these behaviors (as reported by the 33% of student participants), an overwhelming number of

participants feel safe within their school. Table 8 (in APPENDIX G) presents the outcome of student attitudes towards discipline, consequences, and behavioral support.

The question of restorative justice practices was also beneficial for this study. Song and Swearer (2016) define restorative justice as a school-wide approach with identifiable practices and philosophy. Participants were surveyed on this topic because the disciplinary reform discusses restorative justice usage to eliminate punitive, consequential structures, especially in low socioeconomic school communities. A different trend emerged from the data in regards to knowledge of such practices. An overwhelming amount of student participants are unaware of restorative procedures and protocols and positive intervention systems. Even when they face conflicts with their peers, 84% of student participants reported that most misbehaviors were not accompanied by positive supports, such as peace circles and restorative conversations. This information aligns with Mrs. Barry's data, as she described an incident with a student she had a conflict and he returned to school, after being suspended, still out of order without receiving any interventions to assist in managing his disruptive behaviors. Table 9 (in APPENDIX G) represents student data in regards to restorative practices and protocols.

The student's attitudes towards discipline showed a significant correlation between increased student disruptive behaviors and teacher perspectives. The teachers believed that the students were acting out because of the lack of consistent consequences. In reviewing the student data, 86% of the student participants believed that the behaviors increased at Turner Bozeman middle school because they feel like they don't receive any consequences for their actions. Moreover, 26% of student participants believed that their teachers care more about the issued

consequences than the students. Before ending her narrative, Mrs. Ocasio-Matthews reflected on

the student behaviors, with examples of vandalism and property damage. She stated that with

these behaviors, the consequences were not strict enough, students were not being held

accountable, and it continued to be an ongoing issue. This attitude was also extended into the act

of fighting as well, although the punitive approach to managing aggressive behaviors has not

changed. Table 10 (APPENDIX G) illustrates that students are still experiencing out-of-school

suspensions as the preferred punitive approach to behavior management.

Student Voices through CRT Framework

In this study, CRT was applied to analyze the student participants' voices through their

survey responses. I found one tenet of CRT that repeatedly emerged in the student responses, the

permanence of racism. I believe this tenet was prevalent throughout student responses in

explaining how institutional racist ideals are embedded within their mindset of school discipline

and therefore affecting their daily behavioral outcomes.

Institutional racism has been hidden throughout the usage of zero-tolerance policies that

exhibited punitive consequences for mostly Black students (Hoffman, 2014). Unfortunately for

the student participants, this continued exposure to these punitive consequences is reflected in

their responses (SEE APPENDIX G). Students reflected on their experiences with these

consequences, mostly citing suspensions as the means for handling disruptions. Their responses

also acknowledged fighting and other tier three behaviors as a means of being removed from the

instructional setting. Moreover, student participants were oblivious to restorative practices and positive reinforcements for disruptive behaviors.

In contrast to the literature (Skiba & Noam, 2002; Sekayi, 2001), which suggests black students view these policies as deliberate and conscious, an overwhelming response in the data indicates that the use of these punitive consequences was fair and they felt safe within this environment. Critical race theorists define the permanence of racism as ordinary and often unrecognizable in U.S. society (Ladson-Billings, 1998,2013; Taylor, 1998, 2009). Weiss et al. (1992) study of children found that those who were either disciplined frequently or in a school environment where students are disciplined unfairly develop problematic styles of thinking about structure and authority.

Summary

The student participants expressed their perspectives of the discipline at Turner Bozeman Middle School. It is clear that this system lacks restorative practices. The students reflected on discipline approaches that are still representative of the punitive consequences responsible for the notable school-to-prison pipeline. The lack of restorative practices resonates throughout the data, as the student participant's lack of knowledge of restorative practices and protocols undermines their perspectives of fair and just consequences. However, the students continue to feel safe based on these outcomes and increased student misbehavior. Despite the over usage of punitive consequences and increased negative student behaviors, 54% of the student participants believe that they are being heard and have a voice in the way they are disciplined. Unless the student

population's mindset shifts towards a more positive and collaborative experience with school discipline, students will continue to believe that suspensions and exclusionary discipline practices are the only way to combat disruptive behaviors, widening the discipline gap between this middle school and the more affluent school districts

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CRT as a Methodology and Theoretical Framework

I chose critical race theory (CRT) as a methodology for this research study to highlight the perspectives and experiences with P.A. 99-0456 for administrators and educators. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define critical race methodology in education as "acknowledging the intercentricity of racialized oppression-the layers of subordination based on race, gender, class, immigration status, surname, phenotype, accent and sexuality" (p. 25). Through these narratives, CRT provides persons of color an outlet to criticize the disciplinary policy while outlining how racism is perpetuated through the implementation and procedural processes (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). When journeying through these participants' experiences, the reader gains insight into their journey before and after the implementation of this disciplinary policy, as it related to combatting disruptive behaviors without the use of punitive consequences. These in-depth interviews examined their struggles, disappointments, and suggestions for improving this disciplinary practice. CRT was used as a methodology and a theoretical framework to identify how white privilege, masked as invisible, is normalized within this disciplinary policy and how it's applied to combatting disruptive behaviors amongst African American students in a low socioeconomic community (McIntosh, 1989).

The purpose of this research study was to provide a voice to the administrators, educators, and students in an attempt to understand their thoughts of this disciplinary policy's utilization of restorative justice practices or its reliance on traditional punitive procedures. This study also sought to identify student support services' role in identifying underlying deficiencies

that may cause these disruptive behaviors. My chapter will interpret the study's research questions through coded data and critical race literature and provide future research implications and recommendations for future research.

Navigating through the narratives with the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456?

In this study, the participants shared positive and negative perceptions and experiences of Turner Bozeman's disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456. Both the administrators and the teachers acknowledged their critical role in combatting disruptive behaviors. Yet, they all agreed that more is needed to ensure that the students' needs are met, and additional services are provided to remedy these behaviors from continuing.

Administrators

The administrators in this study emphasized their role in implementing this policy. They all agreed that introducing a new practice that focuses less on punitive practices and more on restorative discipline would be a more beneficial approach to combatting school discipline (Skiba, 2014; Martinez, 2009; Brown et al., 2013; Song &Swearer, 2016). However, with the exception of Mr. Michaels, Mr. Hudson and Mrs. Shorter were charged with implementing P.A. 99-0456 at Turner Bozeman middle school. Both participants recalled being apprehensive about the transition from the punitive approach due to the previous disciplinary practices. The teachers felt that the ideas of P.A. 99-0456 allowed students to misbehave without receiving proper consequences.

Along with the need for restorative practices, all three administrator participants agreed that non-punitive approaches have improved communication between the students and adults within the school community. Mr. Michaels noted that he saw his teachers taking a more hands-on approach to handle discipline, meaning they were more conscious about their classrooms' culture and began to rely more on the resources they had in the building, such as social workers and the deans. Mr. Hudson and Mrs. Shorter reflect on how this communication has been an addition to the proactive pieces. Mrs. Shorter admitted that having personal conversations with individual students and finding out exactly why the behaviors have occurred prevented her from resorting to using punitive disciplinary practices, such as suspensions. Consistent with Song and Swearer's (2016) research, these participants' utilization of restorative practices contributed to their acceptance of this disciplinary approach.

Although there were noted positives, all three administrators articulated weaknesses with this act, including the idea of the perpetuation of institutional racism. Due to the school community's low-socioeconomic status, Mr. Hudson, Mrs. Shorter, and Mr. Michaels argued about the lack of funding that prevented the school from receiving professional development programs and additional student support services that support the act's objectives. Foreman's (2015) study showed that training addresses the quality of interventions and is critical for effective practices for implementation. Without these supports, Mr. Hudson believes that his school was forced to utilize the traditional way of handling discipline, which provides the students with no additional resources for managing their behaviors. Mrs. Shorter agreed, noting that students needed more support to ensure that they received the tools and strategies necessary

to combat disruptive behaviors and determine the triggers and self-regulation practices. Consistent with Payne and Welch's (2008) research, schools with higher percentages of African American students revert to punitive approaches instead of gravitating towards restorative practices and procedures. Moreover, the lack of these required supports prohibits the school from tapping into the restorative practices that are embedded in the act; therefore, they argue that funding should be available to ensure that the act is accessible to all students, regardless of economic status. Unfortunately, all three administrators admitted that misbehaviors increased at Turner Bozeman.

In continuing the conversation of institutional racism, Mrs. Shorter was the only administrator who questioned the act's cultural relevancy. She expressed her concerns with restorative practices as a means for African American students to assimilate to the white culture. She also criticized the idea of restoring students because she didn't exactly know what they were converted to. She pleads for more culturally relevant interventions, which can benefit the students' Turner Bozeman services. She is also the only administrator to briefly mention the need to implement race conversation before implementing any disciplinary practice. Research suggests that race is a socially constructed category that "actively remakes oppression and inequality" (Annamma et al., 2013; Beratan, 2008; Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). She believes that African American students will continuously be misunderstood, mistreated, and misdiagnosed for behavioral interventions without these critical conversations.

Teachers

The teachers in this study also shared their experiences and perceptions of the school's disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456. Like the administrators, the teachers believed that Turner Bozeman Middle school students needed more disciplinary policies that focused less on exclusion and more on restoration. Three teachers, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. Barry, and Mr. Terry, believed that focusing more on the whole child and their behavioral patterns allowed teachers to be more open-minded when dealing with behaviors while creating positive and well-managed learning environments. Research on restorative practices suggests that this disciplinary practice responds to behaviors that create a safe and supportive learning environment that reflects cultural values (Chavis, 1998; Karp & Clear, 2000).

However, with this acknowledgment, all four teachers did not believe that the disciplinary act was implemented correctly, causing more harm than good for student progress. Mrs. Barry and Mr. Terry reflected on the actual implementation process as reprimanding past punitive practices, yet no clear direction on how to follow the act's expectations. Research has shown that restorative justice practice training can be slow with limited standards that may not meet the evidence-based demands of that particular school (Foreman, 2015; Song and Swearer, 2016). All four educators also noted that institutional and communal forces, such as lack of funding that prevented the staff from receiving proper professional development and training, parental misguidance, and the omission of race and culture, were absent during the implementation process of the act. Still, they were held accountable for distributing interventions and strategies that they had no experience with, and student behaviors intensified. Losen and

Martinez (2013) articulated that equitable implementation and participation are especially needed for students of color, male students, and students in special education- these groups of students tend to receive suspensions at higher rates than their white peers. Noguera (2000) stated it is critical to understand what it means to implement discipline reform equitably with racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students.

Research Question 2: What are the students' perceptions of disciplinary practices since the onset of P.A. 99-0456?

One of the common themes amongst the administrators and teacher narratives reflected an increase in student behavior since the onset of P.A. 99-0456, or lack thereof. These perceptions of discipline were echoed within the student survey responses. 52% of student participants didn't take consequences seriously, and they believed that the reason for these increased behaviors reflected the lack of student accountability. Additionally, 76.3% of the student survey responses noted that students felt they don't really get in trouble for disruptive behaviors, justifying the noted increases in behaviors. Unfortunately, because the students have not been exposed to alternative ways of combatting disruptive behaviors, 84.7% of the participants acknowledge that these punitive disciplinary practices were fair.

These findings also indicated that the students were unaware of restorative practices and more familiar with the punitive consequences, such as suspensions. Based on the data, 89.1% of the student participants had never heard of restorative justice. In comparison, 84.7% have no experience with combatting behaviors using peace circles, peer mediation, or other restorative strategies. Moreover, 84.7% of the students reported that when conflict arose with another

student, they were mostly sent to the Principal's office and not receiving support services from the social worker or deans.

P.A. 99-0456 does not explicitly omit the idea of suspension, yet 91% of students reported that being suspended from school was the consequence of fighting in school, while 100% of all student participants acknowledged suspensions as a common consequence for addressing discipline. Consequently, 26% of student participants believe that the adults cared more about the issued consequences than students' behaviors, justifying why 91.3% think they're not being heard regarding their input on disciplinary practices. Rodriguez-Ruiz (2017) denotes, "this negative perception makes it increasingly difficult for students to appreciate the value of an education, which lowers academic achievement, additional misbehaviors, and greater social ills" (p. 810).

Implications for Continuing/Future Educational Practices

The narratives and survey results in this study uncover the participants' perceptions and experiences with P.A.99-0456. The findings in this study indicate that African American students are not merely acting out in school. The behaviors exist because of multiple institutional, environmental, and communal factors that are not addressed through Turner Bozeman's response to discipline. Moreover, an analysis of the narratives also found that student support services also lacked in their mission to transition from punitive consequences to restorative practices.

With the disproportionate representation of punitive disciplinary consequences, African American youth have also been disproportionately affected by various forms of trauma,

stemming from physical and sexual abuse to witnessing domestic violence (Metzger, et al., 2021). Research has found that almost 65% of African American youth have reported exposure to traumatic experiences than 30% of youth of other races (Briere, 2002; Finkelhor et al., 2013). This may attribute to racism-related stressors (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Carter, 2007; Tynes et al., 2019). Mosely et al. (2021) define these experiences as racial trauma, meaning "race-based traumatic stress, the psychological, emotional and physical injury from experiencing real and perceived racism (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Carter, 2007). Racial trauma can often lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, this form of trauma results from exposure and re-exposure to racial stress, which in turn, becomes traumatic (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019; Saleem et al., 2019) and shares symptoms such as re-experiencing the trauma, avoidance, arousal, and negative mood and cognitions (Carter, 2007; Williams, Metzger, Leins, & DeLapp, 2018). Harrell (2000) also notes that race-related trauma may be evident through "time-limited life events, direct and vicarious experiences, daily microaggressions, chronic contextual and collective experiences, and transgenerational transmission (p. 46).

District and building administrators would benefit from enhancing their knowledge of racial trauma and its effect on African American students' disruptive behaviors, resulting in overusing punitive consequences and behavioral interventions that do not work. Anderson et al., 2018 found that generalized interventions fail to address culturally specific and relevant strategies which focus on the students' interpersonal traumas. Such failures hinder instead of healing African American youth. In fact, Black youth are three times less likely to receive proper services and trauma-related treatment than their peers of other cultures (Kilpatrick et al., 2003;

Lester et al., 2010). District and building-level administrators must examine the use of P.A. 99-0456 through the lens of racial trauma and its integration of racial socialization. Metzger et al. 2021 assert that "if racial socialization (RS) integrates a culturally relevant and commonly practiced familial coping strategy-into trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy to improve trauma related outcomes among African American youth" (p. 18).

District administrators would also benefit from learning about the experiences of their building principals and teachers. This study's findings highlighted the inadequacies of implementation from the administrators' and teachers' experiences with lack of funding, which was guilty of limiting professional development training, employing additional staffing, and the absence of restorative justice curriculum and interventions. An analysis of the participants' experiences provides district administrators insight into the struggles of implementing policy without the proper services and provides a positive outlook on how the approach to discipline could alter African American students' school experiences. In that case, the implementation of P.A.99-0456 could have possibly taken a different journey and perhaps made a more significant impact on student behaviors.

Building administrators and teachers would benefit from hearing students' voices and their disciplinary experiences, improving their efforts in properly implementing a discipline policy. In researching student knowledge on restorative justice, this study showed that students were accustomed to punitive consequences, such as detentions and suspensions, and did not understand restorative practices. In fact, student participants believed that these punitive consequences were fair and felt safe within their school, even though disruptive behaviors

increased. Knowledge of student perceptions of consequences is beneficial for altering the mindset on punitive consequences and improving building culture for the entire school community. This mindset is a perpetuation of how society views African American students' behavioral experiences, and unfortunately, students have been conditioned to believe that is the only way of maintaining order.

District administrators must be vigilant in making informed decisions on implementing discipline policies within their school communities. The perpetuation of institutional racism has led to African American students experiencing excessive exclusionary discipline practices, like suspension and expulsions, which has acquainted them with the infamous school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon. The findings of this study suggest that when dealing with discipline for African American students, district administrators would benefit from examining their current disciplinary processes and, most importantly, how this policy could impact their school community with proper implementation and student service supports. DeMatthews (2016) asserted, "school leaders not only must be knowledgable about various discipline policies and know how to identify and apply consequences, but also must be aware of how discipline policies can disproportionately target or harm marginalized student groups" (p. 90). School administrators could benefit from examining race and consider creating systems of communicating race within the school to improve students, teachers, and building staff's mindsets on discipline and behavior.

Parents' and guardians' voices matter as well. Parents in these communities may have been disciplined with the same punitive consequences that their children are facing today. With

these adverse experiences in education, some parents are not eager to intervene with discipline issues their children face in school because they were treated the same way as students. Mowen (2015) found that parental involvement was lower in schools that exhibited punitive disciplinary outcomes. Research has assessed that parents with higher levels of social capital and economic status are able to rely on their status to influence the educational outcomes of their children, often producing higher rates of success (Lareau 2011; McNeal, 199; Putnam, 2000). Noguera (2003) posited, "as a "captured market" they [disadvantaged parents] are a group of consumers who are compelled to accept the quality of educational services provided to them, whether they like it or not" (p. 94).

Parents would benefit from hearing the students' voices and their disciplinary experiences and become advocates for behavioral reform. An administrator's interview noted that when the reform was implemented, there was a low turnout for the parent informational meeting, suggesting that this school community's parents are unaware of the proactive approach to discipline. This lack of knowledge continues the cycle of punishment, with Black youth are looked upon as potential criminals instead of students in school and the community (Mowen, 2017). This ostracization of the Black body affects the family structure, placing emotional burdens on family relationships, contribute to mental health, depression, or possible future incarceration (Wildeman et al., 2012; Braman, 2004; Mowen & Visher, 2016). Parents must acknowledge alternatives to discipline and different proactive means to punitive consequences.

Most importantly, this study empowers them to speak on behalf of their children to demand that regardless of race, culture, and socioeconomic status, their children have the right to

280

access these proactive alternatives, just like their white peers in more affluent communities. Kane (2003) asserted, "When there are behavior problems, the school system is the investigator, they are the prosecutors, the hearing officers, and the appeal board. And where in that process is there anybody who has the interest of the child? The answer to this question is the parent" (p. 1).

Implications for Future Research

In performing research for this study, I found a great need for future research to correlate African American student behaviors and the restorative justice practices in a low socioeconomic, public education environment. A multitude of research focuses on the punitive effects of zero-tolerance policies that fueled the school-to-prison-pipeline phenomenon and African American student experience with the juvenile centers. Although there are studies conducted on restorative justice practices, a limited number of studies highlight the implementation processes' success and follow-through of culturally relevant interventions for African American students in Black communities. Furthermore, more research is needed for schools in these communities that have once experienced high usage of punitive consequences and have currently relied on proactive practices through restorative justice. These outcomes would be beneficial for schools that mirror behavioral concerns such as Turner Bozeman, which could provide direction on how to combat disruptive behaviors while lessening the discipline gap between low socio-economic and affluent school districts.

Research that strengthens school leadership's ability to identify race as a primary factor and provide strategies for relaying this to their staff is also a concept that requires a more in-depth analysis. DeMatthews (2016) articulated that "we must engage in a deeper discussion

281

centered on the intersectionality of racism and classism with educational policy, accountability

systems, and the purpose of schooling" (p. 90). When race remains invisible, the needs of

African American students remain unaddressed, unfair, and unimportant. Moreover, the

disciplinary policies become misinterpreted and misused by the school administrators and

teachers, causing consequences to revert to their punitive status. Therefore, schools in Black

communities require research that focuses on addressing race within leadership, teaching and

learning, curriculum, and disciplinary policies, while erasing the assumptions that all Black

administrators have this process mastered and uncovering skills and strategies for student and

community success.

Strengths

The strength of this research lives in the use of CRT as the methodology. Through

counterstorytelling, the voices of the unheard are the core of this educational discourse, which

calls attention to a policy that perpetuates institutional racist structures. The reader is also taken

on an educational journey through the participants' experiences with P.A. 99-0456 and its effect

on the student behaviors at Turner Bozeman Middle School. The participants were also able to

define their roles in the implementation processes and provide insight into how this act can

benefit the school community. This school's participants' voices inform the larger educational

community of the need for a behavioral reform that uncovers the causes and remedies of student

behaviors in the Black community. Their voices are essential for policymakers and school

leaders to take the time to dissect the students' needs and then choose a policy that fits the needs

of the community it serves. These voices are from the margins of traditional

educational/sociological inquiry, and I believe this is critical in better understanding the needs, issues, and concerns of these marginalized groups.

Limitations

This research does not present causality-or cause and effect analyses or conclusions, which is oriented with quantitative work. This research is rigorous in its capacity/ability to present personal and detailed human experiences. As an African American woman, current administrator, and former teacher, I have many experiences with punitive and proactive consequences for my students and have seen the outcomes of both. I can relate to both the administrator and educator participants' narratives, but this research solely focuses on bringing their experiences to the surface and not substantiate my own experiences.

The size of my participant pool was also a limitation. The reader could make assumptions that this research study is not representative of Black school struggles with discipline due to the sample size and also that this research was done at one research site. Please note that this study's findings are only representative of the participants from Turner Bozeman Middle School. However, they may represent similar experiences at other schools. There is no question that having additional participants from other school districts with similar behavioral concerns would have provided me with larger responses to school discipline. I hope that my future research in this area will provide for qualitative and quantitative methods functioning as a hybrid of methodologies for digging deeper into the phenomenon of school discipline.

Recommendations

I entered this research study to advocate for African American students dealing with the effects of punitive consequences. Day after day, I witnessed students being sent home for frivolous behaviors, such as talking back to the teachers or being late too often to school. I also have been in situations where students were suspended for up to ten days for fighting and other serious behaviors. Yet, they were not allowed to make up any work and received no services upon returning to school. Some students either were led directly to the pipeline, while a small few didn't live long enough to share their experiences. When the new disciplinary policy was rolled out, which focused on a more proactive approach, I became intrigued as to how other districts were rolling out this new initiative, especially since having strict control over the class seemed to be a badge of honor for some educators. As I listened to my participants' narratives and studied the students' survey results, it became clear that there was a key component absent from my findings, the discussion of race. Fabelo et al. (2011) noted that "when the relationship of socioeconomic status to disproportionality in discipline has been explored directly, race continues to make a significant contribution" (p.394). Mrs. Shorter discussed how she believed this was an issue that should have been discussed, and Mrs. Barry stated that she was reprimanded for trying to address it.

All in all, Turner Bozeman unsuccessfully attempted to implement a discipline policy without the discussion of race. Therefore, this recommendation section will identify the missing element and determine how school leaders can remedy this concern. Finally, I will provide ways

in which this research study can be applied to improve African American students' behavioral outcomes.

Conditioned to be Silent: The Absence of Race in School

I can specifically remember the day and time I tried to introduce the idea of race and racism to my classroom of eighth-graders at Jackie Robinson Middle School. It was the Fall of 2011, and I had forty-six students in my class, thirty-nine African Americans and seven Hispanics. I wanted to subtly gauge their perspectives because this is how I would get a true analysis of their thoughts about race and racism. I had never taken this approach before, but I wanted to try something different for this group. Instead of mentioning the words race and racism, I wrote the word Black and the word White on the board. The whiteboard position allowed for each word to have its own section so that the students would have ample space to write. My instructions were simple: write one word that describes each color.

I remember they all looked at me, and one of my boys at the time said, "you do know that we learned our colors back in Kindergarten." We all laughed, and I continued with the instructions about how they would take turns coming to the board and writing their responses. Once I did the count down, each student approached the board and wrote their descriptions down. I cannot tell you that I was surprised at the responses that were recorded because our society has a way of letting us know what it is, even at a very early age. Under the word black, students recorded words such as evil, dirty, wicked, demonic, slave, dark, etc. Under the word white, students recorded words such as pure, clean, smart, innocence. One student even went further and wrote the word opportunity on the white side of the board. As I glanced at the list, I

realized that our students have preconceived notions about who they were and how society viewed them. Moreover, these ideals spilled into their academic abilities as well as behavioral outcomes. I wondered where they got this from, why it hasn't been addressed sooner, and what role has the school played in these preconceived ideas of self?

As I reflected on my students' answers and compared them with the narratives and survey results in this study, it became evident that race plays a critical role in African American students' academic and behavioral success. Consequently, it is a topic that remains unaddressed with the implementation of P.A. 99-0456 at Turner Bozeman Middle School. Koon (2013) stated that without carefully addressing racism, even when implementing PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support), SEL (Social Emotional Learning), and RJ (Restorative Justice), African American students will be unable to close the discipline gap. Milner (2012) noted that most educators view their students and their classroom practices as colorless, only focusing on the child. However, Johnson, Boyden, and Pittz (2001) posited that these colorblind ideologies cause educators to consciously and unconsciously perpetuate racist practices, influencing African American students' behavioral outcomes. For these reasons, CRT suggests that history needs to be revisited to understand how racialized structures have evolved and continued to manifest their racial disparities through policies (Kyere, Joseph & Wei, 2018).

The implementation process of P.A.99-0456 did not maturate into the policy's intent. School leaders in this study pinpointed funding to provide resources for proper implementation, while the context of race was not a factor. DeMatthews (2016) asserted, "school leaders are failing to fully address the most salient problems in schools when they attempt to support

286

teachers with professional development on classroom management and student discipline without having meaningful discussions about the impact race plays on student discipline. Gooden (2012) defines public education as a system that has perpetuated White supremacy and conceptions of colorblindness hidden within policies that mask equality yet disregard conversations about equalizing outcomes or addressing historical deficiencies. Therefore, in address school discipline, school leaders must "identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position and subordination of African American and Latino students" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 42).

School leaders must critically question the role of white dominance and other racist structures maintained within their building and challenge these policies' manifestations and interpretations (DeMatthews, 2016; Parker & Lynn, 2002). It is the school leaders' responsibility to raise this awareness and be reflective of their own backgrounds and determine how to eradicate these issues within their building. In doing so, the school community will move forward in combatting behaviors with culturally relevant interventions and student services. More importantly, the students will understand their place in society and their role in improving academic and behavioral outcomes.

Researchers indicate that the restorative practices alone cannot eradicate racism within the school setting, and research is still needed on the actual impact of restorative practices in schools (Lustick, 2017; Morrison, 2003; Payne & Welch, 2013). If acting as a stand-alone disciplinary practice, restorative practices can "be a force of sequestration and surveillance, utilizing the structure of the circle to both separate out certain students and focus on them the

scrutinizing gaze of their teachers and classmates" (Lustick, 2017, p.6). However, restorative justice practices are strengthened by the school leader's ability to address race and racial disparities within their institution. Song and Swearer (2016) suggest that the restorative justice framework's strength is its ability to address racial inequities and focus on systemic racism. Lustick (2017) articulated, "practitioners must be explicit and intentional about using restorative practices to address bias and resist the systems that disproportionately punish children of color" (p. 7).

But Is There Hope?

Based upon my study's findings, the discussion of race is critical to implementing any disciplinary reform, or in this case, P.A. 99-0456. The students of Turner Bozeman Middle School data showed that punitive consequences were normal and acceptable for administration and teachers to solve disruptive behavior issues. The educator participants recognized the institutionalized racist structures that prevented students from improving their behaviors and were looking to the administration for support. The administrator participants focused on the racial disparities of providing adequate curriculum and resources, yet failed to address the critical discussions of race with the school community, which led to why our students act in this manner?

Social justice leadership includes being aware and recognizing that marginalized groups experience racial inequities but align themselves with a proactive orientation to eradicate these unequal practices (Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Furman, 2012; DeMatthews, 2016). Bogotch's (2002) study found that school leaders who merge Social Justice with educational

leadership "provide for socially constructed agreements to emerge around specific problems, solutions and courses of action to create new and just communities" (p. 154). The importance of social justice in school leadership is being prepared to lead through all work-related activities and duties, and school leaders must also become advocates for marginalized student groups by utilizing their voices for change (Theoharis & Brooks, 2011; Brown, 2004; Cambron-McCabe,& McCarthy, 2005; Capepr, Theorharis & Sebastian, 2006; Furman, 2012; Jean-Marie, Normore & Brooks, 2009; Pazey &Cole, 2013; Shields, 2004). DeMatthews (2016) suggests the following activities for school leaders:

1) Work with all school and community stakeholders to consider how resources and opportunities are distributed.

2) Recognize all student groups meaningfully.

3) Reflect on how certain practices can intentionally and unintentionally marginalize certain groups

4) Engage faculty and students in racial concerns and challenges (book study, etc.)

5) Provide a safe space for families and students to make crucial decisions that impact their lives

Although I share the same sentiments with DeMatthews's (2016) list for school leaders, my research study produced a more in-depth list that is more suitable for the Black community. Based on my findings, my list of activities for improving the behavioral outcomes of African American students include:

1) District leaders collaboratively work with building administrators in performing a needs assessment of the building, highlighting needed resources, extra staffing (BIS-Behavioral Interventionist and Social Workers), and funding for proper implementation.

2) District leaders, building administrators, selected community members, and parent committees must carefully analyze the discipline policy to eliminate any forms of marginalized practices for Black students. This meeting also includes discussions about communal concerns and how the student population is affected.

3) District leaders collaboratively work with the district curriculum department and building-level Principals to perform a curriculum audit to determine what is already existing and what is needed to enhance the learning experiences while addressing the student population's behavioral concerns.

4) After the curriculum audit is complete, the Curriculum Department and Student Services Team creates a culturally relevant curriculum that focuses on racial socialization (RS) which "prepares youth to cope with stressors and oppression associated with a racial minority status" (Hughes, et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown et al., 2005).

5) District leaders must employ the needed staff members (Behavior Interventionist and additional Social Workers) with similar cultural backgrounds for intensive student support.

6) Based on the information received from item #2, building principals must work collaboratively with their Student Services Team (BIS, Social Worker, and Administration Team) to discuss communal concerns and identify at-risk students to create trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) behavioral plans for student progress. Cohen et al., 2016 posit that TF-CBT "emphasizes cognitive-behavioral strategies that address PTSD, trauma-related depressive and anxiety symptoms, and behavioral problems" p. 18). These culturally relevant behavioral matrices and interventions include "racial pride messages, racial barrier messages, racial equality and achievements," which is associated with racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett et al., 2008; Neblett et al., 2009; Stevenson et al., 2002).

7) Building administration, student services team, and teacher committee will create a (TF-CBT)matrice and intervention system that addresses student disruptive behaviors (Metzger et al., 2012). This document will be shared and followed by the entire school community.

8) The Building administration and student services team will host weekly PLCs (Professional Learning Community) that focus on progress monitoring of behavioral data, interventions, and behavioral plans. Teachers will be able to share concerns and gain insight from the student services team on how to remedy these behaviors through TF-CBT and RS. SST (Student Services Team) will be required to check in with teachers daily for additional support.

9) Student registration is the time when parents are in the building registering their students for school. Building principals must host a Parent-Student University that focuses on the building's behavioral policies, expectations, and procedures, which require parents and student attendance. Parents and students must sign a behavioral document illustrating that they are aware of the policy and agree to the terms. Students will be reminded of the behavioral expectations and policies in daily school practices such as morning and homeroom meetings.

10) To address race and its significance in student success, building administrators and student service teams (BIS, Social Workers, and Deans) will host professional development for the staff that focuses on resiliency, racial trauma, racial socialization (teaching racial pride, barriers, equality, and achievements) and teacher and staff training on cognitive and behavioral strategies. Learned strategies will be expected to be implemented in daily instruction.

11) The building principal will host monthly Parent Webinars and In-School informational highlighting TF-CBT and RS's usage within the school and tips on how these practices can be prevalent at home as well. This gives the parents and community insight into the discussions inside the school building regarding student success. Williams et al., 2014 stated that "as parents are actively involved in the administration of TF-CBT and influential sources of support when teaching appropriate cognitive and behavioral coping strategies, the integration of RS practices

in TF-CBT for treating both interpersonal and racial trauma in African American youth may lead to better trauma-related outcomes for this population" (p. 115).

12) Race and cultural diversity will be honored throughout the building through artwork, wall murals, cultural celebrations, etc. This sets the tone for how race and tolerance are the primary focus of the building's culture and climate and aligns with the building's behavioral expectations' racial socialization.

13) Parent resource room should also be available to parents who need to use resources (computers, job board, college center, etc.). This allotted space for parents enhances their attitude towards school and its role in the community. Parents will also have access to the Student Services Team for additional home supports with TF-CBT and RS.

14) Consistency! All behavioral policies and procedures must be followed with fidelity by the entire staff.

15) Celebrate the school community! The staff will host celebrations that honor students for their progress in academics as well as behavior. Staff will also be honored by the building administration for their hard work with students.

Social Justice leadership is not a fix to the racist institutional structures that have plagued the African American student school experience. However, Bogotch (2002) posited that how social justice merges with educational leadership practices matters the most, "including school budgeting, teacher evaluations, parent and community engagement, curriculum and resources, decision making and special programs" (DeMatthews, 2015, p. 84). School leaders must reflect

on their actions and connect them to their school's needs, which is reflected in the teachers,

students, and the community it serves.

Researchers Reflections

In the year that I performed my experimental lesson on race and racism with my eighth-

grade students, I was enrolled in the Master's Program, obtaining my Educational Leadership

degree for school administration. I recall writing on paper on the Invisibility of African

American student voice in public education, and I had to present my research to the class. The

audience was receptive to my research, and a colleague even suggested that I come to speak to

her high school's staff to enlighten them on why race matters. She said she was going to talk

with her building administration because this was needed at her building. I felt hesitant because I

had a feeling that this event was not going to play out well, mostly since her building was in a

not so diverse community. I remember the school principal called me and asked me about the

contents of my research. After I shared its components, he stated that he didn't think that this

discussion would not sit well with his staff, and our phone conversation was ended.

This is the moment in my career that I realized that there was something more going on

in education. As I reflected on this conversation and his attitude towards the acknowledgment of

race, I wondered if the African American students in his building voices were silent through

punitive consequences and exclusionary practices. I began dissecting my own student behaviors

and focusing on punitive consequences and why they were always being disciplined for the

smallest infractions. This dissertation is near to my heart because some of our students never

had a chance to prove who they were because they were misunderstood, and unfortunately, this

was not just happening in my community. At the beginning of my dissertation, the two students I mentioned, Brandon and Dominique, are representative of more students who were plagued by exclusionary disciplinary procedures. Like the participants in this study, I am from a school community that heavily relied on punitive consequences to control student behaviors. Like my participants, I also desired a more proactive disciplinary system that focused more on understanding why the behaviors exist than a quick get- rid-fix solution.

Can the participants of Turner Bozeman say that P.A. 99-0456 is not effective? The data does not reveal this bit of information. This reform was not implemented to its fullest potential, which was admitted by the administration team as well as the educators. The idea was there, the need for less punitive consequences desired by the entire staff existed, but the actual implementation faltered. More research needs to be done on the actual act and its policies in a school that has actually completed the full implementation processes. However, the data tells the reader that if the discussion of race is not at the epicenter of implementation, any school reform will have difficulty reaching its full potential.   I hope that after reviewing the findings and recommendations of this study, school districts will reflect on how to elicit critical dialogue with their staff to enhance the school experience of African American students in the Black community.

CHAPTER VIII. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher Interview Protocol

Opening: Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research study. Your opinions and insights are greatly appreciated. Please feel free to ask me to repeat any questions. Please take as much time as you feel you may need to reflect upon your responses. This conversation is being recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you do not agree to being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time.

- How long have you had a career in education?

- What grade and content do you currently teach?
- How long have you taught at Roosevelt Middle School?
- Describe the disciplinary procedures at Roosevelt during your first year of teaching at this institution.

- What is your knowledge of P.A. 99-0456?

- Has the administration of Roosevelt Middle School assisted the staff in understanding the disciplinary practices of this policy?

- What support services been implemented in ensuring that the policies of P.A. 99-0456 are successfully enforced?

- What has been your role in ensuring that the disciplinary processes of P.A. 99-0456 were implemented?

- Have you observed any changes in student behavior at Roosevelt Middle School since the implementation of P.A. 99-0456? Explain.

- Let us review the disciplinary policies of P.A. 99-0456. Based on your experiences, has Roosevelt Middle School's disciplinary practices mirrored the components of this new policy? Explain your answer and provide evidence from your experience to support your claim.
- Is there anything else you would like to share that you feel will assist me with my research study?

Closing: Thank you for your participation today. As we close out today, I want to remind you that I will contact you within the next couple of weeks so that we can schedule our final stage of the interview process, the member check session.

Appendix B: Administrator Interview Protocol

Opening: Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research study. Your opinions and insights are greatly appreciated. Please feel free to ask me to repeat any question. Please take as much time as you feel you may need to reflect upon your responses. This conversation is being recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you do not agree to being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time.

- How long have you been a school administrator?
- Reflect on your experiences of school discipline before you were an administrator. How has this practice changed once you became an administrator?
- Describe the disciplinary procedures of Roosevelt Middle School.
- What is your knowledge of P.A. 99-0456?
- How did you ensure that your staff understood the policies of P.A. 99-0456 and the implementation process for Roosevelt Middle School?
- Since the school's implementation of P.A. 99-0456, have you noticed any changes in student behavior? Explain
- What role have you played in the implementation process of P.A. 99-0456?
- What supports and services have been implemented in ensuring that the policies of P.A. 99-0456 are successfully enforced?
- Let us review the disciplinary policies of P.A. 99-0456. Based on your experiences, has Roosevelt Middle School's disciplinary practices mirrored the components of this new policy? Explain your answer and provide evidence from your experience to support your claim.
- Is there anything else you would like to share that you feel will assist me with my research study?

Closing: Thank you for your participation today. As we close out today, I want to remind you that I will contact you within the next couple of weeks so that we can schedule our final stage of the interview process; the follow-up session.

Appendix C: Student Survey Questions

Please check all that apply:

___ Girl.   ___ Boy.   ___7th Grade.   ___ 8th Grade

___Black/African American   _____Hispanic   _____White/Caucasian   _____Other

Please choose one answer per question.

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	I don't know
Do you feel safe in your school?						
Do you feel supported in your building?						
Do you like being a student at your school?						
Do you think the behavior policies at your school are fair?						
If you are faced with a conflict, do you believe your school supports you?						
If you are suspended from school, are you allowed to make up any homework?						
How often do you think students suspended from school?						
Do you have opportunities for peer mediation and peer resolution at your school?						

Check all boxes that apply

	Nothing, Return to class.	Parent Contact	Meet with Behavior Interventionist	Visit Admin Office	In-School Suspension	Out of School Suspension	I don't know
A student deliberately came to school out of uniform. What are the consequences?							
A student accidentally wore the wrong shoes to school, which means she violated the school's dress code. What are the consequences?							
A student has been consistently tardy to school. What are the consequences?							
Two students are caught fighting in the hallway. What are the consequences?							
Student A gets into an argument with Student B in class. The teacher asks Studen B to leave because he continues to be a disruption. What are the consequences?							
Student A is heard threatening a teacher. What							

are the consequences?							

Check Yes or No

	YES	NO
Do students in your school get suspended?		
Have you heard of Restorative Justice?		
Does your school have a Behavior Interventionist?		
If you are faced with a conflict, does your school have a restorative justice system that helps with misbehaviors and student conflicts (like peace circles and restorative chats)?		
Does your school have a PBIS system?		
Regardless of the consequences, do you feel like you are being heard?		

You have come to the end of the student survey. Thank you for participating in the research study.

Appendix D: Follow Up Session (Teacher and Administrator)

Opening:

Thank you for agreeing to be part of my research study. Your opinions and insights are greatly appreciated. Please feel free to ask me to repeat any questions. Please take as much time as you feel you may need to reflect upon your responses. This conversation is being recorded for research purposes. Please let me know now if you disagree with being recorded. You may request that the recording stop at any time.

1. In research studies, follow up is a way for the researcher to ensure the accurate portrayal of participant voices by allowing participants the opportunity to confirm or deny accuracy and interpretations of data, adding credibility to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Gaba, 1986; Stake, 1995). I am going to give you the transcript of your interview and I want you to take a few minutes to look over your responses. (Provide the participant as much time as needed to review their transcript)
2. Based on your recorded responses, do you believe the descriptions provided from each response is complete and realistic?
3. Based on your recorded responses, do you believe the interpretations are fair and representative?
4. Based on your recorded responses, do you believe the themes are accurate to include? Is there any additional information you would like to add to your responses?

Closing:

Thank you for participating in my research study. I will contact you in a few weeks to discuss the findings of this research study.

Appendix E: Administrator Thematic Response Charts

Table 1

Experiences with school discipline before P.A. 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456	3
Behavioral changes in students influenced by communal changes and family structure	1
Need for behavioral reform with building and distrust in policies and protocols	2
Cultural relevancy in curriculum curved behaviors	1
Use of punitive consequences	3
Empowerment displaced amongst teachers and support staff	1

TABLE 2

Implementation processes of P.A. 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Processes of Implementation	**3**
Administrator roles	3
Establishing teacher-buy in	3
Schoolwide created procedures and practices for alternatives to punitive consequences	1
Misconceptions of Implementation	2

Table 3

Identifiable pros and cons of the implementation processes

Response	# of participants offering this response
Good intentions with questionable outcomes	**4**
Increase in student disciplinary behaviors	2
Increase the line of communication between administration and students.	3
Increased usage of alternatives to suspensions	3
Lack of real-world consequences	2
Need for a humanistic approach to discipline	1
Effects with lack of funding	3

Table 4

The outcomes of the implementation disciplinary practices of P.A 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Instructional reconstruction or Restorative racism	**3**
Attitudes towards restorative justice practices	3
Lack of cultural relevant interventions	1
Embedded institutional racism	3

Table 1

Experiences with school discipline before P.A. 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Experiences with discipline before P.A. 99-0456	3
Punitive Consequences	2
Staff felt students were not being cared for	1
Unwelcoming classroom environment	1
More structure and order for combatting disruptive behaviors	2
Use of culturally relevant interventions	1
Increase the amount of suspensions	3
Increase of disruptive behaviors	3
More administrative support	2

TABLE 2

Implementation processes of P.A. 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Processes of Implementation	**2**
Lack of planning and preparation	1
Miscommunication between administrators and teachers	2
Lack of administrative support	2
Lack of restorative justice professional development opportunities	2

Table 3

Identifiable pros and cons of the implementation processes

Response	# of participants offering this response
Good intentions with questionable outcomes	**3**
Lack of teacher buy-in	2
Lack of culturally relevant interventions	2
Lack of expectations from administrators	3
False sense of student accountability	3
Focus more on positive behavioral supports	1
Lack of resources	3
Lack of parental/involvement and accountability	1

Table 4

The outcomes of the implementation disciplinary practices of P.A 99-0456

Response	# of participants offering this response
Instructional reconstruction or Restorative racism	**4**
Fails to address students' basic needs	2
Disruptive behaviors increased	4
Inconsistency with disciplinary processes	1
Increase communication between students and teachers	1
Perpetuation of racism	3
Administrators failure to address race and teacher biases	1
Act does not address underlying behavioral issues	2
Lack of student support services	2
Untrained teachers	2
Lack of teacher buy-in	2

305

Appendix G: Student Survey Results

Table 8

Values of Outcomes for Disciplinary Supports, Reforms, and Consequences

Survey Questions	Always	# Resp.	Sometimes	# Resp	Rarely	# Resp	Never	# Resp
Do you feel safe in your school?	76.08%	35	15.22%	7	6.52%	3	2.17%	1
Do you feel like consequences given for misbehaviors are fair?	47.83%	22	36.96%	17	4.35%	2	10.87%	5
How often do you witness misbehaviors in your school?	45.66%	21	41.30%	19	10.87%	5	2.17%	1
Do you think students who misbehave get fair consequences?	52.18%	24	39.13%	18	4.35%	2	4.35%	2
Do you think the student misbehaviors (class disruptions, fighting) in your school occur…	54.35%	25	39.13%	18	6.52%	3	0%	0
If students in your school misbehave, do you have supports (Social Worker, Behavior Interventionist, Dean) to help with behaviors?	33.33%	25	55.55%	15	4.44%	2	6.67%	3

Table 9
Perspectives of restorative practices and protocols

Survey Questions	Yes	# Responses	No	# Responses
Have you heard of Restorative Justice?	10.87%	5	89.13%	41
If you are faced with a conflict, does your school have a restorative system that helps with misbehaviors and student conflicts (like peace circles and restorative chats)?	15.22%	7	84.78%	39
Does your school have a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention System)	37.61%	15	67.39%	31
Do the students of Turner Bozeman receive suspensions?	100%	46	0	0
Do you think you are being heard in regards to the use of consequences and discipline pratices?	91.3%	42	8.69%	4

Table 10
Punitive Approaches to behavior management
Students were able to choose multiple answers

Survey Questions	We are sent to the Principal's office	# Responses	We are sent home for out of school suspension	# Responses
Two students are caught fighting in school. What are their consequences?	84.78%	39	91.30%	42
If you have a verbal conflict with another student, how is it resolved?	62.22%	28	44.44%	20

Appendix H: Assent Form

<u>**ASSENT FOR CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**</u> <u>**AGES 11-13**</u>

LOCKED OUT TO BE LOCKED UP, ONLY TO BE LOCKED OUT, AGAIN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES AND ILLINOIS POLICY MAKERS ATTEMPT TO ERADICATE THE SCHOOL-TO- PRISON PIPELINE PHENOMENON

Principal Investigator: Algeanna L. Griffin – Graduate Student

Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

College: College of Education

Faculty Advisor: Horace Hall, Ph.D. College of Education

What is research?
I am asking you to participate in my research study. Research is a way for me to test new ideas
and helps me learn more about new things. Research is one of the ways I find out if a new discipline policy will work and what children like you think about this policy in your school.

I am going to explain the research study to you, and it is ok to ask me questions when I am talking with you. You can circle, highlight, or underline things in this paper that you do not understand or that you want to know more about. I want you to ask questions now and anytime you think of them. If you do not understand something, just ask me.

Why are we doing this research study?
I am working to find out more about your experiences with the disciplinary practices at your
school. I am trying to learn how you feel about these discipline practices and what you think should be done to eliminate certain behaviors in your school.

Why are we asking you?
You are being asked to be in this study because you are a current 7th or 8th-grade student of
Roosevelt Middle School.

I hope to have at least 60 children like you in this research.

What happens if you are in the research?
If you participate in the research, this is what will happen:
- You will sign your name to this assent document which says you agree to be part of this research study at the end of this meeting session

- You will fill out a multiple choice survey using paper and pencil and then place the   completed survey in a secured box. You will not have to put your name on the survey. However, you will be asked to check here if you are a boy, check here if you are a girl and you will be asked for your grade level.
- The survey asks questions about your thoughts related to the current disciplinary policies. The survey will include scenarios and then ask you to rate the behavioral culture of your school and how situations are currently being handled. (ex: what happens if a student fights)
- Surveys will be given to you during non-instructional times and will take only 10-15 minutes to complete.

Are there possible good things that can happen?
You will not personally be helped by being in this study. We hope to learn how discipline
policies can be improved.

What are the possible risks or bad things that can happen?
The risks or bad things that may happen are:

- The questions on the survey can make you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. You do not need to answer any questions you do not want to.
- If you choose not to answer some questions, you will not be penalized.

Can you decide not to be in the research?
Both you and your parent (guardian) must agree to you being in the study. It is your parent or guardian's job to read all the information about the study and decide if it is ok for you to do it. But it is still up to you to say yes or no. Even if your parent or guardian says yes, you may still say no. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. Nobody will be mad at you if you don't want to be in the study. Nothing bad will happen to you if you say no now or change your mind later after starting the study. You just need to tell us if you want to stop being in the study.

Will I be paid or will it cost me anything?
It will not cost you or your parent (guardian) anything to be in the research.

What happens to the information from the study?
I will keep the information I collect for the study secure. Your name will not be on the survey. I will not share information that has your name on it with people who are not part of the research team, unless I have to.

What if you have questions, concerns, or complaints?
If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study or you want to get more information or provide input about this research, you can contact the researcher, Algeanna L. Griffin
(708) 712-9649

algeannagriffin@gmail.com
Faculty Sponsor Horace
Hall, PhD (773) 325-
4693 hhall@depaul.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the DePaul Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

<u>Statement of Assent from the Subject:</u>

I have read the above information. I have had all my questions and concerns answered. By signing below, I indicate my assent to be in the research.
Signature: _____ Printed Name _____ Age_____

Appendix I: Adult Consent

ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
LOCKED OUT TO BE LOCKED UP, ONLY TO BE LOCKED OUT, AGAIN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EXCLUSIONARY DISCPLINARY PRACTICES AND ILLINOIS POLICY MAKERS ATTEMPT TO ERADICATE THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE PHENOMENON

Principal Investigator:
Algeanna L. Griffin- Graduate Student
Institution: DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA
College: College of Education
Faculty Advisor: Horace Hall, PhD. College of Education

Key Information:

What is the purpose of this research?

I am asking you to be in a research study because I am trying to learn more about the
factors that assist in the process of eliminating reactive disciplinary practices against students in a low-socioeconomic middle school setting. I will examine the experiences of Roosevelt Middle School community—teachers, and administrators who have encountered exclusionary disciplinary practices of Public Act 99-045, a more proactive way of dealing with misbehaviors instead of immediate suspension and expulsions. Through this research, I seek to identify how your perspective about this new policy and possible changes in discipline you see in action at your school and the effect of its implementation.

This study is being conducted by Algeanna L. Griffin, a doctoral candidate at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her doctoral degree. This research is being supervised by Horace Hall, PhD.

I hope to include about 70 participants in this research study.

Why are you being asked to be in the research?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a teacher or administrator of students who attend Roosevelt Middle School.

What is involved in being in the research study?

If you agree to be in this study, the research involves you being interviewed to identify the pros and cons of the implementation process and practices of P.A. 99-0456. We will ask you about your knowledge of P.A. 99-0456, about implementtion of any policies at your school related to P.A. 99-0456, and your role in the disciplinary processes at your school. We will ask some personal informtion about you. If you are a teacher, we will ask how long you have worked in education, what grade level/content you teach, and how long you have taught at the school. If you are an adminsitrator, we will ask you how long you have been an adminsitrator.

After all interviews are transcribed, I will meet with you for the last time for the follow-up session. You will be asked to complete a 40-45 minute interview as well as a 30-40 minute follow up session which will allow you to review what you said at the interview by reviewing the written transcript and to add more information if you want or edit any information as well.

The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed into written notes later in order to get an accurate record of what you said. All interviews will be transcribed by a transcription software.

During the interviewing process, you will have the right to stop the interview is necessary, or if you choose not to be audio recorded, you can opt for handwritten notes to be taken. After the completion of the interview, I will formally thank you for your participation.

Are there any risks involved in participating in this study?
You may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed (or sad or angry) about answering certain
questions. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to. There is the possibility that others may find out what you have said, but I have put protections in place to prevent this from occurring. I have created a code number for you that will be on your records, instead of using your name to ensure that all data is confidential.

Are there any benefits to participating in this study?
You will not personally benefit from being in this study. However, it is with hope that
what is learned from this research study will allow your voice to act as an advocate for a discipline policy that will either promote the effectiveness of P.A. 99-0456 or provide insight to ways in which this policy can be improved in eradicating the school-to-prison pipeline phenomenon.

How much time will this take?
This study will take about 90 minutes of your time. The first interview will take 40-45 minutes
and the follow up session will take about 30-40 minutes.

Other Important Information about Research Participation

Are there any costs to me for being in the research?
There is no cost to you for being in the research.

Can you decide not to participate?
Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences, penalties, or loss of benefits if you decide not to participate or change your mind later and withdraw from the research after you begin participating.

Your decision whether or not to be in the research will not affect your child's grades, or your employment at Roosevelt Middle School.

You may withdraw from the research at any time. If you decide to withdraw, all data collected
will be destroyed.

The researcher may remove you from the study without your consent, if for example, you do not follow the instructions, if your situation changes and you no longer meet the inclusion criteria for the study, or you are no longer able to complete the study tasks or come for study session.

Who will see my study information and how will the confidentiality of the information collected for the research be protected?
The research records will be kept and stored securely. Your information will be combined with
information from other people taking part in the study. When I write about the study or publish a paper to share the research with other researchers, I will write about the combined information I have gathered. I will not include your name or any information that will directly identify you. Some people might review or copy my records that may identify you in order to make sure I am following the required rules, laws, and regulations. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board may review your information. If they look at our records, they will keep your information confidential. To prevent others from accessing my records or identifying you should they gain access to my records, I have put some protections in place. These protections include using a code (a fake name, a study ID number, etc.) for you and other people in the study and keeping the records in a safe and secure place [using a password protected computer and using a locked file cabinet].

I will remove the direct identifiers, like name or record number, from the written transcript and replace it with a random code that cannot be linked back to you. This means I have de-identified your transcripts only. I will not use

the information collected for this study for any future research of my own or share your information with other researchers.

The audio recordings will be kept until accurate written notes have been made, then they will be destroyed after 5 years. Audio recordings are identifiable by your voice, but the recordings will be stored in a secure location.

Who should be contacted for more information about the research?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, you can contact the researcher,
Algeanna L.
Griffin
(708) 712-9649
algeannagriffin@gmail.com

Faculty Sponsor Horace Hall, PhD.
(773) 325-4693
hhall@depaul.edu

This research has been reviewed and approved by the DePaul Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Compliance, in the Office of Research Services at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

You may also contact DePaul's Office of Research Services if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You will be given a paper copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent from the Subject:
I have read the above information. I have had all my questions and concerns answered. By signing below, I indicate my consent to be in the research.

Please check the line that applies:
I choose to be audio recorded_____

I choose to opt-out of audio recording _____

Appendix J: Research Flyer

<u>EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!</u>

The research study is in need of six teachers and four administrators currently employed at Roosevelt Middle School. I am asking you to be in a research study because I am trying to learn more about the factors that assist in the process of eliminating reactive disciplinary practices against students in a low-socioeconomic middle school setting. I will examine the experiences of Roosevelt Middle School community—teachers and administrators who have encountered exclusionary disciplinary practices of Public Act 99-045, a more proactive way of dealing with misbehaviors instead of immediate suspension and expulsions. Through this research, I seek to investigate your perspective about this new policy and possible changes in discipline you see in action at your school, and the effect of its implementation.

Interested participants are being recruited for the purpose of research ad will be asked to participate in the following activities:

- Participate in 1 confidential audio-recorded interview lasting 30-45 minutes.
- Participate in a 30-minute follow-up session that will allow each participant to review and check the accuracy of your responses.

The information gained through the interviews will remain confidential. Participation in this research study is voluntary and can be revoked at any time.

Algeanna L. Griffin is currently a doctoral candidate at DePaul University.

For more information, contact Algeanna L. Griffin at 708-712-9649 or

algeannagriffin@gmail.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACLU. What Is The School to Prison Pipeline? ACLU. http://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/what-school-prison-pipeline.

Abrams, L.S. & Gibbs, J. T. (2002). Disrupting the logic of home-school relations: Parent involvement strategies and practices of inclusion and exclusion. *Urban Education, 37,* 389-407.

Abdul-Akil, J., Farmer, A. (2006). Inner-city african american parental involvement in elementary schools: Getting beyond urban legends of apathy. *School Psychology Quarterly, 21* (1), 1-12.

Advancement Project, Education Law Center, Fair Test, The Forum for Education and Democracy, Juvenile Law Center NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (2011). Federal policy, ESEA reauthorization, and the school to prison pipeline.

Alvaré, M. (2018). Addressing racial inequities within schools: Exploring the potential of teacher education. *Sociology Compass, 12,* 1-15.

Allen, Q. (2017). They write me off and don't give me a chance to learn anything: Positioning, discipline, and black masculinities in school. *Anthropology & Education 48* (3), 269-283.

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new jim crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness.* Forward by C. West. The New Press.

American Academy on Pediatrics, Council on School Health. (2013). Out-of-school suspension

    and expulsion. *Pediatrics, 131,* 1000-1007.

Amstutz, L., & Mullet, J. H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools.* In Good

    Books.

Anderson, R.E., Jones, S., Anyiwo, N., McKenny, M., & Gaylord-Harden, N. (2018). What's

    race got to do with it? The contribution of racial socialization to Black adolescent coping.

    Journal of Research on Adolescence.

Anyon, Y. (2016). *Taking restorative practices school-wide: Insights from three schools in*

    Denver. Denver School-Based Restorative Justice Partnership.

Anyon, Y., Gregory, A., Stone, S., Farrar, J., Jenson, J., McQueen, J., Downing, B., Greer, E.,

    Simmons, J. (2016). Restorative justice and school discipline sanctions in a large urban

    school district. *American Educational Research Journal 53 (6),* 1663-1697.

Armsworth, M.W., & Holaday, M. (1993). The effects of pyschological trauma on children and

    adolescents. *Journal of Counseling & Development,* 72, 49-56.

Armour, M. (2013). *Ed. White middle school restorative discipline evaluation: Implementation*

    and impact 2012/2013 [Report to the North East Independent School District, San Antonio,

    TX]. Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue

    https://irjrd.org/files/2016/01/Ed-White-Evaluation-2012-2013.pdf

Arum, R. (2003). *Judging school discipline: The crisis of moral authority.* Harvard University Press.

Autor, D.H., Katz, L.F., & Kearney, M.S. (2008). Trends in U. S. wage inequality: Revising the revisionists. *Review of Economics and Statistics, 90,* 300-323.

Austin, J., Clear, T., Duster, T., Greenberg, D.F., Irvwin, J., McCoy, C., Mobley, A., Owen, B., & Page, J. (2007). *Unlocking america: Why and how to reduce america's prison population.* JFA Institute.

Bailey, M., & Dynarski, S. (2011). Inequality in postsecondary education .In G. J. Duncan & R.J. Murname (Eds), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools and children's life chances* (pp. 117-132). Russell Sage.

Bajaj, M.(2012). *Schooling for social change: The rise and impact of human rights education in india.* Continuum International Publishing.

Balfanz, R., Spiridakis, K., Neild, R.C., Legters (2003). High-poverty secondary schools and the juvenile justice system: How neither helps the other and how that could change. *New Directions for Youth Development. 99*, 71-89.

Beckett, K., Nyrop, K., Pfingst, L. (2006). Race, drugs, and policing: Understanding disparities in drug delivery arrests. *Criminology 44* (1), 105-138.

Baum, D. (1996). *Smoke and mirrors: The war on drugs and the politics of failure.* Little, Brown and Company.

Belenko, S.R. (1993). *Crack and the evolution of anti-drug policy.* Greenwood

Bell, C. (2015). The hidden side of zero tolerance policies: The african american perspective. *Sociology Compass* 9 (1), 14-22.

Bell, D., & Lang, K. (1985). The intake dispositions of juvenile offenders. *Journal of Research in Crime and Deliquency, 22,* 309-328.

Berton, M.W. & Stabb, S.D. (1996). Exposure to violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in urban adolescents. *Adolescence,* 31 (122), 489-499.

Bennett, W., Dilulio, J., & Walters, J. (1996). *Body count: Moral poverty and how to win America's war against crime and drugs.* Simon & Schuster.

Bishop, D.M., & Frazier, C.E. (1988). The influence of race in juvenile justice proceedings. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 25,* 242-263.

Black, A. (2007). The war on people: Reframing the war on drugs by addressing racism with american drug policy through restorative justice and community collaboration. *Brandies Journal 46* (1), 177-198.

Blood, P., & Thorsborne, M. (2005). *The challenges of culture change: Embedding restorative practice in schools.* Paper presented at the Sixth International Conference on Conferencing, Circles and other Restorative Practices: Building a Global Alliance for Restorative Practice and Family Empowerment, Sydney, Australia.

Bloomberg, L.D. & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end.* Sage Publications.

Bogotch, I.E. (2002). Educational leadership and social justice: Practice into theory. *Journal of School Leadership, 12,* 138-156.

Bornstein, J. (2015). "If they're on tier I, there are really no concerns that we can see:" PBIS medicalizes complaint behavior. *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research, 9,* 247-267.

Bowden, E. & Redmond, H. (2016). Teaching note- No peace without justice: Addressing the united state's war on drugs in social work. *Journal of Social Work Education 52* (4), 503-508.

Bowditch, C. (1993). Getting rid of troublemakers: Highschool disciplinary procedures and the production of dropouts. *Social Problems 40* (4), 493- 509.

Braman, D. (2004). *Doing time on the outside: Incarceration and family life in America.* University of Michigan Press.

Briere, J. (2002). Treating adult supervisors of severe childhood abuse and neglect: Further development of an integrative model (From The APSAC [American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children] *Handbook on Child Maltreatment,* 175-203, 2002, John EB Myers, Lucy Berliner, et al., eds). *National Criminal Justice, 19,* 1-26.

Brewer, R.M., & Heitzeg, N.A. (2008). The racialization of crime and punishment for criminal

    justice, color-blind racism, and the political economy of the prison industrial complex.

    American Behavioral Scientist, 51, 625-644.

Brown, A. (2011). Racialized subjectivities: Critical examinations of ethnography of black males

    in the u.s. 1960s to early 2000s, *Ethnography and Education 6* (1), p. 45-60.

Brown, K.M. (2004). Leadership for social justice and equity: Weaving a transformative

    framework and pedagogy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40, I77-108.*

Brown-Douglas, K. (2015). *Stand your ground: Black bodies and the justice of God.* Orbis

    Books.

Bryant-Davis, T., & Ocampo, C. (2005). Racist incident-based trauma. *The Counseling*

    Pyschologist, 33 (4), 479-500.

Buka, S.L., Stichick, T.L., Birdthistle, Il, & Earls, F. J. (2001). Youth exposure to violence:

    Prevalence, risks, and consequences. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 71,* 298-310.

Castella, R. (2003). Zero-tolerance poicy in schools: Rationale, consequences, and alternatives.

    Teachers College Record, 105 (1), 872-892.

Cambron-McCabe, N., & McCarthy, M.M. (2005). Educating school leaders for social justice.

    Educational Policy, 19, 201-222.

Capper, C. A., Theoharis, G., & Sebastian, J. (2006). Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44,* 209-224.

Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Pyschologist, 35* (1), 13-105.

Casella, R. (2003). Punishing dangerousness through preventive detention: Illustrating the institutional link between school and prison. In J. Wald & D.J. Losen (Eds.), *New directions for youth development: Deconstructing the school-to-prison pipeline* (pp. 55-70). Jossey-Bass.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011). School-associated violent deaths surveillance study: 1992-2010. US Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. (2009). *Left behind in america: The nation's dropout crisis.* Northeastern University, Center for Labor Markets.

Chambliss, W.J. (2003). Drug war politics: Racism, corruption, and alienation. See Hawkins et al. 2003, 295-318.

Chang, F. H., & Thompkins, D.E. (2002). Corporations go to prisons: The expansion of corporate power in the correctional industry. *Arbor Studies Journal, 27* (1), 45-69.

Chasnoff, I.J., Burns, W.J., & Burns, K.A. (1986). Prenatal drug use: Effects on neonatal and infant group and development, *Neurobehavior, Toxicology, and Teratology, 9,* 291-293.

Chasnoff, I.J., Burns, W.J., Schnoll, S.H., & Burns, K.A. (1987). Effects of cocaine on pregnancy outcomes. *Monograph Series, National Institute of Drug Abuse and Research, 7 (*67), 335-341.

Chatelain, M. (2016). How black girls suffer when booted from school to juvenile detention centers. Washington Post. www. Washingtonpost.com/opinions/ how-black-girls-suffer80e4-c381214de1a3_story.html?nondirect=on&utm_term=

Chavis, D. (1998). Building community capacity to prevent violence through coalitions and partnerships. In D.R. Karp (Ed), *Community justice: An emerging field* (pp.81-94). Rowman and Littlefield.

Chideya, F. (1995). *Don't believe the hype: Fighting cultural misinformation about african-americans.* Penguin Group.

Chiles, N. (2015, March 14) *Generation of so-called 'crack babies' are now grown up and demonstrating the hysteria of the 1990s was a racist myth.* Atlanta Black Star. http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/03/14/gneration-called-crack-babies-now-grown-showing-hysteria-1990s-racist-myth/

Chin, J.K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S.R., & Rime, W.J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions; Rationale and recommendations. *Journal of School Violence, 11,* 156-173.

Civil Rights Data Collection Data Snapshot: School Discipline. Ocrdata. http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf.

Council of State Governments Justice Center (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study of how school discipline relates to student's success and juvenile justice involvement.* Texas A&M University, Public Policy Research Institute. Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Crack Babies. (April 1, 1989). *The Economist, 311,* 7596, 28.

Cramer, E.D., Gonzalez, L., & Pellegini-Lafont. (2014). From classmates to inmates: An integrated approach to breaking the school to prison pipeline. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47* (4), 461-475.

Crone, D.A., Horner, R.H., & Hawken, L. A. (2004). *Responding to problem behavior in schools: The behavior education program.* Guilford Press.

Crotty-Nicholson, S., Birchmeier, Z., Valentine, D. (2009). Exploring the impact of school discipline on racial disproportion in the juvenile justice system. *Social Science Quarterly 90* (4), 1004-1017.

Cuellar, A. E. & Markowitz, S. (2015). School suspension and the school-to-prison pipeline. *International Review of Law and Economics, 43,* 98-106.

Dantley, M. E. & Tillman, L.C. (2010). *Social justice and moral transformative leadership.* In C. Marshall & M. Oliva (Eds), *Leadership for social justice.* (2nd, ed., pp. 19-34). Allyn & Bacon.

Davis, A. (2001). Writing on the wall: Prisoners on punishment. *Punishment & society 3* (3), 427- 431.

Davis, A (2003). *Are prisons obsolete?* Steven Stories Press

Delgado, R., Stefancic, J. (2017). Foreward. A. Harris, *Critical race theory: An introduction (2nd ed.).* New York University Press.

DeMatthews, D. E. (2015). Making sense of social justice leadership: A case study of a principal's experiences to create a more inclusive school. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 14* (2), 139-166.

DeMatthews, D. E. (2016). The racial discipline gap: Critically examing policy, culture, and leadership in a struggling urban district. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 19* (2), 82-96.

Dickerson, J. (1991, September 20). Crack babies cost us a lot more than $504 million. *Atlanta Journal,* p. A18.

Does This War Make Sense?. (January 21, 1989). *The Economist, 310,* 7586, 25.

Dow-Edwards, D. (1992). *Perinatal substance abuse: Research findings and clinical implications.* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Drug-Exposed Infants, (1990). *Pediatrics 86* (4), 639-642.

Duckworth, M.P., Hale, D.D., Clair, Scott D., & Adams, H.E. (2000). Influence of interpersonal violence and community chaos on stress reactions in children. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15* (8)

Edwards, L. (2016). Homogeneity and inequality: School discipline inequality and the role of racial composition. *Social Forces 95* (1), 55-75.

Emdin, C. (2016). *For white folks who teach in the hood—and the rest of y'all too: Reality pedagogy and urban education.* Beacon Press.

Elwood, W.N. (1994). *Rhetoric in the war on drugs: The triumphs and tragedies of public relations.* Praeger Publishers.

Equal Justice Initiative. (2017). *Black children five times more likely than white youth to be incarcerated.* Montgomery, AL: Equal Justice Initiative. EJI. http://www.eji.org

Fabelo, T.T., Plotkin, M.D., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, D.P., & Booth, E. A. (2011). *Breaking school rules; A statewide study of how school discipline relates to students' success and juvenile justice involvement.* Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Fairbanks, S., Sugai, G., Guardino, D., & Lathrop, M. (2007). Response to intervention: Examining classroom behavior support in second grade. *Exceptional Children, 73,* 288-310.

Families Against Mandatory Minimums (2016). *Prisoner Profile.* FAMM. http://famm.org/prisoner-profiles/

Fasching-Varner, K.J., Mitchell, R.W., Martin, L.L., & Bennett-Haron, K.P. (2014). Beyond

    school to prison pipeline and toward an educational and penal realism. *Equity & Excellence*

    in Education, 47 (4), 410-429.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2009). *Uniform crime reports: Crime in the united states.*

    Washington, DC: Author.

Feld, B. (1999a). A funny thing happened on the way to the centenary: Social structure, race, and

    the transformation of the juvenile court. *Punishment and Society, 1,* 187-214.

Fenning, P., & Rose, J. (2007). Overrepresentation of african-american students in exclusionary

    discipline: The role of school policy. *Urban Education, 42* (6), 536- 559.

Fenning, P.A., Pulaski, S., Gomez, M., Morello, M., Maciel, L., Maroney, E., Maltese, R.

    (2012). Call to action: A critical need for designing alternatives to suspension and expulsion.

    Journal of School Violence, 16, 105-117.

Ferguson, A.A.(2000). *From bad boys: Public schools in the making of black male masculinity.*

    University of Michigan Press.

Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphen: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N.K.

    Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 70-82). Sage

    Publications.

Finklehor, D., Ormrod, R., Turner, H., & Hamby, S. L. (2005). The victimization of children

    and youth: A comprehensive, national survey. *Child Maltreatment, 10,* 5-25.

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H, Al, Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S.L. (2013). Violence, crime and abuse exposure in a national sample of children and youth: An update. *JAMA Pediatrics, 167* (7), 614-621.

Flannery, D., Modzeleski, W., & Kretschmar, J. (2013). Violence and school shootings. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 15* (1), 1-7.

Foster, K.M. (2004). Coming to terms: A discussion of John Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory of minority academic achievement. *Intercultural Education 15,* (4), 369-373.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punishment,* Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan. Vintage.

Frazier, C.E., Bishop, D.M., & Henretta, J. (1992). The social context of race differentials in juvenile justice dispositions. *Sociological Quarterly, 33* (3), 447-458).

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48,* 191-229.

Garibaldi, A.M. (1992). Educating and motivating african american males to succeed. *Journal of Negro Education, 61* (1), 12-18.

Giroux, H. (2012). *Disposable youth: Racialized memories and the culture of cruelty.* McMaster University.

Girven, E.J., McIntosh, K., Nese, R.N.T., Horner, R.H. (2016). Vulnerable decision points for disproportionate office discipline referrals: Comparison of discipline for african american and white elementary school students. *Behavioral Disorders, 41* (4), 187- 195.

Gonzalez, T. (2012). Keeping kids in schools. Restorative justice, punitive discipline, and the school to prison pipeline. *Journal of Law & Education, 41* (2), 281-335.

Gooden, M.A. (2012). What does racism have to do with leadership? Countering the idea of color-blind leadership: A reflection on race and the growing pressures of the urban principalship. *Educational Foundations, 26,* 67-84.

Gorski, P. (2008). The myth of the culture of poverty. *Educational Leadership, 65*(7), 32-36.

Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis.* Sage.

Gregory, J.F. (1996). The crime of punishment: Racial and gender disparities in the use of corporal punishment in the u.s. public schools. *Journal of Negro Education 64:* 454-462.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R., Noguera, P. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39* (1), 59-68.

Green, J. (2009). Changing past student discipline practices to create a district-wide discipline plan. *Education and Urban Society 41,* 457-468.

Hall, S. (1997). *From representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices.* Sage Publications.

Haney, C. & Zimbrano, P. (1998). The past and future of u.s. prison policy: Twenty-five years after the standard prison experiment. *American Psychologist, 53* 709-727.

Harrell, S. P. (2000). A multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 70,* 42-57.

Harry, B., Allen, McLaughlin, M. (1995). Communication versus compliance: African parents involvement in special education. *Exceptional Children 61* (4), 364-377.

Hawken, L. S. (2006). School psychologists as leaders in the implementation of a targeted intervention: The behavior education program. *School Psychology Quarterly, 21,* 91-111.

Hawken, L., & Horner, R. (2003). Evaluation of a targeted group intervention within school-wide system of behavior support. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 12,* 225-240.

Hawken, L. S., MacLeod, K.S., & Rawlings, L. (2007). Effects of the behavior education program on office discipline referrals of elementary school students. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9,* 94-101.

Hawkins, D.F., Meyers, S.L., Stone, R.N. eds (2003). *Crime control and social justice: the delicate balance.* Greenwood.

Hoffman, S. (2014). Zero benefit: Estimating the effect of zero tolerance discipline policies on racial disparities in school discipline. *Educational Policy 28* (1), 69-95.

Howard, T.C. (2013). How does it feel to be a problem? Black male students, schools and

    learning in enhancing the knowledge base to disrupt deficit frameworks. *Review of Research*

    in Education 26 (1), 54-86.

Howard, T.C., Flennaugh, T., Terry, C.L. (2012). "Black males, social imagery and the

    disruption of pathological identities: Implications for research and teaching." *Educational*

    Foundations 22 (1-2): 79-98.

Howard, J., Beckworth, L., Rodning, C. & Kropenske, V. (1989). The development of young

    children of substance-abusing parents: Insights from seven years of intervention and

    research. *Bulletin of the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs, 9* (5), 8-12.

Hsia, H., George, S.B., McHale, R. (2004). *Disproportionate Minority Confinement 2002*

    Update. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E.P., Johnson, D.J., Stevenson, H.C., & Spicer, P. (2006).

    Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future

    study. *Developmental Psychology, 42* (5), 747.

James, A., & James, A. (2004). *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy, and social practice.*

    Palgrave MacMillan.

Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A.H, & Brooks, J.F. (2009). Leadership for social justice: Preparing

    21st century school leaders for a new social order. *Journal of Research on Leadership*

    Education, 4 (1), 1-31.

Johns, A.A. (Ed.). (2015). *A companion to Ronald Reagan.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Johnson, T., Boyden, J.E., Pittz, W.J. (2001). *Racial profiling and punishment in U.S. public schools: How zero tolerance policies and high stakes testing subvert academic excellence and racial equity.* Research Report and Executive Summary.

Kane, G. (2003). *Parents still play a key role in student's discipline.* The Baltimore Sun.

Kang-Brown, J., Trone, J., Fratellow, J., & Daftary-Kapur, T. (2013). What we've learned about zero tolerance in schools. *Vera Institute of Justice: Center on Youth Justice.*

Karakatsanis, A. (2013). Why u.s. V. blewett is the obama justice department's greatest shame. The Guardian. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/23/us-v-blewett-obama-justice-department-shame

Karp, D. R., & Breslin, B. (2001). Restorative justice in school communities. *Youth & Society, 33,* 249-272.

Karp, D.R., Clear, T. R. (2000). Community justice: A conceptual framework. In *Boundaries changes in criminal justice organizations.* (Vol. 2, pp. 323-368). National Institute of Justice.

Katsiaficas, D., Futch, D., Sirin, S., Fine, M. (2011). Everyday hyphens: Exploring youth identities with methodological and analytic pluralism. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 8,* 120-139.

Kena, G., Hussar, W., McFarland, J., De Brey, C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X. (2016).*The conditions of education 2016 (NCES 2016-144).* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Kennedy, D. (1992, December 6). "Crack Babies Catch Up", *Santa Cruz Sentinel)*

Kilpatrick, D.G., Ruggiero, K. J., Acierno, R., Saunders, B.E., Resnick, H.S. & Best, C.L. (2003). Violence and risk of PTSD, major depression, substance abuse/dependence, and comorbidity: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 7*(4), 692.

King, R.S. & Mauer, M. (2006). Sentencing with discretion: Crack cocaine sentencing after booker: *The Sentencing Project,* New York.

Koch, D., Lee, J., Lee, K. (2016). Coloring the war on drugs: Arrest disparities in black, brown and white. *Race and Social Problems 8* (4), 313- 325.

Koon, D. S. (2013). *Exclusionary school discipline: An issue brief and review the literature.* The Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Policy, University of Berkeley School of Law.

Kunjufu, J. (2013). *Changing school culture for black males.* Chicago, IL: African American Images.

Kyere, E., Joseph, A., & Wei, K. (2018). Alternative to zero-tolerance policies and out-of-school

    suspension: A mulitiered centered perspectives. *Journal of Ethnics &Cultural Diversity in*

    Social Work, 1-16.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's its doing in a nice field

    like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race and family life.* University of California

    Press.

Leiber, M. J., & Stairs, J. M. (1999). Race, contexts, and the use of intake diversion. *Journal of*

    Research I Crime and Delinquency, 36, 56-86.

Lester, B.M., & Tronick, E.Z. (1994). The effects of pre-natal cocaine exposure on child

    outcome. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 15,* 107-120.

Lester, K., Artz, C., Resick, P.A., & Young-Xu, Y (2010). Impact of race on early treatment

    termination and outcomes in posttraumatic stress disorder treatment. *Journal of Consulting*

    and Clinical Psychology, 78(4), 480.

Lewis, A.E. & Diamon, J.B. (2015). Despite the best intentions (2015 ed). Oxford University

    Press.

Losen, D. (2013). Discipline policies: Successful schools, racial justice, and the law. *Family*

    Court Review (57), 388-400.

Losen, D. J., Hodson, C., Keith, M. A., Morriso, K., & Belway, S. (2015). *Are we closing the school discipline gap.* Center for Civil Rights Remedies at The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.

Losen, D. J., & Martinez, T.F. (2013). *Out of school and off track: The overuse of suspensions in American middle and high schools.* University of California.

Lynch, J.P. & Sabol, W.J. (2004). Assessing the effects of mass incarceration on informal social control in communities. *Commentary, 3,* 267- 294.

Lyons, P., & Rittner, B. (1988). The construction of the crack babies phenomenon as a social problem. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 68* (2), 313-320.

Lusane, C. (1991). *Pipe dream blues: Racism & the war on drugs.* Afterword by J. Jackson. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Lustick, H. (2017). "Restoring justice" or restoring order? Restorative school discipline practices in urban public schools. *Urban Education* (201711), 1-28.

Mallet, C.A. (2016). The school to prison pipeline: A critical review of the punitive paradigm shift. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal 33,* 15-24.

Marsh, S. (2014). *School pathways to juvenile justice system project.* Reno, NV: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Martinez, A. & Bournival, B. (1995). ADHD: The tip of the iceberg. *ADHD Report, 3* (6).

Matsuda, M. (1989). Public response to racist speech: Considering the victim's story. *Michigan Law Review 87* (8), 2320-2381.

Mauer, M. (2006). *Race to incarcerate.* New Press.

Mauer, M. (2011). Addressing racial disparities in incarceration. *The Prison Journal 9* (13), 875-101S.

Meierhoefer, B.S. (1992). The general effect of mandatory minimum prison terms; A longitudinal study of federal sentences imposed. *Federal Judicial Center,* Washington, DC.

Meiners, E. (2011). Ending the school-to-prison pipeline/building abolition futures. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education 43* (4), 547-565.

Merriweather- Hunn, L., Guy, T., & Manglitz, E. (2006). *Who can speak for whom? Using counterstorytelling to challenge racial hegemony.* Adult Education Research Conference, New Prairie Press.

McCarthy, S. & Waters, T.F. (2003). A crack kid grows up: A clinical case report. In *Treating substance abusers in correctional contexts: New understandings, new modalities.* The Haworth Press, Inc.

McClusky, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Stead, J., Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2008). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference? *Educational Review, 60,* 405-417.

McIntosh, P. (1989). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom,*
10-12.

McNeal, R.B. (1999). Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on
science achievement, truancy, and dropping out. *Social Forces, 78,* 117-144.

Metzger, I. W., Anderson, R. E., Are, F., & Ritchwood, T. (2021). Healing interpersonal and
racial trauma: Integrating racial socialization into trauma-focused cognitive behavioral
therapy for african-american youth. *Child Maltreatment 26* (1), 17-27.

Milner, H.R. (2012). Beyond a test score: Explaining opportunity gaps in educational practice.
Journal of Black Studies, 42 (3), 693-718.

Milner, H.R. & Williams, S.M. (2008). Analyzing education policy and reform with attention to
race and socioeconomic status. *Journal of Public Management & Social Policy, 14* (2), 33-
50.

Mitchell, O. (2009). Is the war on drugs racially biased? *Journal of Criminal Justice, 32,* 49-75.

Mitchell, O., & Caudy, M.S. (2015). Examining racial disparities in drug arrests. *Justice
Quarterly, 32,* 288-313.

Morris, M. (2015). *Pushout: The criminalization of black girls in schools.* New Press Books.

Morrison, G.M., & D'Incau, B. (1997). The web of zero tolerance: Characteristics of students

    who are recommended for expulsion from school. *Education and Treatment of Children, 20,*

    316-335.

Mowen, T. J., & Visher, C. A. (2016). Changing ties that bind: How incarceration impacts

    family relationships. *Criminology & Public Policy, 15,* 503-528.

Mowen, T.J. (2017). The collateral consequences of "criminalized" school punishment on

    disadvantaged parents and families. *Urban Review, 49,* 832-851.

Musu-Gillette, L., Robinson, J., McFarland, J., KewalRamani, A., Zhang, A., & Wilkinson-

    Flicker, S. (2016). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2016*

    (NCES 2016-007). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Myers, D., Briere, D. (2010). Lessons learned from implementing a check-in/check-out

    behavioral program in an urban middle school. *Beyond Behavior 19* (2), 21-27.

Neblett, E. W., White, R. L., Ford, K. R., Philip, C. L., Nguyên, H. X., & Sellers, R. M. (2008).

    Patterns of racial socialization and psychological adjustment: Can parental communications

    about race reduce the impact of racial discrimination? *Journal of Research on Adolescence,*

    18 (3), 477-515.

Neblett, E. W., Smalls, C., Ford, K., Nguyên, H. X., & Sellers, R. (2009). Racial socialzation and

    racial identity: African American parents' messages about race as precursors to identity.

    Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38, 189-203.

Neiman, S., & DeVoe, J.F. (2009). *Crime, violence, discipline, and safety in US public schools: Findings from school survey on crime and safety.* U.S. Department of Education.

Netzel, D.M., & Eber, L. (2003). Shifting from reactive to proactive discipline in an urban school district: A change of focus through PBIS implementation. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 5,* 1-19.

Nicholas- Crotty, S., Birchmeier, Z., & Valentine, D. (2009). Exploring the impact of school discipline on racial disproportion in the juvenile justice system.

Nittle, N.K. (2019). How racism affects minority students in public schools. Thought Co. https://www.thoughtco.com/how-racism-affects-public-school-minorities-4025361.

Nixon, R. (1971). Remarks about an intensified program for drug abuse prevention and control. Presidency. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3147

Noguera, P. (1995). Preventing and producing violence: A critical analysis of responses to school violence. *Harvard Educational Review, 65* (2), 189- 212.

Noguera, P. (1999). How listening to students can help schools to improve. *Theory Into Practice, 46* (3), 205-211.

Noguera, P. (2003). *City schools and the American dream: Reclaiming the promise of public education.* Teacher College Press.

Noguera, P. (2008). *The trouble with black boys: Other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education.* Jossey-Bass.

Oakes, J. (1994). Tracking, inequality, and the rhetoric of reform: Why schools don't change. In j. Kretovics & E.J. Nussel (Eds), *Transforming Urban Education* (pp. 146- 164). Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ogbu, J. (1985). Cultural-ecological influences on minority students, *Language Arts, 62* (8), 860- 869.

Okie, S. (2009, January 26). The epidemic that wasn't. *The New York Times.* http://nytimes.com/2009/01/27/health/27coca.html

Payne, Y.A., Hitchens, B.K., Chambers, D.L. (2017). "Why I can't stand out in front of my house?": Street-identified black youth and young adult's negative encounters with police. *Sociological Forum, 32* (4), 874- 895.

Pazey, B. L., & Cole, H.A. (2013). The role of speical education training in the development of socially just leaders building an equity consciousness in educational leadership programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40,* 243-271.

Peck, J. H., & Jennings, W.G. (2016). A critical examination of "being black" in the juvenile system. *Law and Human Behavior 40,* (3), 219-232.

Provine, D.M. (2007). *Unequal under the law: Race and the war on drugs.* University of Chicago Press.

Provine, D.M. (2011). Race and inequalities in the war on drugs. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science 7,* 41-60.

Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American communities.* Simon & Shuster.

Rapoport, J., & Castellanos, J. (1995, Nov). *Neurological profiles of children with ADD.* Paper presented at the C.H.A.D.D. Conference, Washington, D.C.

Reinarmanm C., Levine, H.G. eds (1997). *Crack in america: Demon, drugs and social justice.* California Press.

Rich, J., Corbin, T., Bloom, S., Evans, S., & Wilson, A. (2009). Healing the hurt: Approaches to the health of boys and young men of color. The California Endowment Fund.

Rich, J., Corbin, T., Marks, A., & Ashley, L. (2018). There is no "post": How trauma and violence affect the lives of young males of color. The California Endowment Fund.

Richards, J. (2004). Zero room for zero tolerance: Rethinking federal funding for zero-tolerance policies. *University of Dayton Law Review, 30,* 91.

Rist, M. (1990). "Crack babies" in school. *The Educational Digest 55* (9), 30-33.

Rodriguez-Ruiz, R. (2017). School to prison pipeline: An evaluation of zero-tolerance policies and their alternatives. *Houston Law Review 54* (3), 803-837.

Rose, T., Lindsey, M.A., Xiao, Y., Finigan-Carr, N.M., Joe, S. (2017). Mental health and

educational experiences among black youth: A latent class analysis. *Youth Adolescence 46,*

2321- 2340.

Samura, T. (2000). Prisons, punishment, and profiteers. *Workplace, 6,* 23-53.

Sandy, K. (2003). The discrimination inherent in america's drug war: Hidden racism revealed by

examining the hysteria over crack. *Alabama Law Review 54,* 665-693.

Scalia, J. (2001). *Federal drug offenders, 1999 with trends 1984-1999.* Bureau of Justice

Statistics.

Sentencing Project, The (2012). *Parents in prison.* The Sentencing Project.

Sentencing Project, The (2017). *Black disparities in youth incarceration.* The Sentencing

Project.

Serrano, A. (2018). Juvenile injustice: Racial disparities in incarceration start early. *Color Lines.*

Race Forward.

Sewell, T. (1997). *Black masculinities and schooling.* Trentham Books.

Scully, J. (2002). Killing the black community: A commentary on the united state's war on drugs.

In J. Silliman & A. Bhattacharjee (Eds.), *Policing the national body: Race, gender and*

criminalization. Forward by A. Davis. South End Press.

Shaw, S. R. & Braden, J.P. (1990). Race and gender bias in the administration of corporal

    punishment. *School Psychology Review, 19*: 378-383.

Shields, C.M. (2004). Dialogic leadership for social justice: Overcoming pathologies of silence.

    Educational Administration Quarterly, 49, 243-271.

Skiba, R.J., Peterson, R.L., & Williams, T. (1997). Office referrals and suspensions: Disciplinary

    intervention in middle schools. *Education and Treatment of Children 20,* 295-315.

Skiba, R.J., & Peterson, R. (1999). The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe

    schools? *Phi Delta Kappan, 80,* 372-382.

Skiba, R.J., & Knesting, K. (2001). Zero tolerance, zero evidence: An analysis of school

    disciplinary practice. *New Directions for Your Development, 92,* 17- 43.

Skiba, R.J., Michael, R., Nardo, A.C., Peterson, R. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of

    racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review, 34* (4), 317-

    342.

Skiba, R.J., & Rausch, K.M. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension and expulsion: Questions of

    equity and effectiveness. *Handbook of Classroom Management Research, Practice and*

    Contemporary Issues, 1063-1089.

Skiba, R.J. (2014). The failure of zero tolerance. *Reclaiming Children and Youth 22* (4), 27-33.

Skiba, R.J., Arredondo, M.I., & Williams, N.T. (2014). More than a metaphor: The contribution of exclusionary discipline to a school to prison pipeline. *Equity & Excellence in Education 47* (4), 546-564.

Simmons, W., & Grady, M. (1990). *Black male achievement: From peril to promise (Report of the superintendent's advisory committee on black male achievement).* Prince Georges Country, MD: Prince Georges County Schools.

Smith, E. & Hattery, A. (2006). The prison industrial complex. *Sociation Today, 4* (2).

Smith, J.R. (2015). Unequal burdens of loss: Examining the frequency and timing of homicide deaths experienced by young Black men across the life course. *American Journal of Public Health, 105,* S483-S490.

Smith, J.R. & Patton, D. U. (2016). Posttraumatic stress syndrome in context: Examining trauma responses to violent exposures and homicide death among black males in urban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 86* (2), 212-223.

Solomon, R. P., Portelli, J.P., Daniel, B., & Campbell, A. (2005). The discourse of deinal: How white teachers candidates construct race, racism, and white privilege. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 8* (2), 147-169.

Song, S., & Swearer, S.M (2016). The cart before the horse: The challenge and promise of restorative justice consultation in schools. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 26* (4), 313-324.

Steiner, B. (2001). The consciousness of crime and punishment: Reflection of identity, politics, and lawmaking in the war on drugs. *Stud. Law Polit. Soc, 23,* 187-214.

Stevenson, H.C., Jr., Cameron, R., Herrero-Taylor, T., & Davis, G. Y. (2002). Development of the teenager experience of racial socialization scale: Correlates of race-related socialization frequency from the perspectives of Black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology, 28* (2), 84-106.

Student Discipline Reform of 2016, Pub. L. No. 099-0456

Sugai, G., Horner, R.H., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., Lewis, T.J., Nelson, C.M., Ruef, M. (2000). Applying positive behavior support and functional behavioral assessment in schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 2,* 133-143.

Sugai, G. & Horner, R.H. (2002). Introduction to the special series on positive behavior support in schools. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 10,* 130-135.

Sykes, B.L., Piquero, A.R., Gioviano, J.P. (2017). Adolescent racial discrimination and parental perceptions of safety in american neighborhoods and schools. *Sociological Forum 32* (S1), 952- 974.

Tate IV, W.F. (1997). Cultural race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of research in education, 22* (1), 195-247.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson- Billings, G. (Eds). (2009). *Foundations of critical theory in education.* Routledge.

Teasley, M., McRoy, R.G., Joyner, M., Armour, M., Gourdine, R.M., Crewe, S., Kelly, M.,
 Franklin, C.G.S., Payne, M., Jackson, J., & Fong, R. (2017). Increasing success for african
 american children and youth. *American Academy of Social Work and Welfare 21,* 1-25.

Theoharis, G., Brooks, J.S. (Eds). (2011). *What every principal needs to know to create equitable
 and excellent schools.* Teachers College Press.

Townsend, B. (2000). The disproportionate discipline of african american learners: Reducing
 school suspensions and expulsions. *Exceptional Children, 66* (3), 381-391.

Turkel, S.B., & Eth, S. (1990). Psychopathological responses to stress: Adjustment disorder ad
 post-traumatic stress disorder. In Arnold, E.L. (Ed.), *Childhood Stress* (pp. 51-71). John
 Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Tsai, T. & Scommengra, P. (2012). U.S. has world's highest incarceration rate. PRB Org.
 http://www.prb.org/publications/articles/2012/us-incarceration.aspx

Tynes, B. M., Willis, H. A., Stewart, A. M., & Hamilton, M. W. (2019). Race-related traumatic
 events online and mental health among adolescents of color. *Journal of Adolescent Health,
 65* (3), 317-377.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rihts (1993). *1990 elementary and secondary
 school civil rights survey: National Summaries.* DBS Corporation.

Van Tassel, P. (1992, January 5). Schools trying to cope with 'crack babies.' *The New York Times.* www.nytimes.com/1992/01/05/nyregion/schools-trying-to-cope-with-crack-babies.html

Vincent, C., & Tobin, T. (2011). The relationship betwee implementation of school wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) and disciplinary exclusion of students from various ethnic backgrounds with and without disabilities. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 19,* 217-232.

Wachtel, T., Costello, B., & Wachtel, J. (2009). *The restorative practices handbood for teachers, disciplinarians and administrators.* International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Wald, J., & Losen, D.J. (2003). Editors' notes. In J.Wald & D.J. Losen (Eds.), *New directions for youth development: Deconstructing the school-to-prison pipeline* (pp.1-2). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Walker, H.M. & Horner, R.H. (1996). Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patters among school-age children and youth. *Journal of Emotional and Behavior Disorders, 4*(4), 194-210.

Watson-Hill, D. (2013). Outside the realm: The counter-narratives of african american parent involvement. [Doctoral dissertation, DePaul University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Way, N. (1998). *Everyday courage: The lives and stories of urban teenagers.* New York

    University Press.

Weiss, B., Dodge, K., Bates, J., Pettit, G. (1992). Some consequences of early harsh discipline:

    Child aggression and a maladaptive social information processing style. *Child Development*

    63 (13), 21-35.

Wildeman, C., Schnittker, J., & Turney, K. (2012). Despair by association? The mental health of

    mothers children by recently incarcerated fathers. *American Sociological Review, 77,* 216-

    243.

Wilkie, C. (2015, August, 25). Illinois governor signs sweeping school discipline reform:

    Progressive new law wins backing from republican gov. bruce rauner.

    www.huffingtonpost.com

Williams, E.H. (1914, February 8). Negro cocaine "fiends" new southern menace. *New York*

    Times, 5 12.

Wilson, A. (2015). A critique of sociocultural values in pbis. *Association for Behavior Analysis*

    International 8 (1), 92-94.

Witt, H. (2007). *School discipline tougher on African Americans.* Available from

    http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-070942discipline, 0, 22104.story

    ?coll=chi_tab01_layout.

Wordes, M., & Jones, S. (1998). Trends in juvenile detention and steps towards reform. *Crime and Delinquency 44* (4), 544-560.

Wu, S.C., Pink, W.T., Crain, R.L., & Morales, O. (1982). Student suspension: A critical reappraisal. *The Urban Review, 14,* 245-303.

Zyromski, B. (2007). African-american and latino youth and post-traumatic stress syndrome: Effects on school violence and interventions for school counselors. *Journal of School Violence, 6.*