Spring 5-16-2024

To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Ross T. Hamilton Jr.
Arcadia University, rosshamjr1914@gmail.com

To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Arcadia University

EdD Program in Educational Leadership

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd

A DISSERTATION IN EDUCATION

Presented to the Faculties of Arcadia University's School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Bruce Campbell, Jr., Committee Chair

Dr. Zarah Adams, Committee Member

Dr. Monica J. Taylor, Committee Member

2024

<u>Dissertation Defense Approval Form</u>
Arcadia University

Ed.D. Program in Educational Leadership

Name: Ross T. Hamilton Jr.

Phone #:

E-mail: rhamilton_01@arcadia.edu

Semester/Year Started Program: Fall 2020

Attach Dissertation Title and Abstract (250 word maximum) to this form.

Date of Dissertation Defense: April 25, 2024

✓ Approved	_____ Approved Contingent Upon Revisions as Stated Below

Required Signatures:

Chair Name: Dr. Bruce Campbell Jr.   Signature: _____ Date: 4/25/2024

Members:

Name: Dr. Monica Taylor   Signature: _____ Date: 4/25/2024

Name: Dr. Zarah Adams   Signature: _____ Date: 4/25/24

Necessary Revisions Include:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Date revisions must be completed and submitted:_____

1

Dedication

First and foremost, this body of work is dedicated to my ancestors who were forced to this country many moons ago; their God-given strength to push through the horrors of enslavement has given me the opportunity to reach heights that I could have never imagined.

I would also like to dedicate this to my beautiful wife, Imani, and my children, Anaya, Azaria, and Michael. Thank you for being with me during this journey and for all of the sacrifices you have had to endure. I love you!

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my lord and savior Jesus Christ, for without his guidance and protection I would not be who I am today. Thank you to my wife, Imani Hamilton, for all of your support and encouragement during this journey; I could not have done it without you. My beautiful children, Anaya, Azaria, and Michael, I love you, and always reach for the sky and the stars above.

I would like to thank my awesome and amazing committee team. To my chair, Dr. Bruce Campbell, you're an amazing professor and mentor. God truly placed you in my life for this very moment. To my committee member Dr. Zarah Adams, I look forward to collaborating with you now that this journey has finished. Thank you for all of your words of encouragement during this journey, especially during the loss of my father. To my committee member, Dr. Monica Taylor, I knew from day 1 that I wanted you on my committee. I truly honor all of the accomplishments that you have achieved throughout your career in education; it has been a true privilege to have you on my team.

I would like to thank my mother, Toni Plaskett: Your prayers are always received, thanks for raising me to be the man I am today. To my father, Dr. Ross T. Hamilton, Sr.: Although you are with the lord, your legacy will continue. To my sister, Dr. Tonisha Joanis: Thank you for helping to review my papers and for all the support you have given me. To my brother, Neil: Your words of encouragement have always helped keep me grounded; love you bro. To my mother-in law, Dorothy Carn: You have been a true godsend for Imani and me.

To my maternal grandparents, Joseph "Pop-Pop" and Bernice "G-G" Plaskett: Thanks for helping my family when we were in need. To all my cousins, aunts, and uncles: I love you. To my paternal grandparents, Rev. Leo & Anne Hamilton: Your legacy continues.

A special acknowledgement to Arcadia University's Cohort 11: We did it! To my special group of peer reviewers, Brian Wallace, Dr. Karen Guidas-Sidorick, Jeri Johnson, and Dr. Keisha Robinson: Teamwork makes the dream work!

To my high school teacher Ms. Forte: You're the reason I am an educator. To my high school counselor, Mr. Sloane: Thank you. To the Claire family: Thank you for what you did during my senior year. To the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity: Thank you for your constant support and encouragement. To my dear alma mater, Clark Atlanta University: It was on your hallowed grounds where I found my purpose.

To all of those participants who shared their experience in this research, your story will help the next generation of Black students at the high school in this dissertation, and to that I say thank you.

Thank you, God, for all that you do and continue to do in my life, and for that I will continue to uphold your name in all that I do.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban public high school shaped the racial identity development of Black students. In addition, the researcher was also able to identify the policies and practices that benefit and or harm the racial identity development of Black children as they matriculate through high school. African American children matriculating through suburban public schools do so at serious risk to their racial identity development (L. A. Jones, 2018; Leath et al., 2019). Cultural and social challenges faced by African American children in suburban schools include navigating a system that is built entirely around the White experience (L. A. Jones, 2018). Cross's (2021) Nigrescence theory, which captures the various stages of African Americans as they move from a state of cultural unconsciousness to cultural pride, was used as the theoretical framework for this study.

The participants of this study were Black alumni, who graduated from Sunnyside High School (SHS; pseudonym) prior to 2020. SHS is a large suburban public school that prior to 2023 had a student body that was predominately White. Data collection for this qualitative study included semistructured individual interviews with 11 Black alumni of SHS, a small focus group consisting of five Black alumni of SHS, and a document review of public records connected with SHS. Through the data collection process, the researcher was able to identify the following six themes: (a) racial socialization: role of parents/family members; (b) racist encounters; (c) affinity spaces for Black students; (d) lack of culturally relevant pedagogy; (e) insufficient number of Black teachers; and (f) attending a predominantly White suburban public high school prepared individuals for a racialized society.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the United States, the salience of race is a phenomenon that develops quite early in the lives of children, even before entering kindergarten; 3- and 4-year-olds have already been found to associate racial groups with both low status (i.e., poverty) and high status (i.e., wealth) markers (Sullivan et al., 2021). Worrell et al. (2020) present race salience as the level of importance to which race plays within a person's self-understanding during periods of their life. Research has found that even at the age of 6, a child can identify discrimination and understand key elements of racism (Marcelo & Yates, 2018).

Racial identity development is the level of connection that a person attaches to their own racial group (Hughes et al., 2015; Sackett & Dogan, 2019; Schwartz et al., 2014). As Black children transition into adolescence, they develop an even more heightened state of racial identity awareness, especially surrounding how their racial group membership is treated by others within society (Leath et al., 2019; Rogers et al., 2015). In suburban schools, African American children, within the edifices of their school buildings, face a variety of threats to their social, cultural, and academic development that their White classmates do not encounter (L. A. Jones, 2018; Lewis-McCoy, 2018).

In this chapter, the researcher will first provide an overview of the literature as it relates to the experience of Black suburban students in the public school system. Next, the research problem will be presented, which shows the various threats that racism-related practices and cultural incompetence in schools have on the racial identity development of Black students. Finally, the research questions, context of the study, and significance of the research will be provided.

Background of Study

In the United States, the suburbs are growing more rapidly than urban and rural areas (Parker et al., 2018). Recent data indicates that there are roughly 175 million Americans who reside in the suburbs, an increase of 16% from the 150 million that were identified in 2000 (Parker et al., 2018). As a result of the increase in the suburban population, the majority of public school students in the United States now obtain their education through suburban schools (Diamond & Posey-Maddox, 2020).

The increase in residential population within the suburbs has also manifested into an increase in persons of color within these areas; for instance, more than half of the Black population in the United States lives in suburban areas (Diamond & Posey-Maddox, 2020; McGowen, 2017). McGowen (2017) attributes the racial demographic rise of African Americans living in the suburbs to both an increase in their economic mobility and the removal of racist barriers that once prevented African Americans from residing in these once predominantly White enclaves.

Posey-Maddox's (2017) research on suburban Black families and their relationships with their children's schools found that most Black parents saw intrinsic value in the plethora of resources and educational opportunities offered within their suburban public school districts. Such value can also be bolstered by research that indicates that "students of color matriculating through predominantly White integrated schools had higher levels of achievement, stronger test scores, lower dropout rates, and less truancy than their counterparts in segregated cities" (Chapman, 2014, p. 313).

Although the educational opportunities provided in suburban settings may be enticing to Black families, the stark reality is that Black children who attend suburban schools are not

immune from the harsh realities of racism; their school buildings remain a microcosm of the various racial microaggressions that plague Black people throughout society (Posey-Maddox, 2017; C. D. Smith & Hope, 2020).

Research Problem

In the United States, Black/African American children attending suburban schools do so under the constant threat of serious harm to their racial identity (L. A. Jones, 2018; Leath et al., 2019). These threats faced by African American students in suburban educational spaces include: (a) curriculum that does not reflect their culture, (b) daily doses of racial microaggressions from their peers, and (c) interactions within their building that perpetuate the stereotypes that society has placed on African Americans (Leath et al., 2019). Unfortunately, in order to achieve success in these educational institutions that are built around White-normed policies and expectations, students of color face the heavy burden of adapting to the institutional expectations set before them (Chambers et al., 2014). In essence, the double-consciousness theory brought to light by W. E. B. Du Bois (1994) in the early 20th century still rings true today for Black children attending suburban schools.

Du Bois (1994) in 1903 defined the concept of double consciousness as the psychologically draining matrix in which African Americans find themselves constantly examining their existence through a racist society in which their mere existence is a measure of contempt. The result is a dual consciousness in which African Americans feel they have two frames of being—one as an African American and the other as an American—resulting in a state of battle toward maintaining their racial identity while also adapting to the norms of American society (Du Bois, 1994).

Confronting racial mistreatment against African Americans and its residual effects on Black children is nothing new. To celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1963, the renowned author James Baldwin (1991) penned a letter to his Black teenage nephew in which he encouraged him to:

> Know whence you came. If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go. The details and symbols of your life have been deliberately constructed to make you believe what white people say about you. Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure, does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity and fear. (p. 8)

Due to the large amount of time that adolescents spend within their school buildings, forms of discrimination against students of color are important to unpack (Hope et al., 2015). For the purposes of reflection, the researcher will first examine the area of school discipline.

Disproportionality in Discipline

Research has found that in regard to school discipline, Black students are more likely to face punitive disciplinary actions, such as suspensions, than their White peers (K. P. Anderson & Ritter, 2017; Davison et al., 2022; Fisher et al., 2020; Gregory & Fergus, 2017). This disciplinary racial gap is not just isolated to high school but starts at preschool, according to Gregory and Fergus (2017): "Although only 19 percent of preschool children are black, they represent 47 percent of preschool children who receive one or more out-of-school suspensions" (p. 119).

The disproportionality in school discipline between Black and White students has severe consequences; for instance, there exists a strong correlation between school dropout rates and suspensions (Davis, 2017). Data shows that within the kindergarten through 12th-grade (K-12) sphere, Black students are more likely to drop out when compared with their White classmates

(Davis, 2017). When examining solutions to improve the academic success and engagement of

Black students, one way to start is by introducing pedagogical practices that incorporate Black

culture within the curriculum (Gay, 2013; Milner, 2016).

Barriers to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Classrooms

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is the theory that the culture of a student is a

valuable asset to tap into during the educational process (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Shaw,

2016; Warren-Grice, 2017). Gay (2013) suggests that culturally responsive teaching is the ability

to connect to students by using "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and

performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to

and effective for them" (pp. 49–50). CRP is an effective tool for teachers to both legitimize the

experience of African American children within their lessons and disseminate deficit narratives

of African Americans and their culture (Ladson-Billings, 2022).

Although CRP, if implemented correctly, can be transformative for students of color, the

teaching force within the United States, the majority of which are comprised of White teachers,

find it challenging to replicate such practices in their classrooms (Kearl, 2022; Pagán, 2022;

Willey & Magee, 2018). One barrier toward the implementation of CRP is that White teachers

arrive at their buildings with racial biases that normalize racist school policies and uplift White

privilege (Pagán, 2022; Willey & Magee, 2018). When examining the challenges to engaging in

culturally responsive dialogue within the classroom, Thomas (2013) found that teachers from a

variety of backgrounds all face the challenge of separating their intellectual ideologies from their

life experiences. According to Thomas (2013), "When teachers and students hold contrasting

ideologies about the curriculum under study, pedagogical practices, or other aspects of classroom

interaction, conflict often occurs" (p. 329). In discussing ideologies within education, one such

method that further perpetuates racism and inequality to persons of color is the colorblind

approach to discussing race (Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021; Neville et al., 2013).

Colorblind Racism

The colorblind racial ideology is the act of denying differences between races and instead

seeing all persons as the same (Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021; Neville et al., 2013). As a result of

systematic racism within the United States, there exists real social and economic disparities that

result in the marginalization and oppression of Black people (Neville et al., 2013). According to

Neville et al. (2013), the refusal to see a person's race and to take into account the disparities

brought on by racial differences actually results in the continued perpetuation of racial harm

against persons of color.

In examining the impact of colorblind racism on children in schools, Sondel et al. (2022)

indicates that a colorblind approach actually uplifts White supremacy by allowing Whites the

ability to refuse to accept any culpability for the societal challenges faced by persons of color

while also professing support of the status quo without fear of being branded a racist. Neville et

al. (2013) also highlighted the negative impact of colorblind racial ideology by indicating that

children who receive such colorblind language from teachers are less likely to either name or

report acts of racism.

One way to address the colorblind philosophy is to increase the presence of African

American teachers in schools, according to McKinney de Royston et al. (2017): "Such educators

intentionally challenge a colorblind notion of care and see it as their responsibility as African

American adults to protect African American children from further racial trauma" (p. 7).

Insufficient Number of Black Teachers

Studies have found that Black students who are taught by Black teachers benefit not just academically but socially (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Hart, 2020; Stovall, 2022). In regard to in-school racism, Gale's (2020) research on Black adolescents found that "students who perceived higher levels of teacher support were protected against the negative influence of in-school racial discrimination" (p. 7). Research has found that classrooms of Black teachers tend to be more attuned to the cultural and social needs of Black students (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Redding, 2019). In addition, according to Lee et al. (2022), Black teachers are of extreme importance to Black students as their classrooms are more likely to be infused with culturally relevant and affirming practices.

Unfortunately, data indicate that the K–12 public school teaching workforce within the United States remains majority White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), "in schools where the majority of students were White, over 90 percent of teachers were White" ("Teachers of a Given Race" section). Data pulled from 2014 regarding the racial demographics of the K–12 public school teacher workforce found that roughly 79% of the entire teaching force is White compared to 8% who identify as Black (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Using the same data, when examining the teaching workforce of large suburban public schools, the teacher workforce is 84% White and 8% Black (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Based on the above-mentioned data, it is evident that further research should be conducted to learn more about the lived experiences of Black suburban students and their racial identity development. The subsequent sections will provide an overview of the questions that

will guide this study, the context of the research, and the potential significance that the results can bring to the field of education.

Research Questions

The following questions led this research study:

1. To what extent does attending a predominantly White suburban public high school (PWSPHS) in the United States shape the racial identity development of Black students?

2. What institutional policies or practices do Black alumni of Sunnyside High School (SHS; pseudonym) recall as being a benefit or a hindrance to their racial identity development?

Context of the Study

In the United States, roughly 31% of Black students attend public elementary and secondary schools where less than 25% of the students are Black (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Over the past 2 decades, the suburbs have seen an influx of new residents, many of which include families of color (Chapman, 2014). According to Chapman (2014), "Almost one-third of the students of color in the suburbs attend majority White schools" (p. 312). Studies have shown that Black students who attend predominantly White schools frequently encounter acts of racism that lead to stressors that have a direct impact on their academic engagement and racial identity (Chapman, 2013; Leath et al., 2019).

For this qualitative study, the researcher interviewed 11 Black alumni of SHS, the sole public high school for the residents of a large suburban township located within the northeastern region of the United States. In addition, the researcher conducted a focus group containing five Black alumni of SHS. All Black alumni of this study were pulled from those who graduated from SHS prior to 2020, a time period in which the overall percentage of White students was greater than 50%, thus classifying it as a PWSPHS.

Significance of the Study

In an analysis of disparities within suburban schools, Mordechay and Terbeck (2023) point out that even though the majority of students in the United States are enrolled in a suburban school, most educational literature is centered around the plight of students attending urban schools. Over the past 3 decades, there has been a significant racial demographic change in suburban regions resulting in a significant number of Black students matriculating through such suburban schools (Chapman, 2014; Stroub & Richards, 2017). Diamond and Posey-Maddox's (2020) research on the evolving landscape of the suburbs, including their schools and communities, found that more than half of Black people in the United States live in suburbs near large metropolitan areas.

Understanding how racial identity functions for Black youth is an integral component to the field of education; studies suggest that Black adolescents with a strong connection to their racial group tend to have greater academic and social/emotional success in school (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Rogers et al., 2015). Regarding social and emotional advancement, Zirkel & Johnson's (2016) research on Black racial identity in education found:

> Consistently, a stronger, more developed Black racial identity has been associated with higher levels of self-esteem; greater numbers of friends in school; improved interpersonal functioning; increased life satisfaction; reduced levels of depression and anxiety; greater optimism about the future; greater coping skills and evidence of resilience. (p. 304)

For this study, the researcher is seeking to broaden the literature on the experiences that Black adolescents encounter while attending a PWSPHS, particularly in areas pertaining to their racial identity development. McGowen's (2017) research on African Americans living in predominantly White suburbia found that there exists a tendency for these African Americans to

have more racialized views than their White neighbors. In exploring further, McGowen (2017) identified that by high school, African American students attending predominantly White suburban schools are not only sensitive but keenly aware of how school policies impact their racial group.

Conclusion

Racial identity is a vital element to the academic and psychological development of Black youth, and therefore those who have developed a strong connection to their racial group tend to perform well in school (Rivas-Drake, 2014; Rogers et al., 2015). For this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher will seek to expand on the body of knowledge pertaining to how attending a PWSPHS shapes the racial identity development of Black students. This study will provide educational leaders and practitioners with additional data that can be used to examine their current pedagogical practices and institutional policies so that they are creating schools that are more culturally attuned to the racial identity development of Black students, primarily those who matriculate through PWSPHS. The researcher will also provide findings to the parents, guardians, and caretakers of Black students who attend PWSPHS; these adults can then use this study as an additional resource when advocating for improvement in educational practices. This information will provide their children with not only a more enriching high school experience but additionally one that will eliminate elements of racial stressors. In Chapter 2, the researcher will provide literature on the state of suburban diversity, Black racial identity development, and the researcher's theoretical framework, which revolves around the Nigrescence theory.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The objective of this chapter is to ensure that the reader has an understanding of the social factors that impact the racial identity development of Black students as they matriculate through a predominately White suburban public high school (PWSPHS). This chapter will use William Cross's Nigrescence theory (Appling & Robinson, 2021) to identify the stages of racial identity that Black adolescents traverse through followed by key themes that support the overall positive racial identity development of Black students.

Definition of Terms

To provide greater context to the researcher's study, the following definitions of terms are provided for the reader:

Black or African American: The National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.) defines the term Black or African American as any "person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa" ("Definitions for New Race and Ethnicity Categories," front page).

Nigrescence theory: According to Szymanski and Lewis (2015), the Nigrescence theory is a theoretical framework to describe an

> African American individual's process of transitioning from internalized racism and/or low racial salience to a heightened sensitivity and anger in response to racism to the development of a positive and internalized sense of one's Black social identity that culminates in a deep commitment to disrupt systemic forms of racism and oppression. (p. 174)

Race: The term race is used to identify and or describe individuals of a group that share the same skin complexion, physical features, ancestry, or cultural identities (National Cancer

Institute, n.d.). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.), race is a social, not biological, construct and can also be used to tie together groups of people to similar cultural groups and places of national origin.

Racial identity development: Schwartz et al. (2014) explain racial identity as a subjective view in which one associates and/or views themselves as a member of a particular ethnic or racial group. Racial identity development models exist to help trace the evolution of a person's racial identity typically through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood (Schwartz et al., 2014).

Racial microaggressions: These are defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environment indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Nadal et al., 2019, p. 4).

Racism: Singleton (2021) defines racism as a strategic system created specifically for the marginalization and mistreatment of certain groups based on physical characteristics such as the color of their skin.

Suburban territories: In the United States, suburban territories are identified as districts outside of a city that have a large population of citizens who commute to a large metropolitan area for work (Chapman, 2014). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), a suburban territory can be classified as (a) large, if it is located in an area outside of a major city and inside an urbanized area that has a population of more than 250,000 people; (b) medium, if it includes less than 250,000 but more than 100,000 people, and (c) small, if it is populated with less than 100,000 people.

Suburban Diversity

Suburban areas within the United States are often imagined as a bastion of wealth and Whiteness; however, this image cannot be further from the truth. More than half of Blacks, Asian Americans, Indigenous/First Nations, and Latinx people in the United States live in suburban locales near large metropolitan areas (Diamond & Posey-Maddox, 2020). This myth may be rooted in the historical reality that for many years after World War II, the suburbs were predominantly White enclaves in which racial and socioeconomic segregation lived in both its residential housing and schools (Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017, p. 183).

As the suburbs have become more racially diverse, so have their public schools. For instance, since 1990, the diversity within the student population of suburban public schools has increased by 30%; more specifically, the proportion of Black students in suburban public schools has increased by 20% (Stroub & Richards, 2017). In the suburbs, a significant portion of the students of color are enrolled in high school, and Black students in particular constitute roughly 32% of these populations (Chapman, 2014).

The racial and socioeconomic demographics of suburban schools provide Black students with the rich opportunity to experience an array of different extracurricular activities and resources within the school building (Jang, 2020). Unfortunately, access to these resources does come with a price. Jang's (2020) research on the effects of race-based matching between students and teachers in suburban schools uncovered that "Black students and families living in suburban areas often experience acculturation stress as they adapt to a potentially different socioeconomic status and a culturally different White-dominated culture" (p. 25). Acculturation, explained within the context of suburban schools, is defined as the process in which new and old members of the suburban culture interact in a powerful way with each other (Yu et al., 2017). For example, as African American students from inner city areas migrate into affluent suburbs,

they are more likely to "become the victims of schools' sorting practices and poor instruction as some of their suburban teachers and counselors associate their inner-city origin and cultural patterns with minimal skills and ability" (Yu et al., 2017, pp. 836–837).

Wealth Inequality

The suburbs are not just made up of affluent families void of poverty; for instance, in 2005, the population of poor people living in suburban areas in the United States was roughly one million people greater than the number of poor people living in urban areas (Fraker, 2020). Since the 2008 U.S. recession, poverty levels within the suburbs have increased significantly. It has been found that since 2010, roughly one out of three Americans living in poverty resided in the suburbs (Pavlakis, 2018). Palakshappa and Fiks's (2016) study on the effects of poverty for medical practices servicing suburban areas found that "more than half of poor and near-poor metropolitan area residents, 56% and 63%, respectively, live in the suburbs" (p. 1).

Data indicate that although the majority of people living in suburban poverty tend to be White and Latino, there are a disproportionate number of Black suburban residents who live in poverty. Statistically speaking, suburban residents of color have a higher probability of living in a poor neighborhood than White suburban residents living in poverty (Lewis-McCoy, 2018). Pavlakis's (2018) qualitative analysis of suburban poverty and student homelessness uncovered that one of the causes for the rise of suburban poverty is the gentrification of major cities, which has resulted in the push of low-income residents out of these now unaffordable metropolitan areas and into their surrounding suburbs.

As persons of color move to the suburbs from urban areas to access greater opportunities, they are met with social and economic issues such as poverty, high unemployment, aging housing infrastructure, and high taxes (Pfeiffer, 2016). The epic wealth gap between minorities

and Whites has left families of color at a disadvantage for accessing affordable housing in suburban areas deemed as low-crime areas with schools labeled as high performing (Pfeiffer, 2016).

In addition to challenges of affordable housing, Rutan et al.'s (2023) research on the rise in suburban residential evictions suggests that one root cause for the spike in suburban evictions is the inequitable design of most suburban landscapes, in particular the sprawling street designs built around residents owning a car. This suburban reliance on car ownership not only lends to additional economic stress, but it also places residents in a precarious and vulnerable position of losing employment should their automobile break down (Rutan et al., 2023, p. 106). Access to employment opportunities in low-income suburbs, especially with poor public transportation, can be quite a challenge; Palakshappa and Fiks (2016) indicate that in these areas "only 25% of jobs are within a 90-minute public transit commute and 4% within a 45-minute commute" (p. 2).

The rise in suburban poverty has also resulted in a bump in food insecurity within those communities (Lewis-McCoy et al., 2023). Palakshappa and Fiks (2016) note that the poor public transportation offered within the suburbs has resulted in suburban residents having limited access to supportive services such as food pantries. Lewis-McCoy et al. (2023) indicate that access to service providers dealing with food security in the suburbs "often requires access to a car, which is financially burdensome; relying on walking long distances, which can be unsafe in suburbs with inadequate sidewalks; or using public transit, which is frequently more time consuming in the suburbs" (p. 2).

Regarding poverty and adolescent academic achievement, Gordon and Cui's (2018) research on the topic concluded that

the racial disparity between Black and White adolescents was greater in communities

where there was low poverty as compared with high-poverty communities, in that, Black

adolescents in low-poverty communities experienced a greater disadvantage than White

adolescents in high-poverty communities, relative to academic achievement. (p. 960)

Gordon and Cui (2018) suggest that these findings related to low-poverty communities

can be attributed to the racial demographics of such settings being primarily White, resulting in

Black adolescents lacking opportunities to engage with fellow Black students and obtain positive

racial identity affirmation.

Black Parents' Choice of Suburban Schools

For minority families, one of the motivating factors for moving to the suburbs is their

perceived high quality of both residential housing and public schools (Rhodes & Warkentien,

2017). Kimelberg and Billingham (2013) point out that middle-class relocation from the urban

cities to the suburbs is a direct result of parents seeking to avoid city school districts with a lack

of sufficient resources, poor standardized test scores, and negative reputations. In Posey-

Maddox's (2017) study on Black family–school relations in the suburbs, it was found that most

Black parents valued the resources and educational opportunities offered within their suburban

public schools.

In closely examining the choice made by Black families to move into the suburbs,

Rhodes and Warkentien (2017) found there to be distinct differences. Black parents who were

raised in urban locales tended to view the suburbs as enclaves of superior schools and were less

likely to critique the differences among suburban districts; however, those Black parents who

grew up in the suburbs were more apt to crucially examine such schools.

Although Black middle-class families living in the suburbs are equipped with an element of class privilege, this still does not prevent these groups from encountering elements of race-based microaggressions and hostility from both White teachers and parents (Posey-Maddox, 2017). Lewis-McCoy's (2018) analysis of Black life within the suburban environment uncovered elements of internal segregation within schools, including a disproportionality in discipline, academic tracking, and unchecked teacher bias leading to anti-Black feelings.

To combat these inequalities, African American parents tend to be proactive in helping their children identify and adapt strategies to combat racism and racial microaggressions found within the classrooms educating their children (Baquedano-Lòpez et al., 2013, p. 159). Posey-Maddox's (2017) research concluded that Black families in suburban areas faced the harsh reality that the schools in which they sent their children did not insulate them from racism; in fact, these very institutions actually mirrored the microaggressions perpetrated against Black people within society.

Black Racial Identity Development

African Americans who attend school in the suburbs deal with daily social and cultural challenges that neither their White classmates nor their African American counterparts attending schools in urban settings encounter (L. A. Jones, 2018). These obstacles include the daily navigation within a school system, whether it be riding on a school bus, sitting in the classroom, or participating in extracurricular activities where the majority of students are not Black (L. A. Jones, 2018).

These barriers begin to rise most notably during adolescence, a period in life that is a fundamental stage in the development of one's identity (Appling & Robinson, 2021). Personal identity refers to the sense of who one is over a period of time; it is during the early periods of

adolescence where young students seek to explore and question who they want to be and what their role within society might be (Branje et al., 2021). Branje et al. (2021) describe personal identity as being closely interlocked with social identity in that one's personal identity is shaped and molded by the social groups that one belongs to. As for Black youth, a key element of self-awareness is understanding what it means to be a Black person living in today's society (Griffin et al., 2022).

As African American children transition into adolescence, their identity development is centered specifically around areas of race, personality, and group affiliation (Appling & Robinson, 2021). Worrell et al. (2020) contend that race and ethnic identity are integral psychological elements among minorities, especially African Americans. Research conducted on racial identity development and salience suggests that "early socialization processes associated with school, family, and social life play a role in knowledge about race and individual racial identity salience across all groups" (Hurtado et al., 2015, p. 147). According to Elmore et al. (2012), the normal development of African American children will consist of exposure to racist environments that can "lead to debilitating perceptions of oneself as a person of African descent, one's self-esteem and general mental health" (p. 89). Racial identity is of fundamental importance to the mental health of African American children as it also helps them persevere through the stressors of racial discrimination (Elmore et al., 2012).

Racial Socialization: The Role of Black Parents

In exploring the racial identity development of African American adolescents, it is important to understand racial socialization, which is the process by which parents provide their children with implicit and explicit communication about the role that race plays within society (Tang et al., 2016). African American parents provide their children with both proactive and

protective messages. Proactive messages include the transmitting of positive attributes about what it means to be a member of the Black race, and protective messages refer to warnings given about the harsh realities of racism and specific strategies on how to handle racial discrimination when it arises (Barr & Neville, 2013).

More specifically, M. A. Smith-Bynum et al. (2016) indicate that these proactive and/or protective messages sent by African American parents can include information about "Black history, the importance of getting an education, the importance of racial pride, confirmation of the existence of racial bias in society, embracement of mainstream values, or teaching children not to trust other racial–ethnic groups" (p. 1928). M. A. Smith-Bynum et al. (2016) interestingly found there to be distinct gender differences in the frequency of racial socialization. African American parents tended to direct messages around racial biases primarily to Black boys, whereas with Black girls, parents conversely or alternatively facilitated lessons focused on cultural and racial pride. In keeping with the discussion on gender biases, M. A. Smith-Bynum et al.'s (2014) findings suggest that "African American males are faced with unique stereotypes that characterize them as violent and delinquent, potentially leading to more encounters with racial discrimination than females" (p. 1059).

Proactive and protective messages around racial socialization have been found to have a positive impact on the mental health of Black children, ranging from reduced psychological distress to an increase in self-esteem (Barr & Neville, 2013). In addition, Tang et al.'s (2016) empirical research on racial socialization and identity found that African American adolescents with parents who engage in consistent racial socialization tend to have a greater connection to their culture and frequently question their connection to the dominant White culture's view of what it means to be African American. This is needed as racial discrimination is consistently

present within the lives of African American adolescents and can subsequently lead to serious mental health concerns (M. A. Smith-Bynum et al., 2014).

Familial Capital of Parents

Familial capital is identified as the tangible human resources that families and students have access to outside of the school building (Budhai & Lewis Grant, 2023; Tolbert Smith et al., 2022). An integral element of community is the family; as a result, community-related organizations are interlocked with familial capital (Budhai & Lewis Grant, 2023). Research has found that Black parents are active participants in the education of their children; one such way in which this is seen is the exposure that they provide to their kids regarding academic opportunities within the community (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016).

Latunde and Clark-Louque (2016) found that in order to expose their children to educational opportunities lacking within their children's schools, Black parents engaged in community organizations, fraternities, sororities, and religious institutions. All things considered, "students come to school rich in experiences and learning from family that can be leveraged in schools if schools acknowledged this form of cultural capital" (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016, p. 376).

Influence of Racism

Encountering racial discrimination is a regular occurrence within the daily experience of African American adolescents that when left to fester can lead to negative outcomes such as extreme psychological distress (M. A. Smith-Bynum et al., 2014). There exists structural racism within schools that is based on policies that increasingly render minorities at a disadvantage yet simultaneously elevate White students to succeed; students of color regularly engage in interactions with adults who are at times unaware of their racial biases and microaggressions, all

of which lends to a climate of mistrust toward White educators (Flitner et al., 2023). Collectively these occurrences erode an individual's sense of belonging (Flitner et al., 2023).

Psychologist Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs establishes that a sense of love and belonging is core to the development of all human beings (Xu et al., 2023). Foxx (2021) defines a sense of belonging as the belief that one is both accepted and valued within a community. Schools can enhance their students' sense of belonging when teachers and administrators cultivate and demonstrate acts of caring for the social, emotional, and academic well-being of their students (Rutledge et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, national data has shown that Black students in U.S. K–12 public schools are disciplined at a higher rate than their White counterparts (Bottiani et al., 2017, p. 532). According to Fisher et al. (2020), "Black students were 3.79 times more likely to be suspended, compared to their White counterparts" (p. 1492). The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2022) investigation into suspensions and expulsions within U.S. public schools discovered that Black boys in particular were suspended and/or expelled at rates that were three times their enrollment population; at the same time, Black girls were the only racial group within their gender category that received a disproportionate amount of suspensions and expulsions. Throughout the United States, the racial disproportionality in school discipline against Black students follows a consistent pattern that flows from elementary school all the way to high school (Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Bottiani et al. (2017) point out that "in schools that differentially suspended Black students, Black students reported less school belonging and equitable treatment, and more adjustment problems, relative to Black students in schools with lesser discipline disparities" (p. 532). Chapman's (2014) research on students of color in suburban schools found that Black

students in predominantly White school settings had lower levels of self-esteem and cultural

flexibility than Black students who attended schools in which students of color were the

majority. Lewis-McCoy (2018) takes it a step further and suggests that within suburban schools

there exists a structure of race-based segregation particularly around high-level course offerings,

specifically Advanced Placement classes.

Theoharis and George (2023) define culturally responsive leadership as the process of

knowing the cultural values, history, and background of students while at the same time having

an understanding of the power of inequality and injustice and its impact on educational

outcomes. In keeping in line with social justice, culturally responsive leaders also make issues of

race and other forms of marginalization a central component to their work (Theoharis & George,

2023).

Unfortunately, in suburban school districts, race-related challenges are not addressed

properly on the district level; Welton et al. (2015) conducted research that found that district

officials in suburban settings were not properly prepared for the racial diversification of their

schools, and instead of dealing with issues of race, most of the leaders in such settings assumed a

colorblind and or race-neutral approach to such problems.

Colorblindness is an approach to race that removes any thought of racist acts as being

intentional or premeditated; in essence it supports White supremacy by providing White people

with the ability to selectively ignore racism in action (Mueller, 2017). Schools that avoid

discussing race-related issues and/or use race-neutral terminology ultimately wind up doing

serious harm to their student population (Welton, 2015). Lac and Baxley (2019) echo this

sentiment by stating that "school leaders with an arc toward social justice cannot espouse the

ideals of racial equity while silencing, ignoring, or negating the voice of marginalized students

and parents" (p. 38). The silence of the Black voice is one of the key problems within the U.S. education system today. This tactic cultivates an environment that prevents society from truly understanding the plight of an oppressed group (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

When examining racial identity among ethnic youth minorities, it has been found that a positive racial identity is associated favorably with self-esteem (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Similarly, Hughes et al. (2015) unpack racial identity awareness to be of utmost importance as those African Americans who closely identify with their racial identity have in return more positive reflections on their ethnic group, higher self-esteem, and lower symptoms of depression.

Nigrescence Theory

The researcher's theoretical framework for this research study will be centered around Cross's (2021) Nigrescence theory, which can be used to explain the process in which an individual develops a Black consciousness, one that is keenly aware of racism and is cognizant of the important connection to Black people and Black culture. Hypolite (2020) views Nigrescence theory as a way to pinpoint the growth of an African American identity from one that emerged from an assimilation of White culture to that of a pro-Black stance. Appling and Robinson (2021) also explain Nigrescence theory as being rooted in the concept that adolescence is a pivotal period in the development of Black children; it is at this stage that they begin to examine their personal identity, most specifically their race.

First developed during the immediate aftermath of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 assassination, Nigrescence theory sought to explain the development of Black consciousness that was noticeable during the "Black Power" social movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Cross, 2021). Ture and Hamilton (1967) framed "Black Power" as a symbolic call to arms for

Black people living in the United States—a point to reclaim and recognize their heritage, unite as a people, enhance their sense of community, and dismantle racist organizations and their values.

Cross (2021) framed Nigrescence theory around the following five stages of development: Pre-Encounter (Stage 1), Encounter (Stage 2), Immersion-Emersion (Stage 3), Internalization (Stage 4), and finally Internalization-Commitment (Stage 5). Although the researcher will examine all five stages of Nigrescence theory, a more in-depth approach in this chapter will center around the Internalization and Internalization-Commitment stages. The rationale for this decision can be framed around the researcher's qualitative methodology that will focus on interviewing Black alumni of a PWSPHS who graduated prior to 2020. Because the subjects have been removed from their high school for periods spanning 4 to 10 years, the researcher can learn more about how the subjects' experience with racial identity development during their high school experience has factored into their current daily lives.

Pre-Encounter

Endale's (2018) examination of the philosophical foundations of racial identity development within the Nigrescence theory indicates that the

> Pre-Encounter stage marks a time when an African American individual views the world through Euro-centric values. Outwardly, the individual shows signs of assimilating into White culture through hairstyles and dress. For individuals in this stage, there is no group cohesiveness with other members of the Black racial group. (p. 514)

Tatum (1997) describes the Pre-Encounter stage as a point in which a Black child digests and absorbs the belief that White culture is to be viewed and valued as superior to all other cultures. The characteristics of a Pre-Encounter individual is one who exhibits low-salience attitudes regarding race with an additional lack of awareness of the social, political, and

economic effects of racism (Cross, 2021). To put it bluntly, Lu and Newton (2019) define the Pre-Encounter stage as a period in which a Black individual maintains a pro-White identity and an anti-Black position.

In totality, due in part to the harmful effects of miseducation, those within the Pre-Encounter tend to embody characteristics that can be described as anti-Black (Cross, 1991). Internalized racism is when an individual accepts only the negative stereotypes of their racial group (Maxwell et al., 2015). Bailey et al. (2002) explain internalized racism as a point where a Black person accepts the dominant White oppressive culture as the normalized standard while viewing any connection to Africa as the oddity to be rejected.

Racialization of Achievement: Acting White

Students who are seen as assimilating into the dominant White culture are at times accused by their fellow Black peers of acting White (Durkee & Williams, 2015). The racialization of achievement is typically seen in predominantly White schools. It is in these settings where harmful tracking practices result in honors and gifted programs being predominantly White; as a result, these settings are often viewed as White spaces (Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015). Therefore, students within such academic settings tend to racialize those characteristics that they believe exist within such settings, particularly gifted classes, resulting in a lack of cohesion between high-achieving Black students who exist in such White spaces and those Black students who do not (Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015).

According to Durkee and Williams (2015), the harmful accusation of acting White, typically experienced by Black students during adolescence, is associated with behaviors aligned with one's "style of speech, style of dress, racial make-up of friends, and music/dance preferences" (p. 27). The phrase "acting White" is "frequently used by Black students in a

derogatory manner to point out and attack another Black students' connection with perceived White students' values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, styles, and preferences (Grantham & Bridle, 2014, p. 179).

Typical derogatory descriptions associated with "acting White" include "selling out on their race, stuck up, uppity, not acting your race, acting like 'typical' White person, bougie, snobbish, snooty, sucking up, not using slang, speaking 'properly,' not embracing Black culture, dressing preppy, not wearing urban gear" (Grantham & Biddle, 2014, p. 179). Grantham and Biddle's (2014) research on gifted Black students uncovered the prevalence of bullying against gifted Black students, mainly centered on accusations hurled at them of acting White. Due to these accusations, African American gifted students face higher levels of mental health concerns centered around stress, anxiety, and depression (Grantham & Biddle, 2014).

Students of color who matriculate through White-normed spaces face an emotional quagmire, which is that academic success comes at the perceived cost of one's own racial identity (Chambers et al., 2014). This element of assimilation can be labeled as racial opportunity costs, which can be defined as "tradeoffs or the value of missed opportunities that students of color forfeit to achieve academic success in white-normed school environments" (Tabron & Chambers, 2019, p. 125).

Tabron and Chambers's (2019) study on racial opportunity costs and Black students in education suggest that many of their student participants found the norms of their school to be at odds with those of their family and community. Due to this reality, a substantial number of the students felt that "academic success came at the expense of feeling valued and included unless they assimilated to the White, middle-class norms of the school" (Tabron & Chambers, 2019, p. 129).

At the turn of the 20th century, Du Bois (1994) presented his theory of double consciousness, which he defined as a draining matrix where Black individuals constantly find themselves being measured through the lens of a racist society. This idea of double consciousness places Blacks living in the United States in a daily state of navigating the tightrope of both extolling and embracing their cultural heritage while also having to conform to American values controlled by the White dominant group strife with racism (Du Bois, 1994).

Encounter

In the Encounter stage, a Black person experiences or witnesses an event, usually one that includes racial marginalization, that awakens them to the power of racism within society (Lu & Newton, 2019; Tatum, 1997). This Encounter stage may conjure emotions that include guilt toward having led an anti-Black life that denied elements of racism or anger against the offender (Cross, 1991; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Such an encounter usually results in a radicalized consciousness and generalized anger against White people for causing racial harm (Cross, 1991; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Cross (2021) frames the Encounter stage in two sections: (a) experiencing the racial event and (b) developing a new perspective of society as a result of that encounter. An individual within the Encounter stage typically begins the process of evaluating the manner in which their Blackness is treated within society and is hyperaware of race-related occurrences as they arise within their daily existence (Lu & Newton, 2019).

During the Encounter period of racial identity development, Black children engage in an internal battle stemming from the causes and effects of being a member of a marginalized and oppressed group (Tatum, 1997). In essence, within the Encounter stage, Black children develop

an element of being woke, or aware, of the racial issues impacting Black people in society (Cross

et al., 2022).

Colorblindness in the Classroom

Racism is rooted firmly within the structure of the U.S. educational system, resulting in

the creation of a school system that elevates White students for success and places Black

students at a disadvantage (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Flitner et al., 2023).

A component of the everyday acts of racism within the education system includes racial

microaggressions perpetuated by White teachers against Black students, which is often upheld

through colorblind practices or in maintaining a general avoidance toward discussing or

developing an awareness of racism (Kohli et al., 2017). Studies have found that teachers adopt a

colorblind approach as a symbolic gesture toward equality; however, in return, it actually does

harm to Black students by denying their reality in confronting racism in their daily lives (Lee-

Johnson, 2023).

According to Hazelbaker and Mistry (2021), "Colorblindness, which includes ignoring or

denying the importance of race, perpetuates racism, and reinforces White privilege by denying

racial inequality" (p. 1127). The ability to avoid discomfort and/or vulnerability associated with

the discussion of racism provides White people with the ability to ignore being associated or

complicit with the maintenance of racist system that is geared toward their benefit (Jones et al.,

2023).

Structural Racism in Schools

The structural racism evident in schools creates an everyday reality for Black students

that includes a greater tendency to be referred to special education, placed in remedial classes,

and not recommended for gifted and advanced classes (Crutchfield et al., 2020). In suburban

school districts, Kettler and Hurst (2017) uncovered that Black students are not enrolled in

Advanced Placement or international baccalaureate programs at the same level as their White

classmates.

Davis et al. (2013) also found a discrepancy in the number of African Americans enrolled

in Advanced Placement classes. For instance, although African Americans make up roughly

14.7% of the student population in public schools, they comprise of only 9% of those who are

enrolled in Advanced Placement classes. Chapman's (2013) research on Black students in

majority White suburban school districts highlights that even high-achieving Black students are

prone to racism-induced stress, leading some of them to self-question their academic abilities and

presence in such rigorous classes.

Leath et al.'s (2019) study on racial discrimination faced by Black students in

predominantly White school districts found that

> Black adolescents are at increased risk of experiencing racial discrimination—due to
>
> increased freedom of movement outside the home and parental/family contexts; increased
>
> racial cleavage in peer networks; physical maturation, which can lead to their being
>
> viewed as less innocent and more threatening; and increased social cognitive capacities
>
> for understanding how they are viewed by others. (p. 1320)

In regard to disciplinary policies, what is most striking is that Black students are more

likely to receive harsher consequences than their White counterparts for comparable infractions

(Bottiani et al., 2017; Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Gregory and Fergus's (2017) research on equity

and social and emotional learning within school discipline indicates:

> The discipline gap between black and white students starts as early as preschool. National
>
> data from 2013-14 show that although only 19 percent of preschool children are black,

they represent 47 percent of preschool children who receive one or more out-of-school

suspensions. These disproportionalities continue as students proceed through elementary,

middle, and high school. (p. 119)

K. P. Anderson and Ritter's (2017) study on discipline inequalities in the U.S. public

school systems illustrate that although Black students represent roughly 15% of the overall

student population, they constitute 44% of student suspensions and 36% of expulsions. This

lends credence to the research done by Davison et al. (2022) suggesting that schools have

become punitive spaces for Black children; it is within these settings that Black students are at

least three times more likely to face suspension than their White counterparts.

Bottiani et al. (2017) indicate that in schools where Black students were

disproportionately disciplined, they were less likely to feel a sense of belonging and equity

within the school community. Davis (2017) further suggests that there exists a correlation

between suspensions and dropout rates, which may explain why Black students within the K-12

journey are more likely to drop out of school than their White classmates.

Immersion-Emersion

The Immersion-Emersion stage can be identified as the pivotal point in which an

individual "begins to demolish the old perspective and simultaneously tries to construct what

will become his or her new frame of reference" (Cross, 1991, p. 202). Cross (2021) paints a

picture of the Immersion-Emersion phase by explaining that an individual within this stage:

Throws caution to the wind and, in an experience akin to being taken over by a

strange but wonderful force, immerses her or his mind, heart, and soul in the

mesmerizing world of blackness. Neither being completely free of the old, while a

neophyte to the new, the person is subject to extreme acts that demonstrate total

commitment to the new. (p. 26)

The convergence of leaving an assimilationist and/or anti-Black mindset, trying to gain a

firm understanding of one's new mindset, can push an individual in the Immersion-Emersion

stage to being extremely sensitive to anything pertaining to race and or even militant (Cross et

al., 2022).

During immersion, a person can be seen attending cultural or political events that are

centered around Black issues while also dissociating themselves from Eurocentric groups that

they may have joined during their Pre-Encounter phase (Cross, 1991, p. 203). At the point of

emersion, the "intense negative emotions subside, and the glorification of Blackness evolves into

Black pride that is balanced with realistic views of Black culture and Black people (Worrell et

al., 2023, p. 392). Cross (2021) suggests that at this pivotal stage, a Black person is emersed

from a sea of Black pride and cleansed from the vestiges of White superiority.

The Need for More Black Teachers

There exists a serious issue with racial diversity within today's teacher preparation

programs, even though data shows the benefits of a diverse teacher body (Lee et al., 2022). As of

fall 2021, 15% of students in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools identified as being

Black (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Nationwide, however, only 6.7% of

public school teachers are Black; in schools where more than half of the students are White and

non-Hispanic, the percentage of Black teachers drops to 2% (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2020).

One of the reasons why the disparities in the number of Black teachers is of concern is

that students of color have more of a favorable view toward teachers of color (Cherng & Halpin,

2016). The ability for students to connect with and have a favorable view of their teachers is vital to the education experience and can promote positive social development and academic outcomes (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). For instance, studies have found that Black students, when taught by teachers of the same race, perform better academically (Egalite et al., 2015; Hart, 2020; Stovall, 2022), are more likely to be recommended into gifted programs (Bryan et al., 2016; Hart, 2020), are less likely to be disciplined (Hart, 2020; Stovall, 2022), and have increased chances of graduating and entering college (Hart, 2020; Stovall, 2022). Lee et al.'s (2022) research on Black students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses found that by having a Black teacher in the STEM classroom, Black students were more likely to achieve academic success and consider the pursuit of STEM-based careers.

It has also been found that when a teacher and student share similar cultural values rooted in their connection to a racial or ethnic group, the probability increases that the student will receive a more just appraisal of their academic and classroom behavior (Redding, 2019). Redding (2019) further explains that teachers of color tend to have a deeper understanding of the cultural and social context of their students of color; as a result, there exists a more fluid connection between the identities of their students and the materials being presented in the curriculum.

According to Bristol and Martin-Fernandez (2019), "Black teachers have a higher level of multicultural awareness, which fosters a more adaptive, responsive classroom environment for Black students" (p. 149). In regard to the social and emotional development of Black students, literature has shown that Black teachers play a pivotal role in this area when compared with White teachers; Black teachers hold their Black students to higher standards (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Gershenson et al., 2016).

At predominantly White institutions, Black faculty of color play an instrumental role in cultivating a campus that supports a sense of belonging for Black students (Harper, 2013). Black faculty can provide Black students and their affinity groups with support and validation as they experience daily encounters with racism and microaggressions.

Affinity Groups for Black Students

Affinity groups in schools are defined as safe spaces that provide students, usually from a marginalized group, with the platform to both discuss and create action plans around issues related to their identity (Bell, 2015; Tauriac et al., 2013). Members of affinity groups tend to share common social connections and face similar biases inflicted by nongroup members; as a result, among affinity group members there exists an atmosphere of trust, a place where feelings can be expressed without trepidation (Tauriac et al., 2013).

Adolescence is a period of high stress and points of depression, especially for African American children growing up in the United States, a place where they are more than likely to encounter racism and discrimination due to their ethnicity (Causey et al., 2015). African American children who may lack parental support at home can benefit from a social network at school that can help them navigate the psychological impact that stress can have on one's mental health (Causey et al., 2015).

Affinity groups can be an instrumental force in helping Black students handle racial anxiety faced in their schools; these groups provide students who share the same racial identity with an opportunity to simply be themselves among peers who can relate to their shared experiences (Bell, 2015; Harper, 2013). Land et al.'s (2014) qualitative study on the success of African American male high school students was able to conclude that despite social obstacles, the young men they researched were able to achieve academic success through the social capital

derived from the collection of school-based mentors who assisted them throughout their high school matriculation. The mentors these students connected with in high school were those they could trust and rely on for moral support when faced with obstacles in school (Land et al., 2014).

Internalization

Stage 4, Internalization, is the stage when a Black person becomes secure in their racial identity and displays an attitude of pride toward their Black culture and race (Worrell et al., 2023). It is at the point of internalization where race becomes a core element of a Black person's identity, shaped by a new form of enlightenment, one that is attuned to the power of race in American society and enlightened to their racial identity (Lu & Newton, 2019).

Cross et al. (2022) identify internalization as the moment where a person is at ease with their new racial identity, no longer possessing an urge to showcase or proclaim to the public that they are Black, don African garb to prove cultural awareness, or recite historical facts on Black history. It is during the Internalization stage that a Black person becomes less hostile toward White people; in fact, within this stage, a Black person usually goes beyond basic rhetoric about addressing the marginalization of Black people and instead discusses ways to take action for change (Cross, 2021).

Leath et al.'s (2019) research on racial identity in predominantly White school districts produced findings that indicate that Black adolescents draw upon their racial identity as a key resource that keeps them academically engaged even in settings where they encounter negative race-based treatment. Within the same study, Leath et al. (2019) connect a school's ability to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy as a key element for the promotion and continued support of Black racial identity.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is the process of utilizing the cultural knowledge and experiences that ethnically diverse students bring to school as a method of enhancing the learning experience (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). First proposed by scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings in the early 1990s, CRP rests on the theory that teaching practices that are culturally attuned to Black students can in return enhance the academics, cultural competence, and critical consciousness of said students (Freidus, 2020).

Aronson and Laughter (2016) base CRP around six points:

• Culturally responsive teachers are socially and academically empowering by setting high expectations for students with a commitment to every student's success;

• Culturally responsive teachers are multidimensional because they engage cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives;

• Culturally responsive teachers validate every student's culture, bridging gaps between school and home through diversified instructional strategies and multicultural curricula;

• Culturally responsive teachers are socially, emotionally, and politically comprehensive as they seek to educate the whole child;

• Culturally responsive teachers are transformative of schools and societies by using students' existing strengths to drive instruction, assessment, and curriculum design;

• Culturally responsive teachers are emancipatory and liberating from oppressive educational practices and ideologies as they lift "the veil of presumed absolute authority from conceptions of scholarly truth typically taught in schools" (p. 165).

Because most African American students will have a White teacher leading their classrooms, it is vital to focus on improving CRP among White teachers (Boucher, 2016). This is

important, as CRP can provide White teachers with tools to not only learn more about Black history and culture but to also formulate stronger relationships with their Black students (Boucher, 2016).

Cavallaro et al. (2019) indicate that to encourage culturally attuned lessons, teachers can tap into the rich amount of resources found within their local community such as engaging with museums, speaking with residents, or visiting historical buildings. Connecting a history lesson to the local community can enhance student engagement by making content authentic to students and can relate to stronger school–community bonds (Cavallaro et al., 2019).

Challenges to CRP

The educator force in the United States is predominantly White, and furthermore, it is estimated that roughly 82% of teachers identify themselves as White compared to 51% of students who identify as White (Willey & Magee, 2018). Pagán (2022) indicates that the classroom teacher plays a pivotal role in the identity, academic, and psychological development of students; unfortunately, teachers tend to exhibit lower behavioral and academic expectations for Black students while also employing harsher disciplinary action.

In addition to the teacher force, Willey and Magee (2018) found that the U.S. school system is one that is immersed in Whiteness and is structured to benefit White students through the structure of its curriculum. The standard, accepted curriculum bolsters and normalizes the dominant White culture and racist disciplinary policies and reinforces the inherently unequal academic system (Willey & Magee, 2018). Pagán's (2022) research of barriers for teachers implementing CRP present that teachers arrive to their classrooms having internalized societal messages about Black people being inferior to White people; as a result, regardless of one's race,

teachers tend to believe the racist stereotypes painted by society that justify race-based achievement gaps and disproportionality in discipline.

Warren-Grice (2017) presented that one of the challenges that teachers faced in rolling out CRP was the way in which it deviated against the structure of the traditional curriculum. Teachers found it difficult to cover new diverse material based around race consciousness and cultural biases while at the same time being held to task for the standardized curriculum and its associated exams (Warren-Grice, 2017).

Teacher preparation programs are an essential area to prepare teachers for their role as change agents through CRP; however, teacher educators have created self-imposed barriers toward the teaching of CRP, mainly due to insecurities around their own ability toward multicultural education instruction (Kondo, 2022). As a result, the curriculum for teacher prep programs tend to be centered around traditional skills and awareness as opposed to those that teach about critical consciousness and social justice (Kondo, 2022).

Kearl (2022) points out that teacher prep programs also avoid critical discussions around race as a direct result of catering to White teachers' emotionality, which is connected to the belief that Whites are exempt from the responsibility of enhancing the overall wellness of marginalized racial groups within society and their school. According to Kearl (2022), White teachers' immersion in their own emotional comfort results in the denial of any accountability toward the society ills of racism and creates evasive methods to escape the teaching of topics that evoke racial pain.

Internalization-Commitment

The last stage of the Nigrescence theory is Internalization-Commitment; it is within this stage that an individual displays a commitment to their Black identity through social activism

efforts that both seek to uplift their community and address the marginalization of other groups within society (Lu & Newton, 2019). Typically viewed in conjunction with Stage 4 (Internalization), the move toward commitment is essentially a transition from a focus that is entirely centered on race to one that examines how dismantling embedded systematic racism encompasses discussions on privilege and power (Cross, 2021).

A person who is within the Internalization-Commitment stage can typically be found discussing and identifying with groups whose oppression is not directly linked with being Black; for example, this can include working with groups that are working on dismantling issues surrounding anti-Semitism, homophobia, and even sexism (Cross, 2021; Endale, 2018). Worrell et al. (2023) describes this stage as the point in which a Black person with a positive racial identity takes a concerted effort in developing a plan to uplift and transform their community.

CRP and Social Justice-Based Curriculum

Ladson-Billings (2022) revealed that one of the benefits of culturally relevant teaching is that it cultivates a community-based ethos in which students view themselves interwoven with each other and the community. This leads to the development of a team mentality fostering the perception of success as helping others as opposed to one's own self (Ladson-Billings, 2022).

While high rates of drugs, crime, and unemployment can negatively impact a community by creating a sense of pessimism for children, CRP is vital, as it provides teachers with the methods to help these students see beyond immediate issues and uncover the strengths of their communities (Ladson-Billings, 2022).

Diemer and Rapa's (2016) research on critical consciousness and political efficacy involving marginalized adolescents discovered that African American adolescents who engaged in a critical reflection on the social and economic inequalities within society were more than

likely to participate in social action initiatives to solve them. Harrell-Levy (2018) describes sociopolitical efficacy as "an individual's belief in his or her capacity to impact the community in ways that are social and political" (p. 101). According to Harrell-Levy et al. (2016), a social justice course provides students with opportunities to develop critical thinking strategies that they can then apply to current issues within society. Such a course can then foster a blend between a service learning and/or civics class (Harrell-Levy et al., 2016).

Harrell-Levy et al. (2016) found transformative social justice education as a form of pedagogy that provides students with the ability to become change agents both in their school and community. Research has shown that engaging Black youth in instruction that addressed community-related issues in turn led to citizens who were more politically engaged (Harrell-Levy, 2018). In addition, when students are engaged in culturally relevant practices, they report a greater level of sociopolitical involvement (Harrell-Levy, 2018).

CRP related to social justice can enhance the classroom experience; students subsequently have a more enriched learning experience when they perceive that their teacher is committed to topics that are directly related to their lives (Harrell-Levey, 2018). With the ongoing videos depicting violence against Black Americans and rising awareness surrounding race and police relations, social justice education provides youth with the opportunity to create effective responses to issues of injustice (Harrell-Levy, 2018).

According to Harrell-Levy et al. (2016), transformative social justice teachers help spark identity exploration in their classrooms, which in turn leads to identity development among their students. This was found in students who became more attuned with family values while also building a sense of agency in their lives.

Development of a Critical Consciousness

A new level of awareness to oppression creates a critical consciousness, which Forenza (2017) defines as a "marginalized person's awakening to the oppressive forces in her or his life" (p. 120). Gale et al. (2023) identified three components of critical consciousness in Black children: (a) the ability to frame the social, political, and historic structures of the problem; (b) one's frame of mind and confidence to change an oppressive system; and (c) a desire to bring about social justice.

It has been found that when Black adolescents start to use a critical reflection in their daily interactions, they begin to view their marginalization not as a result of their own inadequacies but rather as the result of racist systems that are entrenched within in all aspects of society (Gale et al., 2023). In explaining the oppressive nature of colonialism, Fanon (1967) described racism and culture as intertwined: "If culture is the combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow-man, it can be said that racism is indeed a cultural element" (p. 32).

Black adolescents today, in part due to social media, now face an even more intensified exposure to racialized violence against Black Americans (L. A. Anderson et al., 2022). Incidents posted on the internet, such as the murder of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by a White police officer or the killings of Black children and men such as Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Philando Castile, have created online platforms where Black youth can discuss racism, violence, and oppression as they relate to their daily lived experiences (L. A. Anderson et al., 2022). Fanon (1967) explored further by suggesting that "racism is not the whole but the most visible, the most day-to-day and, not to mince matters, the crudest element of a given structure" (p. 32).

Social media provides Black youth with the ability to both engage in discourse about the killings of unarmed Black men, such as Michael Brown and Eric Garner, by police (Carney, 2016). Cross (2021) suggests that as Black people develop a critical consciousness they press society to change the way it functions, moving away from continuing life as par for the course. Carney (2016) points out that using social media hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter can be seen as a method of social activism against police violence toward Black people. There does exist a psychological cost to witnessing acts of racial violence; L. A. Anderson et al. (2022) suggest that Black youth can develop post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of witnessing a violent event, especially one related to being a member of an ethnic/racial group. Trauma is more common in Black adolescents than in their White counterparts; one of the key contributors is racial stress formulated by witnessing frightening and dangerous events involving race-based discrimination (Saleem et al., 2019).

Summary

In the United States, the suburban landscape has become increasingly more diverse; areas that were once primarily White are now multicultural. In fact, more than half of Blacks living in the United States reside in suburban areas (Diamond & Posey-Maddox, 2020). Suburban public schools, however, as a whole remain predominantly White; this results in Black students developing either positive or negative strategies to adapt as they matriculate through such spaces (Jang, 2020).

Racial identity development is a subjective way in which one identifies or associates themselves with a particular racial or ethnic group (Schwartz et al., 2014). Nigrescence theory has been used to understand the racial identity development of African Americans as they move

through stages of awareness pertaining to the various effects of racism to one's cultural connection to other Black people (Cross, 2021).

Since the inception of the Nigrescence theory in 1971, there have been expanded models; the original model was framed as developmental, in which a Black person moves from the Pre-Encounter stage connected to low self-esteem to that of Internalization-Commitment framed as high self-esteem (Worrell et al., 2020). The most recent version of Nigrescence theory is more complex; it suggests that one can have various levels of self-esteem in all stages of development (Worrell et al., 2020). For this study, the researcher will focus primarily on the basic components of the five stages of Nigrescence theory and not necessarily on all aspects of its revised models. In Chapter 3, the researcher will identify the methodology used for this qualitative phenomenological study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

For Black children, adolescence is a pivotal point in which they become conscious of their racial identities; it is at this psychological and physical transitional stage of development when they are keenly aware of how their race is valued by the school community (Leath et al., 2021). Unfortunately, racism is rooted firmly within the U.S. public school system, resulting in the advancement of White students to the detriment of Black students (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Flitner et al., 2023). Leath et al.'s (2021) qualitative research on racial diversity, particularly on the high school level, revealed that Black students are frequently exposed to discriminatory policies and messages during their matriculation that can negatively impact a sense of belonging to the school community.

Black families living in the suburbs are faced with the stark reality that the schools in which they send their children are far from insulated against the realities of racism and microaggressions that exist within today's society (Posey-Maddox, 2017). Although suburban schools provide access to a wide variety of academic resources, Black students often encounter stress associated with adapting to the majority White culture that permeates throughout all aspects of the environment (Jang, 2020; L. A. Jones, 2018).

Racial identity can be defined as the way in which a person associates themselves with a racial or ethnic group (Schwartz et al., 2014). Hughes et al. (2015) found that African Americans with a strong connection to their racial identity reported not only positive reflections when considering their racial group but also described an overall higher level of self-esteem. This study seeks to explore the extent to which attending a predominately White suburban public high

school (PWSPHS) shapes the racial identity development of Black students and will be further examined through the lens of Black alumni of the identified site school Sunnyside High School (SHS; pseudonym).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent does attending a PWSPHS in the United States shape the racial identity development of Black students?

2. What institutional policies or practices do Black alumni of SHS recall as being a benefit or a hindrance to their racial identity development?

Research Type

For this study, the researcher used qualitative research, which, according to Creswell & Creswell (2018), is a valuable method for uncovering and exploring the meanings that people attribute to an issue within society.

According to Marshall et al. (2022), the following are characteristics of qualitative research:

- Understands that there may exist multiple truths

- Is conducted in an interpretive manner

- Utilizes several methods that involve human interaction

- Focuses on the context of an event

- Is conducted in a natural-world environment

Those who utilize qualitative research tend to "support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). Qualitative researchers view social

phenomena as interconnected and are attuned to how their own personal experiences may help structure the study (Marshall et al., 2022).

Perspective of the Research

The researcher applied a phenomenological approach to this qualitative research study. Phenomenological research can be defined as a method in which a researcher both describes and seeks to understand the lived experience of human beings who have experienced a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022). Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that phenomenological research "culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon" (p. 13).

According to Terrell (2022), phenomenological studies include "the description of what an experience means to a person, or to a small group of people, who lived the experience, and can retell the story of that experience" (p. 162). To better understand the experience of an individual, a phenomenological approach includes the researcher conducting a series of in-depth interviews with the people who have experienced the phenomenon to which the study is based upon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022).

A phenomenological study was used by the researcher so that the research participants, Black alumni of SHS, had the platform to share their lived experiences at SHS. With this approach, the researcher was able to ascertain how the matriculation of the participants at a PWSPHS may have shaped their racial identity development.

Transformative Worldview

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define a transformative worldview as a philosophical approach to research, one that recognizes the power that research has to both eradicate social oppression and to reform society, thus giving voice to the plight of the marginalized. In essence,

for those who participate in transformative research, it provides a voice for their experiences with inequality, raises collective consciousness, and lends to reform within society (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As an administrator at SHS, the researcher plans on using the findings to help shape and improve current school policies in order to better support Black students and their families. This study can also be added to the growing research around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), assisting organizations in their efforts to identify which school policies best support Black students, particularly those who matriculate through a PWSPHS.

Context of the Study

Suburban territories in the United States are growing more rapidly than urban and rural areas; most recent data indicates that there are roughly 175 million Americans who reside in the suburbs, an increase of 16% from the 150 million that were identified in the year 2000 (Parker et al., 2018). In regard to its school districts, there currently exist 28,291 suburban public elementary and secondary schools in the United States that service roughly 39.7% of U.S. public school students (Glander, 2017). Diamond and Posey-Maddox (2020) state that the United States has transformed into a suburban majority country where most of its students matriculate through suburban schools.

The educational system within the United States is inherently racist, resulting in a school system that places White students at a higher opportunity for success than Black students (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Flitner et al., 2023). African American children attending suburban schools face daily social and cultural challenges that their White classmates do not face (L. A. Jones, 2018). In regard to the saliency of racial identity, Hurtado et al. (2015) suggest that "race may be at the forefront of students' minds because they have become more aware of racial

differences, and it therefore may shape intergroup relations and campus climate experiences" (p. 129).

Township Profile

Sunnyside School District (SSD) is located in Sunnyside Township (ST), a suburban township located outside of a large northeastern metropolitan city with a total population of roughly 30,000 residents (Sunnyside, n.d.). In addition to ST, SSD also serves the residents of two neighboring boroughs: Bordertown and Westland (Sunnyside, n.d.). The data found in Table 1 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.) provides both the total population and the racial demographic breakdown of the White and Black residents that reside in ST, Bordertown, and Westland.

Table 1

Black and White Racial Demographics of the Boroughs and Townships That Make Up SSD

Location	Total population estimates, July 1, 2022	White population	Black or African American population
ST	34,731	69.1%	6.5%
Bordertown	5,066	90.4%	2.0%
Westland	1,407	84%	4%

(U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)

School District Profile

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), during the 2021–2022 academic year, SSD's total student population was 4,358, classifying it as a large suburban district. The percent enrollment by race/ethnicity at SHS for the academic year 2023–2024 can be found in Table 2, which, specifically for the purposes of this research, highlights a student population that is 49% White and 14.1% Black.

Table 2

Percent Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity at SHS for the 2023–2024 Academic Year

Race/ethnicity	Percent enrollment
White	49%
Hispanic	16.3%
Asian	14.5%
Black	14.1%
2 or more race	5.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a Black male administrator with close to 2 decades of experience in the K–12 public school sector, all of which have been based in the northeastern region of the United States. With 16 years of classroom experience as a state-certified social studies teacher, the researcher has spent his entire career in large public urban high schools, where he has amassed accolades such as the Normal Miller Award by the School of Education at Arcadia University, the Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching, and multiple Teacher of the Year awards.

During the 2021–2022 school year, the researcher was a teacher fellow for Teach Plus, a national nonprofit organization geared toward transforming education through public policy within the lens of DEI. As a fellow, the researcher worked with a team of teachers to create a community advocacy toolkit based on how to build and/or maintain a culturally affirming school. It was during his time as a Teach Plus fellow that the researcher created two op-ed pieces around culturally affirming classroom practices, both of which were published by regional news outlets.

For the 2022–2023 academic year, the researcher was selected by Teach Plus to serve as a senior fellow. In this capacity, he led a diverse team of eight Teach Plus fellows for the development of educational policies promoting culturally affirming schools. In this role, the researcher helped guide his team to the publication of an education report geared toward aiding school districts in understanding the newly mandated cultural competencies implemented by their state's department of education.

During the 2022–2023 academic school year, he left his urban school district and joined SSD, where he served as SSD's first advisor for diversity, equity, and climate (ADEC). In this ADEC role, the researcher was responsible for supporting district-wide issues related to equity, inclusion, and belonging (EIB). Additional responsibilities included the creation of multiple climate surveys as well as the implementation of district-wide professional development to support student, staff, and parent engagement while also providing consultation on all district-wide policies to make sure that they were aligned with EIB.

For the 2023–2024 academic year, the researcher was promoted to the position of Assistant Principal at SHS. In this role, the researcher manages Grades 9 and 11, totaling more than 600 students, and is responsible for the scheduling and transportation of the entire building. In addition, the researcher is charged with maintaining the partnership between SHS and the county's local technical high school, a place where close to 150 of SHS students attend on a daily basis.

The researcher is also a product of a large suburban school district in the northeastern region of the United States, having graduated from a PWSPHS in 1996. As a married father of three Black children, the researcher resides and is raising his family in a large suburban township where he has been a homeowner for 11 years. All of the researcher's children are enrolled in this

township's public school district, one of whom is an 11th grader, another who is a seventh grader, and the youngest who is in kindergarten.

In regard to education, the researcher holds a bachelor's degree in mass media arts from Clark Atlanta University, a master's degree in adolescent education from St. John's University, and a doctorate in educational leadership from Arcadia University.

Participant Selection

The selection of participants for this qualitative study was based upon the following criteria: participants (a) racially identified as being Black or African American, (b) were alumni of SHS, and (c) graduated from SHS at any point prior to 2020. The researcher's decision to focus on graduates prior to 2020 was based on three reasons:

1. Removing any direct influence of the researcher's work as the district's first ADEC during the 2022–2023 academic year,

2. Avoiding issues related to the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and

3. Considering the demographics of the school district; prior to 2020, SHS's overall enrollment percentage of White students was greater than 50%.

In the role of ADEC at the SSD during the 2022–2023 academic year, the researcher enacted a variety of district-wide DEI related programs, many of which were run out of SHS. These included an overnight tour of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and a mentor program that paired members of the SHS Black student union with students from a nearby elementary school.

In regard to the Black alumni of SHS who graduated between 2020–2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these students experienced a portion of their experience at SHS in a virtual learning environment. According to Zhou et al. (2021), the shutdown of in-person

learning due to the COVID-19 outbreak resulted in a significant loss of learning and social–

emotional issues that had a disproportionate impact on students of color. Based on these

mitigating factors, the researcher elected not to pull graduates from 2020–2022.

It is important to note that the 2023–2024 academic year was the first time in which

SHS's White student population dipped below 50%; it now stands at 49%. According to state-

based data, during the 2018–2019 school year, the White student population at SHS was at

57.5% and has since seen a steady decline. This data is reflective of a national trend in which

suburban school districts throughout the United States have become increasingly more racially

diverse (Holme et al., 2014; Stroub & Richards, 2017). For this purpose, the researcher wants to

focus on those alumni who experienced SHS at a time in which the total White student

population was more than 50%.

Sampling

For this study, the researcher used nonrandom sampling, a technique in which "all

members of the population do not have a chance at being selected for a sample taken from it"

(Terrell, 2022, p. 289). More specifically, for this qualitative research, the researcher used

purposive sampling, a method that allows for the specific targeting of small groups to work with

(Terrell, 2022).

Outreach and Selection of Participants

In order to gather participants, the researcher created a digital flier (see Appendix A) that

was shared to a social media group site that was designated specifically to and for Black alumni

of SHS. A QR code was embedded on the flier that directed potential participants to a Google

form registration stored on a Google account, created specifically for this research (see Appendix

B). There were a total of 11 participants that registered to participate in this research study. Due

to the researcher being an administrator within the SSD, a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certified proxy was used to screen the registration form for participants who were employees of SSD.

The researcher and proxy both signed a proxy confidentiality agreement form (see Appendix C), which the researcher stored in a lock-secured file cabinet. For this study, the registration screening process involved the proxy checking each registration form to see if the participant was an employee of the SSD. If the person was not an employee, then the proxy shared their registration information to the researcher via a password-protected online shared folder. There were a total of two participants who were current employees of SSD; for those individuals, the proxy became the primary point person for data collection with these individuals. The proxy did provide the researcher with the registration demographic information of the two employees of SSD; however, their names were replaced with pseudonyms and their contact information was removed. Regarding the authentication of participants as graduates of SHS, the researcher verified names with both the archived yearbook of SHS and officially via the guidance technician for SHS. The proxy contacted the guidance technician for SHS to verify the graduation status of the two individuals who were currently employed with the SSD.

The researcher sent a participant selection email to those selected (see Appendix D), which also included the informed consent form for participation in this research study (Appendix E). The selection email also included a hyperlink to a secure online appointment application that allowed participants to select their interview date and times from a list of available options. This online calendar was synced with the researcher's Arcadia University Google calendar.

Focus Group Selection

At the end of each one-on-one interview, the participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in a follow-up focus group for this study, to which all of the participants confirmed that they were interested. In regard to selection of focus group participants, the researcher used a computer-generated lottery application to select the six participants from the nine participants not employed by the school district, after which a selection email was sent to these six participants (see Appendix F). In addition, an informed consent form (see Appendix G) specific to the focus group was sent to each of the six participants, all of whom submitted this form prior to the focus group interview. The researcher did have intentions of running a second focus group pulled from the list of current SSD participants; however, only two current employees signed up for this study, and as a result of this low number, the researcher elected not to run a focus group for this segment of the population.

The researcher did note that roughly 30 minutes prior to the focus group interview, the researcher was contacted by one of the selected focus group participants and informed that they had a work-related emergency that would prevent them from participating in the focus group. As a result, the final focus group consisted of only five participants.

Data Collection

One-on-One Interviews

Marshall et al. (2022) note that in-depth interviewing is the foundation to qualitative research; it provides the interviewer who utilizes a highly structured design to control the interview questions. According to Butler-Kisber (2010), interviewing, particularly when conducting a phenomenological study, is a vital method to understand a lived experience, particularly because we as humans use language as a means of understanding each other.

Interviewing can be conducted for a variety of purposes, some of which include both the gathering of unique insight from the perspective of the interviewee and understanding a phenomenon that the researcher is unable to observe themselves (Stake, 2010). Individual interviews, which consisted of eight questions (see Appendix H), ranged from roughly 30 minutes to just over an hour. Interviews were offered on a hybrid basis, online or in-person; however, all of the participants selected the online format, which took place via the Zoom platform. The researcher did use a proxy to schedule and interview the two SSD employee participants; the proxy is a current doctoral student at Arcadia University and is CITI certified.

Focus Groups

Marshall et al. (2022) identify focus groups as the gathering of small groups of participants, both in person or virtual, who may not share a personal connection but do share similar characteristics related to the research study. Focus groups are powerful in that they function within a social atmosphere that is more natural than a standard two-person interview (Marshall et al., 2022).

For this study, the researcher successfully conducted one focus group that consisted of five participants, all of whom were nonemployees of SSD. The researcher had plans to put in place a second focus group, this one consisting of current employees of SSD; however, the research recruitment only netted two participants who met this criteria. As a result, the researcher did not move forward with a second focus group of current SSD employees.

The focus groups ran more than 60 minutes and took take place via Zoom. Focus group participants were asked five specific questions (see Appendix I).

Document Review

Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that a researcher may retrieve both "public documents (e.g., newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or private documents (e.g., personal journals and diaries, letters, e-mails)" (p. 187). According to Marshall et al. (2022), document review is an enriching way to ascertain the values of an organization, these "archival data-documents recording official events are the routinely gathered records of a society, community, or organization" (p. 180).

The researcher conducted a document review of SHS yearbooks and school board meeting documents pulled from SSD's online school board archives and used a guidance technician to verify that all participants did attend and graduate from SHS during the times indicated. All of these documents provided the researcher with an understanding of the lived and/or shared experiences that the participants may have encountered during their matriculation through SSD.

Triangulation

The triangulation of data, a method of maintaining validity in research, includes the gathering of data from multiple sources such as observations, interviews, and document analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2022). Stake (2010) suggests that triangulation is a means to ensure that data gathered are credible; it provides the researcher with an element of confidence that they have enacted a differentiated approach to identifying and interpreting the true meaning of a topic.

For this study, the researcher conducted three phases of triangulation (see Figure 1). Phase 1 included semistructured interviews of 11 participants; according to Terrell (2022), a semistructured interview approach provides the researcher with the ability to gather more

information from the interview, probe the interviewee, and ask follow-up questions to given

responses. The second phase of the research study was a focus group of five participants who

were nonemployees of SSD. The researcher was seeking to conduct a second focus group of

current employees of SSD; however, due to there only being two participants who met that

criteria, the researcher decided that sample size was too low.

After the focus groups, the researcher then moved into the last phase, the document

review. Document review included an analysis of the yearbooks from the time periods in which

the participants graduated from SHS, using SHS's guidance technician to verify that all

participants were graduates of SHS and verifying school board meeting documents from the

SSD's school board website.

Coding

For coding, the researcher used Dedoose (n.d.), an online qualitative and mixed-methods

cloud-based system that provides researchers with an opportunity for data management,

coding/excerpting, and data analysis. The researcher uploaded all media-related information

from the data collection to his Dedoose account; this included audio/video and transcripts.

The researcher used inductive analysis (Bingham, 2023) of data, which includes

examining patterns and identifying themes (Bingham, 2023). In using inductive analysis of the

data, Dedoose's coding application provided the researcher with the ability to assign excerpts to

relevant code banks. A code application chart was generated (see Figure 1) from this data, which

allowed the researcher to identify the six major themes; these themes were selected because they

all had a large number of excerpts pulled from the interviews and assigned to them. The themes

were selected based on the large number of excerpts pulled from the interviews.

Figure 1

Cope Application Chart for Findings-Emerging Themes

Findings- Emerging Themes

Media	Affinity Groups for Black Students	Attending a PWSPHS Builds Critical	Colorism	Cultural Influence of Black Media	Development of Self-Identity	Encountered Discipline	Great Education or Teachers at	HS Expereinces Still Left me Unsure	Historically Black Colleges &	Insufficent Presence of Black	Lack of Culturally Relevant	Lack of Sense of Belonging	Only Black Person in Advanced	Positive Experience Playing HS	Pushed to Tech Program	Racial Socialization: Role of Black	Racial/Biased Encounters	Talking/Speaking "White"	Totals
Terry Sanders .docx	2	1			1					1	2					1	4		12
Randall Samuels.docx	4	1		4			1			3	2					5	3		23
Mike Jones.docx		2					2			1	1			2		3	2		13
Linda Smith.docx	3	4								2	1					1	3		14
Laura Carmen.docx	5	3	1		1					2	3			3		6	4		28
Kelis Williams.docx	3	2	1				2		4	2	1			4		8	1		28
Kandis Sumner.docx	2	1	2		1		1		1	1	3			2		1	5	2	22
Focus Group.docx	12	6			1				6	2	5	2		5		10	2		51
Ellen Handel.docx	2	1	1	1			2			3	1			1		11	6		29
Bilal Granderson.docx	3	1		2			1			1	6	3		1		2	6	3	29
Angelica Williams .docx	5	1				1	3		7	1	3		5	2		3	6	2	39
Amber Sellers .docx	4							1			4	2				2	4	2	19
Totals	45	23	5	7	4	1	12	1	18	19	32	9	5	18		53	46	9	

Note. The arrows point to the top six themes based on the total number of excerpts pulled from the various interviews and assigned to a code generated by the researcher.

Emergent Themes

The following themes emerged from this inductive process, which the researcher will discuss in further detail in Chapter 4:

- Racial socialization: role of parents/family members

- Racist encounters

- Affinity spaces for Black students

- Lack of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)

- Insufficient number of Black teachers

- Attending a PWSPHS builds critical consciousness

Consent

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), prior to the start of the study and collection of data, a researcher must provide participants with an informed consent form to sign; the signed form provides evidence that the participants agree to the various provisions established within the study. All 11 participants who registered for this study were provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix E). The contact information for both the researcher and the researcher's chair was listed on the informed consent forms should there be any questions. Upon return of the signed consent form, the researcher did move forward with scheduling interviews. The signed forms were scanned and stored on the researcher's secured Arcadia University Google Drive.

The informed consent letter is paramount to upholding the ethics of research; it provides the participants with an overview of the purpose of the study and the specific ways in which the researcher will not only protect their rights but maintain confidentiality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022).

Confidentiality

When collecting and analyzing data, it is imperative that the researcher maintain the privacy of participants; one such way is the use of pseudonyms for both locations and individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, the researcher followed suit and assigned pseudonyms for all participants. In regard to those participants who work for the SSD, the researcher's proxy assigned the specific pseudonym to those participants.

All signed consent forms were locked in a filing cabinet located within the researcher's home residence. In addition, all digitized informed consent forms were scanned and stored on the researcher's password-protected Arcadia University Google Drive. All data, including informed consent forms, will be kept for 5 years, after which they will be deleted from the researcher's Google Drive and/or removed from the filing cabinet and shredded.

Any and all emails received by participants in this study will be stored on the researcher's password-protected Arcadia University Google Drive; upon completion of study, the researcher will delete all corresponding emails with participants. The Google Form database used for the collection of participant data will remain on the researcher's password-protected Arcadia University Google Drive account for 5 years, after which it will be deleted.

All interview-related audio and/or Zoom video recordings will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer until the end of the study, after which all audio and video data will be deleted. In regard to the Zoom platform, the researcher will use their Arcadia University Zoom account to record all interviews. Upon completion of the research study, the researcher will delete all research data from their Zoom account.

Focus Group Participants

At the start and the end of each focus group, the researcher emphasized the importance of maintaining confidentiality. All information shared within the focus group will remain confidential.

Proxy

The proxy used was a current doctoral student at Arcadia University, certified in the CITI program, and one who has fulfilled their doctoral coursework requirements. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher had the proxy sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C).

In addition, the researcher asked for a copy of the proxy's CITI program certificate to keep on file. At the end of the study, and in the presence of the researcher, the proxy will be instructed to shred and/or delete all data and/or notes collected.

Data Analysis

Marshall et al. (2022) identify data analysis for qualitative research as a "search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes and categories" (p. 230). In keeping with themes, during a phenomenological study, the researcher must carefully review all transcripts pulled, seek to understand phrases used by the interviewees, and then identify themes that help the researcher piece together the story being told by the participants (Terrell, 2022).

When conducting data analysis, it is important that data is collected "with an open mind so as not to contaminate the data with personal opinions or preconceptions" (Terrell, 2022, p. 184). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), when conducting the data analysis portion of qualitative research, it is imperative that the researcher:

- Avoid both siding with any of the participants and highlighting only the findings that place the interviewees in a favorable position;

- Report all data, including those points that may oppose a common theme; and

- Protect the privacy of the interviewee by using pseudonyms or aliases.

For this study, the researcher imported all audio/video data pulled from participants onto an online web application called Dedoose that specializes in qualitative research. The researcher used Dedoose to transcribe and code all data. This research management tool assisted the researcher in identifying themes pulled across all interviews.

Trustworthiness Criteria

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the validity of a qualitative research study is the ability of a researcher to showcase to readers that the data collected was done accurately and as a result should be deemed credible. To establish trustworthiness in qualitative research, the researcher can use procedures such as member checking, triangulation, and peer debriefing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022; Terrell, 2022).

Member Checking

In order to establish that the study and its results are credible, it is important that the research enact the vital step of member checking (Terrell, 2022). Member checking is the process in which the researcher provides participants with an opportunity to review the data that they have provided for the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Marshall et al., 2022; Terrell, 2022). Upon the transcription of each one-on-one interview, the researcher shared, via email, the transcript and/or its summary with each interviewee. The researcher provided the interviewee with 5 business days to review and/or add corrections if needed.

Peer Debriefing

Terrell (2022) defines peer debriefers as colleagues who can, in an impartial manner, "be asked to examine your study's methodology, transcripts, data analysis, and report" (p. 191). In using a peer debriefer to assist in the interpretation of data, the researcher not only enhances the accuracy of the study but also adds validity to the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher completed peer debriefing with fellow doctoral candidates from his cohort class at Arcadia University.

Limitations

Limitations, according to Terrell (2022), are "constraints outside of the control of the researcher and inherent to the actual study that could affect the generalizability of the results" (p. 51). All research projects have some limitations; with this in mind, it is important that the researcher acknowledge such elements—doing so prevents one from making excessive claims such as results being the law of the land (Marshall et al., 2022).

One limitation of this study is that the researcher is the former and first ADEC for SSD, a position where he worked closely with the Black student population at SHS. In the capacity of ADEC, the researcher initiated several initiatives to enhance a sense of belonging for the Black student population, which included creating a mentor program with SHS's Black Student Union and organizing an overnight college tour for SHS students to tour HBCUs. In addition, the researcher has worked closely with administrators throughout the district, some of whom have been in SSD leadership positions during the period in which some of the participants may have been SHS students.

A second limitation is that the researcher is now the current AP at SHS, a position that involves the researcher, in essence, being the quasi-ambassador for the policies and procedures at SHS. In this capacity, the researcher interacts daily with teachers, administrators, and other SHS staff who may have been employed during the period in which some of the participants may have been SHS students.

Last, on a personal level, the researcher, who identifies as Black/African American, is an alumnus of a PWSPHS. The experiences provided by the participants could be similar to that in which the researcher encountered during his high school matriculation. In addition, the researcher is the father to three Black/African American children who live and attend schools

within a predominantly White suburban township, the oldest of whom attends the district's predominantly White high school. That said, the researcher has a strong connection to the racial identity development of the participants as they may align to the current experiences of his children.

Timeline

Upon approval of Arcadia University's Institutional Review Board, the researcher submitted a request to conduct research at SSD. Upon approval by the SSD Institutional Review Board, the researcher immediately posted his digital recruitment flier to the social media outlets for Black alumni of SHS. The Google Form registration link remained active for at least 1 week until the minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 applications were submitted.

The researcher set aside a 4-week period to complete all interviews and focus groups; all one-on-one interviews were scheduled within the first 2 weeks followed by the focus groups. Simultaneously and during this month and 2 weeks following the last focus group, the researcher conducted his document review on relevant public and/or private documents related to the study.

Conclusion

The researcher has established how a phenomenological qualitative study should be conducted to identify the extent to which attending a PWSPHS shapes the racial identity development of Black students. The validity of this research study was completed through triangulation, which included one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. To ensure confidentiality and trustworthiness of both participants and data, the following methods were employed: pseudonyms for all persons and places, use of a proxy for participants who are current SSD employees, member checks, and peer debriefing. Upon completion of data

collection, the researcher employed an online coding application to identify the themes

established.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Results

The researcher's interest in this study stemmed from both his personal and professional experiences. The researcher is a product of the suburbs, an alumnus of a predominately White suburban public high school (PWSPHS), and a current building administrator in a suburban public high school. As a Black parent with three children, the researcher and his wife, who also identifies as Black, felt that selecting a suburban district would provide their children with a superior education full of resources and opportunities that would help prepare them for postcollegiate and career success. This is not an isolated ideology; according to Posey-Maddox (2017), the majority of Black parents who reside in the suburbs value the various resources and opportunities found in their children's public suburban schools.

During a family dinner, the researcher's eldest child, a high school student, described having experienced a racialized moment in school; quickly thereafter, the researcher's second child, a middle schooler, also mentioned that they had faced a similar encounter. It was at this point that the researcher and his wife wondered if their decision to place their children in a predominantly White suburban public school district was in fact harming their racial identity development. The researcher's reflection on potential racial identity harm is further bolstered by Posey-Maddox's (2017) research on the suburban experience of Black families and their children, which found that suburban schools, even with their plethora of resources, were in no way void of racism; instead, these schools were a mirror of the various microaggressions faced by Black people in everyday society.

Research has found that positive racial identity development in African American children is associated with both academic success and positive social engagement in school

(Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Rogers et al., 2015). It is the hope of the researcher that this study will provide valuable information that can bolster education-based policies that can support the racial identity development of Black children. The purpose of this study, primarily the impact of attending a PWSPHS on Black students, was birthed in large part from the researcher being a Black alumnus of a PWSPHS, an administrator at a PWSPHS, and raising three Black children in a predominantly White suburban district.

The researcher selected a qualitative phenomenological approach to this study, which included the use of semistructured interviews, a focus group, and a document review. It is the intention of the researcher to use this study to further the discussion around ways to support the educational experience of Black students in suburban settings, both academically and socially. In addition, the researcher is seeking to explore ways to provide teacher and educational leader preparatory programs with additional literature describing the Black student experience within the PWSPHS setting.

Study Recap

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent does attending a PWSPHS in the United States shape the racial identity development of Black students?

2. What institutional policies or practices do Black alumni of Sunnyside High School (SHS) recall as being a benefit or a hindrance to their racial identity development?

Theoretical Framework

Examining the racial identity development of Black children is an important lens within the field of education, particularly because research (Griffin et al., 2022; Leath et al., 2019;

Marcelo & Yates, 2018; Rogers et al., 2015) has found that Black children are cognizant of race and how their racial group is treated in a racialized society. The researcher elected to use the Nigrescence theory (Cross, 2021) as a foundation toward examining the racial identity development of Black children within a PWSPHS. The Nigrescence theory is rooted in the belief that one can trace and categorize a Black person's racial identity development from one end of the spectrum, full assimilation into White culture, to the other end in which a person has developed a pro-Black consciousness intertwined with social activism (Appling & Robinson, 2021; Cross, 2021; Hypolite, 2020, Lu & Newton, 2019).

Methods

In order to gain a firm understanding of the experience of Black students who attended a PWSPHS and its impact on their racial identity development, the researcher applied a qualitative phenomenological approach to collecting data. Marshall et al. (2022) describe phenomenological interviewing as an opportunity to gather and learn about lived experiences and how they shape one's view of society. Researchers indicate that the triangulation of data is an integral element to validating research, which can include the application of interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2022). For this study, the researcher collected data from one-on-one interviews, a focus group, and public documents associated with SHS.

Participants

To gather participants, the researcher distributed a recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) to a social media group site that was created specifically for Black alumni of SHS. In addition, this flyer was presented to the Institutional Review Board of Sunnyside School District (SSD) for distribution to current SSD employees and/or any alumni digital databases. On the digital flyer

was a QR code that connected potential participants to a Google Form registration (see Appendix

B) stored on a secure Gmail account created by the researcher specifically for this study.

Proxy

Due to the researcher being a current administrator within the SSD, and more specifically

at SHS, a proxy certified from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program

was used for any participant who identified as being a current employee of SSD. The proxy, a

current doctoral student at Arcadia University, was granted access to both the dissertation study

Google Form registration and Gmail account. The researcher and proxy used a screening routine

to maintain the anonymity of the participants who were current employees of SSD; this process

included the proxy reviewing the Google registration form on a daily basis for new participants.

If a registrant was not a current employee of SSD, then their full detailed information was shared

directly with the researcher. However, if the registrant was an employee of SSD, then the proxy

applied a pseudonym to the name prior to sending the registration information to the researcher.

The proxy took the lead in maintaining all communication with those participants who identified

as current employees of SSD, which included conducting interviews. Upon completion of proxy

interviews, where participants had their video cameras off to maintain anonymity, the recordings

were shared with the researcher.

Participant Profiles

There were a total of 11 participants who participated in this study, all of whom were

Black alumni of SHS and met the following inclusion criteria: (a) identified racially or ethnically

as Black/African American, (b) were alumni of SHS, and (c) graduated from SHS prior to 2020.

In order to confirm the validity of their graduation connection to SHS, the researcher was

advised by SSD's Institutional Review Board coordinator to contact SHS's guidance technician.

Following this official guidance, the researcher sent the names of all non-SSD participants to the

guidance technician at SHS upon which all participants were officially confirmed as graduates of

SHS during their indicated year. The researcher's proxy followed the same protocol and

connected directly with the guidance technician at SHS to confirm his two participants, both of

whom were officially verified as graduates of SHS during their indicated years.

All of the participants, as shown in Table 3, agreed to participate in this study and

subsequently signed an informed consent form prior to the recording of their interview.

Table 3

Dissertation Participation for One-on-One Interviews

Name	Gender	Graduation year from SHS
Laura	Female	1999
Bilal	Male	1992
Ellen	Female	1993
Mike	Male	2005
Randall	Male	1992
Terry	Male	2008
Amber	Female	2014
Linda	Female	2004
Kandis	Female	1987
Angelica	Female	2008
Kelis	Female	1983

Note. The names and graduation dates for all participants were officially verified by SHS's

guidance technician.

At the end of each interview, each participant was asked if they would like to participate in a follow-up focus group to which all participants replied in the affirmative. The researcher had intended to conduct two focus groups, one consisting of non-SSD current employees and the other with current SSD employees; however, the researcher was unable to enroll more than two participants that met the criteria of being a current SSD employee. As a result, the researcher conducted one focus group, of which six names from the nine non-SSD employees were randomly selected. Originally, all six agreed to participate in the focus group. However, at around an hour prior to the focus group interview session, one participant had to back out due to an unexpected work-related event. As a result, the researcher conducted the focus group with five participants, who are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Focus Group Participants

Name	Gender	Graduation year from SHS
Laura	Female	1999
Ellen	Female	1993
Terry	Male	2008
Angelica	Female	2008
Kelis	Female	1983

Prior to the focus group interview, each of the participants signed and submitted to the researcher an informed consent form for participation in a research study focus group (see Appendix G). This consent form specifically notes the potential risks in sharing sensitive information in a group setting and the confidentiality agreement to refrain from disclosing information shared in the focus group to the public.

Emerging Themes

Racial Socialization: Role of Parents/Families

Racial socialization is the communication of messages, both verbal and behavioral, that transform and shape the behaviors and beliefs of children around race (Doucet et al., 2018; Threlfall, 2018). In particular, African American parents instill in their children both proactive and protective messages that help them handle the elements of racism that they will encounter in society (Barr & Neville, 2014; Tang et al., 2016).

Protective Messages. Research on racial socialization has found that African American parents prepare their children to encounter racism by providing both warnings and strategies that can be used to handle racial encounters in a proactive manner (Barr & Neville, 2014; Doucet et al., 2018). Mike, a participant, was quick to point out the important role that his parents played in preparing him to encounter the threat of racism:

> I credit my parents to this day for making us understand our surroundings, making us understand where we're at, making sure we understand that this is most likely going to happen in this setting and this is the kind of setting you're going to be in nine times out of 10; so, no matter what's going on, you need to be prepared. You need to understand that this can happen at any time, and with that in mind, with those little fret tactics and understandings. Unfortunately, you're on guard or you're not on guard all the time, but your guard's up enough that you understand your surroundings, you understand people, you have a better idea for people, you don't always put yourself in certain situations where you're not sure the kind of people you're going to be around. So all those things come into play as an African American in the setting like I was growing up. You have to be aware at all times, no matter what. If you have a beer in your hand, if you have a book in your hand, it doesn't matter.

This element of preparation was also visible in participant Terry's conversation around guidance given by his Black grandmother to address the microaggressions he encountered from his White teachers:

I always used to complain that, you know, teachers were disrespectful. They weren't supportive and all that, but my grandmother who played a big part in raising me and made sure that I knew who I was as a Black man in this society, is just an advocate of just playing a game. Right. Now she'll make up, she's made plenty of noise in Sunnyside Township. If you, I mean I'm sure if you ask some of the old people in Sunnyside Township, they know who Heather is. She was, you know, on the board of the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], local NAACP for like 40 years. She's the reason they had the first Black administrator at Sunnyside Township, the first Black guidance counselor at Sunnyside Township. She has no problem making noise, but when I was there, she had much more the philosophy of let's play the game and get out of there, you know, get your grade, get into college, and get up out of there. That was kind of her thought process, which was frustrating to me at the time, and I still have some trouble with it, but it is what it is.

In Terry's case, his grandmother equated handling racism to playing the game and, importantly, understanding the rules to successfully escape an environment filled with racist tendencies. It is also important to note that although Terry abided by the rules instilled by his grandmother, he still expressed noted frustration on having to follow such a path of least resistance.

An element of preparation for surviving as a Black person within a racist society was evident in participant Bilal's recollection of advice given by his parents, particularly his mother:

> I guess, they weren't radicals, but they came up in the 60s and the 70s, right. So they
> were kind of like the Black Panther parents that moved to the suburbs and became
> professional, that kind of thing, but they had you know, they would always, especially my
> mom, always you know, kind of remind, she always kept us centered in remembering
> who we were, right. And you know, it's kind of more like a warning, right. Like, don't
> quite, you know, trust them, because at the end of the day you're a Black man and there's
> some things that you can't do that they can do.

According to Threlfall (2018), one category of racial socialization by Black parents is egalitarianism, which describes parents who build on individual qualities within their children that they feel will help them thrive in a racist society. The egalitarianism approach is visible in participant Kandis's experience when describing her mother's position on handling adversity:

> I didn't look at my mom as an advocate, not because she couldn't have been, but she, I
> think she also, she trusted me to do the right thing because she didn't graduate from
> college. She did graduate from high school. She did take a couple of courses in college,
> but she saw me as the way I, I think she saw me. She saw me as always making the right
> decision anyway. So it was like, you know, I take care of business, take care of business.
> So that's what I would do. You know. Yeah, I never would go to her like, "Mom,
> someone is picking me or anything." She would say, "Go back out there and give it back
> to him," you know, so. There you go.

The personal experiences that Black parents have faced with racism is another key element that shapes racial socialization practices (Threlfall, 2018). Participant Amber mentioned that the ability to share her experiences with her parents is what helped her handle elements of racism at SHS:

Yeah, and my mom was very similar. She had the, she went to SHS as well. So she

graduated in '86. She had very similar experiences, if not more. She said she was one of

five Black people in her graduating class, kind of, so she was definitely able to relate to

me.

The ability of Amber's mother to be a sounding board for Amber, particularly because of

the shared high school experience, was further explained in more detail:

My mom, yeah she was definitely able to relate to me and she understood, she said she's

had the same kind of things that are, for example, you know, you speak very proper, like,

you know, you can't be Black, you're, you're light, you can't be, you can't be fully

Black, you know. Where are you from? It's another great question, you know. So yeah, I

was, you know, it was nice to have that kind of, you know, like I can tell my mom things

and she could relate.

Proactive Messages. Barr and Neville (2014) describe proactive messages as the

dissemination of positive information about African American culture and the great

accomplishments of Black people throughout history. Participant Randall vividly described the

role his father played in his awareness of Black history:

And I know I was. I mean shoot, going back to middle school, I remember doing a

biography or autobiography on Martin Luther King, Jr. and this was in the, this was in the

fifth grade. You know, and you know, cause we had to pick a famous person. And so I

did MLK, and that was my dad. That was, that was his. That was his idea, you know?

Because he wanted to keep me learning about our history. You know, our civil rights and

you know, he wanted me to stay grounded and in our culture, right. And so, you know,

that, that never changed. You know, and I will go on to do more reports on Booker T.

Washington. I forget who else I looked at at the time, but, you know, I was, I was still

embracing them as my heroes. You know, and, you know, Malcolm X.

Participant Ellen talked about how her mother's life story was a testimony in itself to the

importance and relevance of Black history:

I'm so grateful that I had parents who, you know, my mom and them were born in 1939,

and my mom marched with Dr. King; she did the lunch counter sit-ins. So she was very

passionate, like she lived it. So there was always a story to tell, there was always an

experience. You know, when you come through the generations where they live through

all of that, a lot of that. My mother was the help, that was her first job making 25 cents a

week, helping her mother wash White people's laundry. So they made sure that we had

our history. You have to fill in the gaps, and I had to do the same with my children.

In the case of participant Kelis, she described the various ways that her mother exposed

her to elements of African American culture, particularly Historically Black Colleges and

Universities (HBCUs):

OK, I think because my mom started the student union, Black Student Union, our, my

freshman year. We were kind of heading or spearheading all of the activities for the

community. So it was like the forefront for us, Black History Month, different activities

being sponsored, added up. Activities that we would be involved in. I believe my mom

put together our HBCU trips for our community, and we went on bus trips to quite a few

places. To see Black schools, so we went to Lincoln, we went to Howard, we went to

Hampton, we went to Virginia Union, Virginia State. We've visited quite a few schools,

but like I just recall that, because of her interest and her investment in our programs at the

school. She was the one who did that.

Regarding HBCUs, participant Angelica also mentioned her exposure to HBCUs was because of her family: "I didn't even know I was going to [a] HBCU to be honest, I just ended up applying because my family members went there." Participant Ellen also highlighted the influence that her family had in her decision to attend an HBCU after graduating from SHS: "I knew that I was going to an HBCU, without question. My mother was a graduate of Clark Atlanta, Prairie View A&M. My dad went to Central State in Ohio, so we had a long history of HBCUs." Research has found that HBCUs foster a climate that both reinforces the richness of African American culture and its history, which provides its students with self-efficacy and racial identity assessment (Greenfield et al., 2015; Shappie & Debb, 2017).

Advocating for Children/Involvement in School Policies. Within the context of the role of parents, the researcher found a pattern about how participants' parents advocated on their behalf when they experienced racial encounters at SHS. For instance, Randall described a moment in art class in which the teacher challenged the skin tone selection of his ceramic elf:

> And so, I'm gonna represent. I'm going to make me a Black elf! I'm gonna make me two, I'm gonna make a Black boy elf and a Black girl elf. And I did it. And so, the teacher had a problem with that. She had a problem with my Black elf. And I forget the argument we had, but I was steadfast like, yo, like this is my, this is my project, this is my guy, my elf. And, at that point, I felt attacked, and I fought back. I'm like, no, like this is what I'm doing.

Randall then went on to explain that when he felt that his arguments were not being heard by the teacher,

> I told my parents. They gave the school a call, and the rest is history. I got an apology from the teacher, and basically she said, "You can make whatever you want to make."

You know, and I said, "That's right. Thank you!" And I kept on making my Black elves. And at that point, I just knew that no one could take my identity away from me. And because I fought for it as a child, but then when I saw that I was losing, I called on the big guns. I called my, I told my parents. You know, because they were gonna make sure that I got a chance to express who I am, you know. And so that was huge, like that was, it was more cause it was more than just, it was more than just an art assignment, it was more than just a project, you know it was me showing them that, no, I'm not better than you, but I'm different. And I'm still the same as you guys. I might be a different color, but I'm still a student too.

When confronted with the inability to reason with the teacher, Randall decided to reach out to his parents. Marcucci's (2020) research on parental involvement in the Black-White disciplinary gap concluded that parental involvement in school is crucial and can play a part in reducing punitive disciplinary actions such as suspensions.

Faced with a racist encounter at school, Ellen, similar to Randall, leaned in on her mother:

And then in high school, I remember very distinctly we walked into school one morning and on our lockers were flyers that were taped, and they said "red niggers in Texas." It was on our lockers. It was in the bathroom. I just remember, you know, calling my mom immediately. From the school phone—they didn't have cell phones yet—and telling her, you know, what I found on my locker, what was written in the bathroom. And so I think she handled it from there.

An example of parental involvement in school policies can be seen in spearheading school programs, such as the creation of SHS's Black Student Union by Kelis's mother:

In school, we had the Black Student Union, which my mom started my sophomore year, my brother, who was 2 years older than me, it would have been his senior year. And she actually went to the administration and said that the African American students needed something where they could learn more about who they were and have a source of pride and confidence in who they were. So she got the approval and started the first Black Student Union at the high school.

In addition to creating the Black Student Union, Kelis further described how in the capacity of advisor, her mother brought into SHS other programs:

Like she brought the famous, what was the name? Was it the Alvin Ailey Dancers? I think she brought the Alvin Ailey dancers to the high school, and we had shows that sold out. Now you have to go down to the city to see them because they travel worldwide. Judith Jamison was a big part of it then and she's, you know, famous part of the history of footprint you know of African American history now around the country and the world. But they started down in the city, and she got them out to our community and did a number of things that were to strengthen and improve our knowledge and education. She did Black History Month programs all the time and matter of fact, you know, she would quite often tell the story of how she marched with Martin Luther King in Atlanta, because my mom was at Atlanta University when he was there.

It was also mentioned that parental involvement did not just pertain to SHS. Terry mentioned how his grandmother was "on the board of the NAACP, local NAACP, for like 40 years. She's the reason they had the first Black administrator at Sunnyside Township, the first Black guidance counselor at Sunnyside Township. She has no problem making noise." The level

of involvement by Black parents to push diversity-based policies on a district-wide level was

also echoed by Ellen:

> We had such strong parents who fought with the district constantly about trying to bring
>
> in teachers of color to the point that I remember very distinctly that my mom, my
>
> godmother who lived around the corner, all, they sued the district. Because they had
>
> submitted a well-qualified applicant and they discovered how they were burning Black
>
> applications so they actually ended up suing the district. And then we finally were able to
>
> get my mom and them fought, fought, fought, and we were probably able to get the first
>
> Black school board member.

Involvement in Social/Political Organizations. Information uncovered during the data

collection that the researcher did not identify initially within the literature review was the

significance of participants being exposed, by their parents, to Black social organizations outside

of SHS. For instance, Ellen shared with the researcher:

> So when I went in the high school, I was, you know, like we were Jack and Jill, The
>
> Links, The Mix [pseudonym]. I mean, my mother always kept us involved in groups in
>
> the community that kept us grounded in our culture, and I just, so I became the vice
>
> president of the NAACP for the local branch.

> According to Jack and Jill of America (n.d.), founded in 1938, this African American-

based organization is focused on enhancing the growth of children, specifically African

American, by creating and/or exposing them to social, academic, and health-based opportunities.

Jack and Jill of America (n.d.) currently has 262 chapters throughout seven regions in the United

States and has 40,000 members. In further explaining the dynamics within the Sunnyside

Township community, Ellen further explained:

A lot of the work that my mom did with my siblings and you know their circle of well-

educated [families], they were kind of like the upper crest of Black families, well-

educated fraternity, sorority, Jack and Jill, they were involved in all of those things.

Kelis described in detail how her parents exposed her to an African American-based

community organization outside of SHS that helped her build her cultural acumen:

And then our community, we didn't have what they call Jack and Jill. We have what

they call The Mix [pseudonym], and it was the county's version of Jack and Jill, which

was began in the nearby city, which was the African American club, that social club, and

the mothers would all get together and provide events and activities for kids, African

American kids, in our community to do, and so this was another way for me to kind of

again, kind of learn more about my culture and my people. And it also wanted me to kind

of go on to learn more and become part of the African American community outside of

Sunnyside Township, so that's why I wanted to go to an HBCU.

Similar to Ellen, Terry was also actively involved in the local NAACP and explained

how he was the "president of the NAACP in the local youth chapter when I was in high school"

while also indicating that his grandmother, who played an instrumental role in raising him, was

"on the board of the NAACP, local NAACP for like 40 years."

An important element of the NAACP is its youth programs. According to the NAACP

(n.d.), the organization has 88 youth councils throughout the United States, which provide a

platform for young activists to learn to advance their skills on advocating for the eradication of

racism, the promotion of equality, and standing up for marginalized groups.

Racist Encounters

Research has found that racism has stretched its tentacles throughout the U.S. education system, resulting in school systems that are inherently biased against Black students (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Flitner et al., 2023). Chapman's (2013) research on racism in majority White suburban schools found there to be a plethora of obstacles in such settings that create a hostile environment for Black students. A clear example of such obstacles could be seen in the experience that participant Ellen shared with the researcher:

> And then in high school, I remember very distinctly we walked into school one morning and on our lockers were flyers that were taped and they said "red niggers in Texas." It was on our lockers. It was in the bathroom.

Peer to Peer. The majority of the participants the researcher interviewed experienced racial encounters at SHS; of these encounters, there were some that came from their White classmates. For example, participant Mike shared an experience he encountered with a White classmate:

> There was an incident where a student made a comment where he directed it towards me and other African American students that he wanted us to go back to Africa. And it's weird, at 38, I remember that incident like it was yesterday, what I was wearing, what he was wearing.

Participant Randall described an experience that occurred in the classroom between him and another White classmate:

> We were in class, and you know how you shuck and you jive in class. I was shucking and jiving with one of the White guys at the time, and I said something smart to him, whatever, right, because he, you know, we were jabbing each other. And then he said like loudly, like, man, you better shut up before I beat your Black ass. And everybody was

like ohhhh. And the teacher was like, OK, enough of the racial slurs here. And, you

know, I in my mind, am like this mother just really came out of his mouth just now.

After hearing the response, Randall further explained to the researcher how he reacted

and its impact on him in that moment:

But when I heard that, I just said for one I knew how much of a jackass he was, but then I

also thought to myself, man, this dude is really racist to be able to say some shit like that

right and just not really, not really caring. I'm not, I remember his name. I'm not going to

give you his name. And, you know, but I, and I obviously remember it, but, I never let it

mess with me, you know, like, I didn't feel any trauma from it. I didn't feel, I don't

remember feeling offended by it. I knew what he said, but I didn't feel offended by it

because I think at that point like, you know when you're a kid, you know you kind of

shrug stuff off.

In Randall's case, he noted that even though the classroom teacher heard and named the

comment used as a racial slur, nothing was done to address the White student. According to

Chapman (2013), when Black students ask staff members to address acts of racism, they are

often ignored, yet, when they defend themselves against such attacks then they are usually

punished for such actions.

In this case of participant Kandis, she recalled an encounter during a sporting event in

which an offensive racial term was used:

You know, you don't see yourself so much, because you're not looking at a mirror, right?

You're just engaging with the world outside of you, right? But then occasionally we

would be sitting down on the bench at practice, and like, oh, "We made an Oreo." I am

like, what? What are we talking about? That was the first time I heard that, right? I was

like, "What are we talking about?" And then they're like, "Well, look," and I said, "Oh,

OK, yeah, I see, Black, White, Black. OK." But I just, I would prefer to not have, you

know, even had to think about that, I was just like, we're just here having a good time,

how did that come into play?

Participant Terry informed the researcher that when he attended SHS, he was given a

nickname by his close White friends, which he later learned as an adult was offensive:

I had at the time I thought I had strong relationships. Most of my friends at the time were

White. I thought that we were close, I thought we were tight, in hindsight. I had a

nickname. I had a nickname that I didn't know what it meant in high school, but my

nickname was token. And had no, I mean, obviously it sounds crazy now, but, I had no

idea that that was a thing until I got to college. Like the token Black guy, like I never

knew, completely over my head.

In the case of participant Ellen, she described a racial encounter that was experienced

during an outing with one of her White friends from SHS:

I mean, I had friends who were White. I would definitely go to their houses. I remember

my one friend who didn't live far from me. I remember the day her dad used the N-word

in front of me. He was taking us somewhere, and he used the N-word like so just

passively like nothing to it, and then I guess he must have forgotten I was in that car

because then he tried to explain it away—"But I was like, you know, a Nigger is just an

ignorant person, not, you know, referencing a Black. I'm just saying he's an ignorant

person." Mmm, no, no.

The researcher also heard from a participant, Laura, who shared a classroom experience

that occurred directly after the verdict reading of the O. J. Simpson murder case:

I guess we must of had the TV in the classroom, and they would turn it on if

there's breaking news, and so they turned it on, it was like the O. J. verdict, and I was

partnered with at least one White girl; I can't remember, the other girl was probably

White too. And, in fact the whole row was probably White. Like, you know, I was

partnered with probably one or two people out of the row and there's probably another

group or two in the row and they all were probably just White and I was not. And the

news broke, and everybody was just like tense and kind of like, come on, come on. And

then when they said not guilty, I remember being like thank God, like I was so relieved.

And I remember the girl that I was partnered with was shaking her head and going, that's

an absolute shame. Like, I can't believe it. He did it. He did it. And I was just like, and I

was like, thinking to myself, but the Black man is free. Like I remember like that's what I

was thinking to myself. And it bothered me that she said that.

Racial Encounters With White Teachers. A component of the everyday acts of racism

within the education system includes racial microaggressions perpetuated by White teachers

against Black students, which is often upheld through colorblind practices or in maintaining a

general avoidance toward discussing or developing an awareness of racism (Kohli et al., 2017).

Participant Terry shared with the researcher an interaction that he encountered at SHS

with a White teacher:

She told me straight to my face that I wouldn't amount to anything because of the way

that I acted. Yeah, that was a White, that was a White teacher. Actually, that White

teacher taught my father as well, and she told me that I was gonna end up just like my

father, who's obviously a Black man as well.

In addition, Terry also mentioned interactions that he had with a staff member at the time, in which on several occasions the person had shared that "there's no chance that somebody named Barack Obama would ever be president."

Posey-Maddox's (2017) research on microaggressions in predominantly White suburban schools found that one of the issues that Black students encountered was hostility and race-based microaggressions from White teachers. Regarding microaggressions, participant Linda shared the following:

> I think I mentioned that earlier, but I always excelled in math classes, so I tend to always be one of the few, if not only, Black students in there, and I remember situations where I'd have finished my work early and my teacher would approach me and pretty much say there's no way you could have finished your work that fast. And I would show her that I was, and she always had kind of, she never celebrated the fact that I was done. She said, "Well if you're actually finished you can help someone else then." It was never like oh, "Good job," or "Wow, I'm impressed," or "Let me talk to you about maybe you know, giving, giving you some other things to differentiate from your peers," nothing like that. It was just like how could you possibly be smart enough to, to complete this assignment this quick and all of your peers and your White counterparts are still working.

Implicit Biases From the Counseling Department. A common theme that the researcher did not anticipate was the implicit biases that participants encountered from their SHS counselors. Johnson and Bornstein (2021) define implicit biases as "subconscious prejudices and perceptions that may influence action" (p. 81). The researcher encountered several participants who identified encounters with their high school counselor in which they recommended them for postsecondary career paths that did not align to rigorous goals. For instance, Kandis stated:

Traumatic experiences or remembrances would be with my counselor when I was getting ready to graduate. We were taking these tests, like what's your propensity to become what, mine was like to become, I think a salesperson or something. But when I had a one-on-one conversation with my counselors like, basically I took from her I'm not gonna be anything more than a secretary. And my mom is the secretary, so on some level I wasn't offended by that, but I knew that I could do more or be more. I wasn't the number-one student in my class, but I was in the top 20% of my class, so I was doing well. So that was not a positive experience.

Kandis further identified her frustration to the researcher by adding:

I can't think of one triggering experience other than that counselor, that might have been it. How are you gonna say I can't? I wanted to be a school psychologist or a psychologist at the time. Why do you tell me I can't be a psychologist and am only going to be a secretary or I'm going to be a secretary versus anything else that I might aspire to do?

Betters-Bubon et al.'s (2022) research on antiracism and school counselors found that implicit biases are harmful not just on a person's social and emotional state, but they can also impact cognitive potential. Kelis faced a similar situation to what Kandis had faced with her counselor particularly around professional career advice:

It was the counselor. She told my mom I wouldn't be successful as a nurse, which is what I was initially thinking I might want to be, and was trying to suggest that I go into some noncollege educational profession, and I want to go on to college. And they were trying to suggest I do something else. And that just kind of blew my mom away. I am glad she didn't listen to them, glad I didn't either.

Kelis and Kandis matriculated and graduated from SHS in the 1980s, but even Amber, who graduated in 2014, experienced a similar situation with her counselor:

Yeah, so I'm [a] first-generation college student, first to graduate, first to get my undergrad, my master's, any, you know, everything like that. Going into it, I definitely did not have the I, my parents didn't know anything. My parents can't, they couldn't give me that kind of information. So I really leaned on my counselors to be able to help me. My counselors in the beginning were steering me to go to like vo-tech, like the vocational school for a while and you know, trying to steer me in a way of, well, if you graduate, then you can, you know, go right into the workforce. And I was like, well, no, you know, I really want to, I want to go to college kind of thing. You know, I, this is, you know, there's nothing wrong with technical school, but it just wasn't for me. And I felt like for a while I had to fight that.

Based on the interviews and focus group, the researcher found that counselors not only directed low-bar expectations to the students but also to their parents. For instance, Terry stated:

Like I'll never forget my mom always tells a story about one of the counselors told my mother that I'd be lucky to get through community college. This is when I was at the end of my junior year. And told her I'd be lucky to get through community college, that college might not be for me. You know, that whole saying, like they don't tell that to all kids, you know, and it wasn't because my grades were bad. It was, it was like a behavior thing. It was like, he's unfocused. He's not, you know, he doesn't have the aptitude to excel in college. That's pretty much what they told my mom.

Interesting to note that Terry disclosed to the researcher that he not only graduated from college but he also obtained his Juris Doctor.

Affinity Spaces for Black Students

Affinity groups are essential places within schools that provide a safe place for students, usually from a marginalized identity group, with the opportunity to gather and discuss issues around their identity (Bell, 2015; Tauriac et al., 2013). Another important aspect of Black affinity groups, particularly on predominantly White campuses, is that it provides an opportunity for Black students to have a momentary reprieve or outlet from the racist climate that can exist on such campuses (Harper, 2013).

The researcher took note that the majority of the study participants were members of the BSU during their time at SHS. In a review of yearbook documents, the researcher was able to identify statements that could help describe the inner workings of the BSU during the time at which the participants graduated from SHS. The researcher captured the BSU yearbook captions and placed them in Table 5. In regard to the review of the yearbook, the researcher found a recurring theme in which the BSU was implementing various programs to support the cultural enrichment of its members. For instance, in 1992, according to the yearbook, the BSU organized a program to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, and in 2005 there were initiatives done around self-awareness, community leadership, and cultural awareness.

The researcher noticed that the BSU was missing in key dates when participants mentioned that the BSU was active. After further review of the data, the researcher was not able to identify why the BSU was missing from the yearbook.

Table 5

SHS BSU Yearbook Captions

Year	BSU listed?	Caption pulled
1983	No	N/A
1987	No	N/A
1992	Yes	During the 1991-92 school year the Black Student Union planned educational assemblies and special observances for minority students. The group also planned to work with the Sunnyside Township Park and Recreation Department, and others to put together a program celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.
1993	Yes	The Black Student Union had a prosperous 1993. Under the guidance of President Sam Rand, Vice President Laura Frank and Secretary/Treasurer Karissa Benjamin, the members enjoyed another successful year. Sponsors Nate Wilks and Mrs. Samuels helped the officers to organize activities and fundraisers. The goal of the Black Student Union is to make a scholarship fund for the outstanding black students of Sunnyside. The members stay actively involved with the community to enrich their lives as well as the lives of others.
1999	Yes	Under the direction of Mr. Mathews and Mrs. Samuels, the Black Student Union has flourished. The BSU is an Organization designed for all students who enjoy learning about Black History. The club's focus is to educate students about the contributions of African-Americans to the nation and to the world. Under the watchful eye of President Taylor Bentley, the BSU has successfully organized several fundraisers, food drives, and holiday celebrations. All are welcome to join!
2004	No	N/A
2005	Yes	With the help of Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Ray, the Black Student Union (BSU) is an organization that strengthens the awareness of African American culture by sponsoring cultural events, self-awareness workshops, and encouraging student leadership within the community. This year, our focus is personal excellence, respect and unity.
2008	No	N/A
2014	Yes	"This club has helped me to have an open mind and to respect the lives of others."—Trenton Barrow Grade 12

Participant Kelis described how her mother was the one who started the BSU at SHS:

> In school, we had the Black Student Union, which my mom started my sophomore year,
> my brother, who was 2 years older than me, it would have been his senior year. And she
> actually went to the administration and said that the African American students needed
> something where they could learn more about who they were and have a source of pride
> and confidence in who they were. So she got the approval and started the first Black
> Student Union at the high school. So my sophomore year would have been 1981, that it
> was started, and we had a good turnout, pretty much almost everyone that was in the high
> school attended the program and she brought excellent programs.

To explore the time period of the early 1980s more and Kelis's statement about her
mother creating the BSU, the researcher reviewed the yearbooks from that period and was able to
find the following statement from 1982 SHS yearbook:

> The Black Student Union is an organization of young black teenagers striving to unite the
> black students of SHS. Reactivated in 1980, the Black Student Union has quickly become
> a group with great success. Part of this success is due to the leadership of its president,
> Charles Banks, a current Senior. The Black Student Union has actively participated in
> various educational establishments. The 1981-1982 Black Student Union has set its goal
> towards making SHS a better school for the black student.

The BSU not only was framed as an entity to provide a better social experience for the
Black students of SHS, but it actually manifested further into providing resources for the
community. Kelis provided the researcher with a recap of key programs that her mother
organized through the BSU, such as an HBCU college trip:

We were kind of heading or spearheading all of the activities for the community. So it

was like the forefront for us, Black History Month, different activities being sponsored,

added up. Activities that we would be involved in, I believe my mom put together our

HBCU trips for our community and we went on bus trips to quite a few places. To see

Black schools, so we went to Lincoln, we went to Howard, we went to Hampton, we

went to Virginia Union, Virginia State. We've visited quite a few schools.

In reference to spearheading BSU activities that benefited the community and not just the

students, Kelis provided the researcher with insight on one such event organized by her mother:

She brought the famous, what was the name? Was it the Alvin Ailey Dancers? I think she

brought the Alvin Ailey dancers to the high school, and we had shows that sold out. Now

you have to go down to the city to see them because they travel worldwide. Judith

Jamison was a big part of it then and she's, you know, [a] famous part of the history of

footprint you know of African American history now around the country and the world.

But they started down in the city, and she got them out to our community and did a

number of things that were to strengthen and improve our knowledge and education.

It is important to note that during the focus group discussion, the researcher did observe a

division between Kelis's perspective of BSU-sponsored community events and those

experienced by more recent graduates from the 2000s. For those students, such as Angelica, the

BSU was more of a social outlet and not necessarily one that spearheaded culturally enriching

activities. Angelica described her BSU experience:

The only thing that I can remember is that after-school club, the Black Student

Association, where we really like, would have a big cook out or socially would gather.

We wouldn't really like do anything productive like go on college visits or talk about the next step after high school and graduation. So we didn't really have that at all.

In addition to Angelica, Amber's experience with the BSU landed more towards an opportunity to socialize, however from Amber's point of view, the BSU appeared to be prioritize those who were in attendance as opposed to reaching out to inform and or uplift the school community:

Yeah, so I, I always got the vibe that it was, so anybody who was in the room basically in the club, I felt like, OK, anyone in here, we're benefiting from the events that we're throwing because we're basically throwing them for ourselves. Like I can remember having like a, like a soul food dinner basically and it was open to everyone but I mean the people who really came and participated were the ones that were in the room with us designing the event, you know, it wasn't necessarily as, uhm, it was meant to engage the entire school and it didn't feel like it was before the entire school. It didn't feel like it was a time for us to really showcase our identity in that way, it was more a space for us to have each other if that, you know.

Kandis, a former student president of the BSU during her time at SHS, also identified her experience with the BSU as social club:

We would gather, we would gather occasionally. I remember a trip. We didn't come around to having a trip. I don't remember where it was to, I cannot remember if we were thinking Africa or if we were thinking of Washington, DC, which is totally different from each other, but like we were talking about a trip that never came to pass. So it became more of like a social club than anything.

Randall also shared his view on the BSU as more of a social outlet as opposed to an action-oriented organization around organizing culturally appropriate trips:

You know, I mean, we had, I mean, we had a Black Student Union, but I don't remember us doing too much. We only had a few meetings. I honestly don't remember us doing too much. And this is like from '90, from '89 to '92 when I was in high school. I don't remember us doing much. I went to the meetings, but I don't remember us, you know. I think we might do the field trip or something. You know, just, I don't remember us doing much. I don't think we did enough to celebrate each other, right. Like, we talked. I don't know that, I don't remember that we really addressed any issues. You know, I think we talked about how we felt as Black students, but, and some of those conversations were really good. But I don't know that we really accomplished a lot with it at the time.

However, Linda, a graduate of 2014, saw the BSU as both a safe space for her and also one that was culturally enriching:

I think the only space really was the Black Student Union. We had speakers to come, and we had a safe space. I remember meeting in our old building in the library classroom, twice a month, and that's where we met and we all, not all, but a majority of the Black students who were a part of the Black Student Union would go there. And we had one woman in particular who was a White woman who was the facilitator of our club. She was the sponsor, and she made that space feel like it was ours. She never tried to dominate anything. It was student-led. We had soul food platter sales at Sunnyside High School. We were, that was the only space I could feel like it was comfortable to be 100% myself.

The researcher did note that Linda's facilitator was a White woman, whereas those participants from the 1980s–1990s all reference having a Black staff member or parent as a BSU advisor. In regard to culturally responsive practices, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2022) provides a culturally relevant and sustaining education program framework that indicates that in order for a teacher to be culturally competent, they must reflect on their own cultural lens, which includes analyzing their own membership to an identity group. In addition, a culturally competent educator, regardless of their race, must understand that they bring with them biases that can shape their interactions with their students (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2022). Linda noted that the White teacher who facilitated the BSU did not dominate the conversation and led the students to believe that the space was their space, which aligns with one who is cognizant of their relationship with a majority racial group and the need to place this dominance in check at the door.

Nate the Custodian. The researcher found that participants from the early 1990s kept repeating a particular name: Nate, the high school custodian, who was the staff advisor for the BSU. Ellen stated:

> So like when we met as a club, we would talk about it. We would, Norm would make sure. Right? How crazy is that—that the custodian is teaching the Black kids their Black history? Cause the teachers won't do it!

Ellen, a graduate of 1993, made it a point to identify that there was not one person from the teaching staff at SHS that volunteered to run the BSU. Bilal, who graduated in 1992, made mention that Nate's selection as advisor was due to a lack of teachers who were willing to sponsor the club:

But, I mean, we didn't even have a Black Student Union at Sunnyside Township when I

first started. We couldn't get a sponsor. We, our sponsor, we had to get the custodian to

sponsor us. There were no spaces where we were that was celebrated or uplifted.

During the discussion of Nate, the researcher found that this was an individual who was

held in high regard by his students, which contributed to the BSU being both a safe and socially

supportive environment for the students. To this idea, Randall stated:

There was a janitor named Nate. You might hear, you might hear, hear some other

guys mentioning. He was our janitor, right, used to be a bodybuilder, I think. But he lost

all that and all the weight went right to his stomach. He was a big dude. But Nate, Nate

was for us, he was the one we looked up to. He was the one that we went to talk to about

our stuff, you know. Nathan was, I felt like he was more of, had more of a teacher like

presence than a janitor. And not just for us Black kids, but for all the kids, you know, he

was hip, he was, he was, you know, I wouldn't be surprised if you hear from one of the

other responders, participants, that he was like a father figure. You know he, he had that

voice you know, and he was, he was the, the leader of, you know, he helped lead out the

union. And Nathan for what I remember, like I said he was this very, you know very

influential. He was a calming presence for us. And, you know, I think that he was, he was

a light for us there. Because we really had no other older Black authority figures at the

high school at the time.

As mentioned by Randall, Nate was a strong presence, inspirational, and one who

Randall felt he could confide in. This sentiment was also backed up by Bilal:

It was Nate. Yeah, and I don't remember Nate's last name, I've been trying to look him

up for years. But Nate, he was the custodian. He had an office right there in the cafeteria,

and he was kind of like, well, he was a friend to everybody. He looked out for everyone. Nate was a really big guy, nicest man in the world, but he was our, he was our sponsor. He was the one that actually stepped up to sponsor us, sponsor our Black Student Union.

The researcher did review the 1992 and 1993 SHS yearbooks to identify Nate, and he located a picture of him among the 1992 BSU club. In reviewing the 1993 SHS yearbook, the researcher uncovered a reference to Nate within the BSU club caption. According to the 1993 yearbook, Nate cofacilitated the BSU with Mrs. Samuels, a Black teacher, who taught business education.

Based on the researcher's conversations with Bilal and Randall, Nate was a pivotal figure within the school building and within the BSU. When analyzing mentors, specifically for African American male high school students, the positive qualities of mentors that stood out were related to being trustworthy and providing moral support when encountering obstacles within the school building. Tauriac et al.'s (2013) study on affinity groups and ethnically diverse students found that a common trait that existed within these spaces was an element of trust in which one had the ability to express themselves without fear of being misunderstood. Nate, based on the data provided, was a leader who, through his presence and actions, provided a strong affinity space for the Black students at SHS.

Lack of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is the theory that the culture of a student can be a key asset to enhance the educational process within the classroom (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Shaw, 2016; Warren-Grice, 2017). When the researcher posed the question on how Black culture and race were addressed both in the classroom and throughout the building at SHS, the majority of participants stated that it was not addressed. When discussing the question about Black race

and culture in the classroom, Amber shared, "In the classroom, you're not really talking about Black culture or race or anything like that unless it comes up in the curriculum. So it's, you know, very few teachers, teachers whatever venture into that topic."

In regard to CRP, Bilal stated:

Blackness wasn't acknowledged or celebrated whatsoever. In my case, because I wasn't quote unquote perceived as Black. Trust me, I was Black, right? The joke was, they thought of it maybe as a compliment actually, believe it or not. Right? But there were no spaces. There were no spaces where it was celebrated. It was an absence of Blackness. That's the only way I can put it, right? There were no positive spaces.

When posed with the same question regarding how Black culture was addressed, this sentiment was echoed by Ellen:

It wasn't. It didn't exist. Other than amongst us, cause like we would come in and be wearing our Cross Colors and listening to the, you know, our music, and our slang. And the other kids, you know, the White kids thought it was so interesting, they would be trying to copy us, but we brought the culture to the building. Sunnyside Township never did anything to advocate or protect, or strengthen or even let it be seen, like even if you walk into the guidance suite and look around the wall, how many HBCUs do you see up there? None!

The researcher did note that in Ellen's response, she identified ways in which Black students celebrated their own culture, which existed through their clothing and music. Randall responded in similar fashion to the same CRP question but pretty bluntly: "Well, it wasn't. [laughs] It wasn't. And this is again coming from my lens." Terry responded in similar fashion stating, "It wasn't. Completely absent."

Racial Insensitive Pedagogical Practices. In addition to a void of CRP within the classrooms and building, the researcher did identify occurrences in which staff of SHS engaged in culturally insensitive practices. For instance, Bilal shared:

> I was one of the first people in the AP [Advance Placement] program at Sunnyside Township when it started. So, I never had another Black person in a class with me ever, my entire 12 years in SSD from elementary through high school. With that being said, you know, when it was time for like an English class, Othello, you know who they chose to play it, right? There was kind of an expectation for me when we were in Black History Month. You know, I was the sole person of African descent that most of them interact with on a daily basis. So it kind of a lot of times fell upon me to kind of be like the spokesperson, per se. They were always kinda like leaning on me.

Racial spotlighting, which is what Bilal experienced, is a harmful practice that occurs when a student is singled out to be the sole spokesperson on any issue related to their culture, when in reality they do not seek that responsibility (Andrews, 2012). Kandis shared her story in which she was placed in a racially insensitive role-playing activity:

> There was one other experience, my history class, U.S. history. Mr. Foggle was my coach and my teacher, and he was awesome, I really liked him; however, the textbook had one chapter. I think it was Chapter 9, which was on slavery. That was all the Black history that I was going to learn. And even in that, we had a role-playing exercise. And so, of course he didn't position me as a slave, but he positioned me as a White person. Yet, I did come out of character pretty quickly because I was offended by the whole conversation, obviously. So that pretty much shut down like us even pursuing studies in that chapter. I recall just like, OK, this is not gonna work.

In regard to culturally relevant practices, Kelly's (2013) research identified that there exists in schools a disconnect between the content taught and individual student culture, which is even more pronounced for students of color. In the case of Kandis, there was a clear disconnect between Mr. Foggle's lesson activity and the cultural and historical background of Kandis. Instead, the lesson was a harmful trigger that prevented Kandis from being able to proceed in her assigned role.

In exploring the extent to which SSD focused on diversity training prior to 2020, the researcher reviewed the SSD school board meeting library minutes. In putting in a search of the online archives using the word diversity, the researcher was only able to identify one date prior to 2020 that referenced the term diversity. On November 5, 2012, it was noted in the board meeting records, listed under information from the superintendent, Mrs. Columbus, that "the district wants to assure that it meets the needs of all students. Mrs. Columbus said that some diversity focused training may be offered and that a Diversity Committee will likely form as part of Strategic Planning." It appears that there was no follow-up regarding this diversity committee and/or the suggestion of diversity training. It is important to note that the online library database for the SSD minutes is only archived from 2007 onward. A search of CRP did not display any content prior to 2020 nor did diversity training. Based on this information, the researcher is led to believe that there did not exist any district-wide initiatives based around CRP during the period in which the participants of this study attended SHS.

Insufficient Number of Black Teachers

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2016, in schools where the majority of students were White, more than 90% of the teachers were White (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In regard to the diversity of the suburban teaching force, the data is troubling;

the U.S. Department of Education (2016) indicates that the teacher workforce in such settings is

84% White and 8% Black. The data from the U.S. Department of Education on the discrepancy

between White and Black teachers in the suburbs was reflective of what the researcher heard

from the participants of this research study. The majority of participants shared that they never

took a class led by a Black teacher during their time at SHS. In addition, the majority of them

shared how the presence of Black teachers was almost nonexistent during their matriculation. For

instance, Terry shared:

> I never had a Black teacher throughout my time at Sunnyside Township. Never had a
>
> Black administrator. I had a Black counselor, Ms. Jerry; I don't know if she's still there
>
> or not. She was the college advisor, so there was definitely a gap there that I felt like I
>
> didn't necessarily feel supported and part of that was because around ninth, around 10th
>
> grade I should say, is when I really started coming, came into like my sense of identity. I
>
> started to become aware of how race plays a factor in my life.

> Fellow 2008 graduate Angelica shared a similar experience about not having a Black

teacher:

> We didn't have any Black teachers. I think there was a Black, there was a Black teacher,
>
> Ms. Horace, she worked with special ed students, but she was more like an attendant. I
>
> don't think she was like an actual teacher. And then we did have Mr. Bentley, who was
>
> like the athletic director. But those were the only like representations of Black staff
>
> members that we had when I was there. So no spaces to really celebrate us.

Ellen stated:

> I never saw anybody who looked like me. There was one Black teacher the entire time
>
> that I was in middle school. There was one Black teacher at the high school who actually

went to my church in Manortown, she's now passed away, and then Ms. Nancy who was

the Black music teacher. And you know, picture this is like, you talk about like, 1985.

When my kids entered the middle school. Ms. Nancy was still one of the only Black

teachers in that building. So we talking about 20-plus years of multitudes of Black

families coming through who never had the opportunity to see or interact with people

who looked like them.

It is important to note that Ellen had children who attended and graduated from SHS; the

insufficient presence of Black teachers at SHS, which was a problem during her years at SHS,

still continued into the time period of her children, which was fairly recent. In describing her

experience at SHS, Kandis mentioned:

I started in Sunnyside Township School District at the age of 11, in sixth grade, so I was

there for 1 year before moving to the middle school/high school. I had a Black teacher in

sixth grade, the only Black teacher I saw throughout my 7 years, I guess, in the district.

Linda, one of the few participants who was a current employee of SSD, made it a point to

share the impact that not having a Black teacher had on her career path:

I mean, I feel like I was impacted a lot by not having much representation. And it was

important to me to be a representative for, for kids, which is why I chose the profession I

chose because I didn't have role models in my building. I think there was one person of

color in the building, and they weren't in the classroom. And I feel like I didn't graduate

that long ago, where I feel like there could have been more representation but that always

stood out to me. That there was not one teacher I had in 4 years of high school, and we

had, what seven periods a day, that there wasn't one person of color. And, you know, but

even with that, naturally finding that one person that looked like me who wasn't assigned

to me for any reason at all, but I gravitated toward them because I was craving that, I was

craving that, that shared experience.

The sentiment to return to SSD, as shared by Linda, to be a Black presence to Black

students, was also shared by the other current SSD employee Mike:

There was no hesitation when I could come back and get a job there. I wanted to be part

of it. I knew that I saw in my community the number of Black students growing, and

there weren't a lot of Black faces when I went there in the sense of principals or teachers.

When I graduated, there was only one Black faculty member, and she was a guidance

counselor. So if I could get in the building and be helpful in any way, especially now

with the numbers growing, especially kids of color, I wanted to be there. I want to be a

part of that.

Many participants yearned to have the experience of a Black teacher. It speaks to Cherng

and Halpin's (2016) findings that students of color have a more favorable connection to other

teachers of color. Studies have also found that Black teachers play a pivotal role in the social

development of Black students, leading to greater engagement within the classroom (Cherng &

Halpin, 2016; Gershenson et al., 2016). The researcher found similarities between Linda and

Mike, both current employees of SSD, particularly around a key reason for their return to SHS.

The experiences of Black PWSPHS graduates who are currently employees of a PWSPHS can be

a further research study that can possibly help examine ways to improve the Black teacher

pipeline into suburban public schools.

Attending a PWSPHS Builds Critical Consciousness

When discussing the long-term impact surrounding the participants' lived experiences at

SHS, the researcher noticed a common theme, one that centered around SHS preparing the

participants to live in a racialized society. The researcher noticed a heightened level of critical

consciousness among participants, especially when examining how, as a Black person, SHS

prepared them for a society in which Blacks remained members of a marginalized group. Critical

consciousness is defined as an awareness of the inequalities of racism and injustice (Forenza,

2017; Moffitt et al., 2022). Fike and Mattis (2023) point out that when measuring levels of

critical consciousness, one can do so through three lenses: (a) critical reflection, (b) critical

motivation, and (c) critical action.

      Critical Reflection. One facet of critical consciousness is critical reflection, which

involves a person's ability to identify the structures that lend to oppression and discrimination

(Diemer et al., 2015; Fike & Mattis, 2023; Heberle et al., 2020; Moffitt et al., 2022). The ability

to identify and prepare for racialized encounters, even as an adult, is something that Mike

learned from his time at SHS:

> You need to be aware; you need to understand where you're at. You need to understand
>
> people. So Sunnyside High School definitely taught me that. It's, that's the world,
>
> unfortunately. You know, I went to school and just an hour outside of where I grew up,
>
> and within my first 2 weeks I was called a nigger. So you know what I mean? Like, you
>
> just need to. It's a war zone in a way. You just gotta realize you got to navigate with your
>
> head up and you got to navigate with brains.

> Mike also stated:

> Unfortunately, you're on guard or you're not on guard all the time, but your guards up
>
> enough that you understand your surroundings, you understand people, you have a better
>
> idea for people, you don't always put yourself in certain situations where you're not sure
>
> the kind of people you're going to be around. So all those things come into play as an

African American in the setting like I was growing up. You have to be aware at all times,

no matter what. If you have a beer in your hand, if you have a book in your hand, it

doesn't matter.

In reflection on his experience at SHS, Bilal shared:

I would say that, honestly, I think they've helped me, believe it or not, navigate, I guess

the majority world, a lot better than some other people, right. I can identify certain things,

right. In kind of those White spaces, right. White spaces. I'm able to, I can immediately

disarm them, just by, you know, relating to them, right. I'm a suburban kid, I'm not from

the city, right. It's, you know, it's giving me at least as far as professionally, it's actually

probably helped me.

In the case of Bilal, the ability to step into a majority White space, identify racial tension,

and successfully navigate those spaces was a skill learned at SHS. Laura shared a similar case of

being aware of her surroundings as the only person of color in her professional workspace:

I think that I'm very aware that you can be in an environment in which others are not

gonna understand the Black experience or understand that you are Black and what, what

that means with identifying with being Black or what that experience is like. I'm aware of

that only through Sunnyside Township because it was the least diverse, I think,

community that you know I've, I've really been a part of. Because college is pretty

diverse. Workforces are pretty diverse. So I feel like that was probably the least diverse.

So I think it may be aware that you can have that experience. As far as how it shaped me,

I think it's made me much more, it's made me very aware. It's made me very sensitive,

and it has ultimately, I think, it contributes to my identity. And for me personally, it

represents, it's a part of who I am, like as, as a Black woman or a person of color that is a

female, you have several things. You're, you know, the female in a working environment.

There's always going to be certain obstacles you have. If you are a person of color in that

environment, you have additional things that you're trying to work past. So I'm aware of

those things.

Last, Kandis provided the researcher with a snapshot of how attending SHS helped

prepare her for a career as a labor organizer in a rural majority White region of the United States:

I'm a labor organizer. I work with a myriad of different people; it's in education, I work

for a western U.S. State Teaching Association, and I represent teachers in a variety of

rural areas, mostly, mostly White—splattering of Latinos I'm coming to find. Very few if

any Blacks, maybe a couple of mixed races. Anyway, very conservative area too and I'm

pretty much a liberal and progressive, but I'm professional. When, when I, when I see

microaggressions or I become self-protective at seeing, like I did see a Confederate flag

amongst a flag store. I pull on my experiences from the predominantly White college I

attended and Sunnyside High School and say, I've been here, even though I can't recall

like a lot of negative experiences, but like I've been the only one, right, in the room. So I

pull on that, and I say, and I'm doing well, and I've done well. So in some ways that, that

tells me I'm prepared for whatever I'm about to face.

In all, several of the participants were clear that SHS was a microcosm of their

professional spaces and, in essence, living as a Black person in the United States. The ability to

navigate White spaces has prepared them to not only identify potential dangerous situations but

also, in a way, has helped them become somewhat comfortable in socializing and working in

spaces where they are the only Black person in the room.

Critical Motivation. Critical motivation is the ability or intrinsic motivation that one has to fight oppression such as racism (Diemer et al., 2015; Fike & Mattis, 2023; Heberle et al., 2020). Linda's experience at SHS also helped her to understand the importance of having a strong foundation in her culture as a way to combat the harmful effects of racism:

> So I truly believe I can navigate any space but still maintain who I am and, and honor my culture and represent my culture to the fullest. So I was raised in a household where it was acknowledged you are a Black person, this is what you should do, this is so, and I always embrace my culture, so I'd never lost that even in White spaces. So I think I can attribute that to learning how to navigate you know, socially and professionally from, from having those experiences at Sunnyside High School.

From Linda's experience at SHS, she has found that the one way to combat racial oppression is to fully immerse herself in Black culture. This sentiment was also shared by Angelica:

> I would say thank God I went to an HBCU. If I didn't, I don't know how it would have impacted me. Because when I was younger, I wanted to fit in so bad and be accepted so bad. That it even hurts me to say like I feel like as a young girl like I wanted to be White, like I didn't have a Black woman to look up to. I wanted straight hair. I didn't like my natural hair, like I hated my lips and my nose. I feel like I got made fun of the most when I was younger for those features that I appreciate so much as an adult. I just feel like, I'm scared for the Black children that are there sometimes because I know what it's like to just want to fit in and not have anywhere to fit.

In the case of Angelica, her experience at SHS pushed her to attend an HBCU which she described as helping her overcome the harmful effects of racial microaggressions, primarily

hating one's skin complexion. Ellen also spoke about how attending SHS pushed her to attend an

HBCU:

> So by the time I got to 12th grade, I mean, it was in my family, which has a history of
>
> HBCU, so there was never a doubt we were going to college. I just knew that I needed to
>
> have a different experience, and I was looking forward to the opportunity to actually have
>
> teachers who look like me, be around other people who look like me, where I didn't have
>
> to continuously either explain or defend my culture or see people trying to appropriate
>
> my culture.

> In a way, Ellen's decision to attend an HBCU was led to her desire to fight against the

racial microaggressions and practices that she encountered at SHS, whether it was from a lack of

Black teachers and/or the need to constantly defend her culture. In a sense, attending an HBCU

provided Ellen with the social skills to navigate a racialized society.

> **Critical Action.** Within the framework of critical consciousness, critical action is

identified as any action that is intended to eradicate injustice or to uplift social justice (Diemer et

al., 2015; Fike & Mattis, 2023; Heberle et al., 2020). The researcher discovered that this area was

clearly visible within the responses from the two participants who were current employees of

SSD. For example, Linda said:

> I feel like I was impacted a lot by not having much representation. And it was important
>
> to me to be a representative for, for kids, which is why I chose the profession I chose
>
> because I didn't have role models in my building. I think there was one person of color in
>
> the building, and they weren't in the classroom. And I feel like I didn't graduate that long
>
> ago, where I feel like there could have been more representation but that always stood out
>
> to me. That there was not one teacher I had in 4 years of high school, and we had, what

seven periods a day, that there wasn't one person of color. And, you know, but even with

that naturally finding that one person that looked like me who wasn't assigned to me for

any reason at all, but I gravitated towards them because I was craving that, I was craving

that, that shared experience.

In a way, Linda's professional choice was driven by her experiences at SHS, particularly

not having Black staff members present. Linda's decision to return to SSD is in a way a method

of combating the racial inequalities that she personally witnessed as a high school student. A

similar sentiment was expressed by Mike regarding his return to work at SSD:

There was no hesitation when I could come back and get a job there. I wanted to be part

of it. I knew that I saw in my community the number of Black students growing and there

weren't a lot of Black faces when I went there in the sense of principals or teachers.

When I graduated, there was only one Black faculty member, and she was a guidance

counselor. So if I could get in the building and be helpful in any way, especially now

with the numbers growing, especially kids of color, I wanted to be there. I want to be a

part of that.

Conclusion

The researcher conducted this phenomenological qualitative study to answer the

following questions:

1. To what extent does attending a PWSPHS in the United States shape the racial identity

   development of Black students?

2. What institutional policies or practices do Black alumni of SHS recall as being a benefit

   or a hindrance to their racial identity development?

For this study, the researcher's population was Black alumni of SHS who graduated prior to 2020. The researcher's theoretical framework for this research study was centered around Cross's (2021) Nigrescence theory, which provides a framework for the stages of Black racial identity development. To uncover the answers to these questions, the researcher used one-on-one semistructured interviews, a focus group, and document review of public data related to SHS.

From the researcher's data collection, the following six themes emerged:

- Racial socialization: role of parents/family members

- Racist encounters

- Affinity spaces for Black students

- Lack of CRP

- Insufficient number of Black teachers

- Attending a PWSPHS builds critical consciousness

The data collected from this qualitative study informed the researcher that in regard to racial identity development, all of the participants went through some element of a racial encounter while at SHS, and most were able to identify policies and procedures, both in the classroom and throughout the building, that were harmful to Black students. These experiences align with Cross's (2021) Encounter stage, which includes a Black person experiencing or witnessing a racial encounter that signified that they were a member of a marginalized group.

It was apparent to the researcher that the majority of the participants viewed SHS as a place where their culture and race were not supported and uplifted. The third stage of the Nigrescence theory, Immersion-Emersion, is identified as the journey, postencounter, that an individual takes to learn more about their Black race and heritage (Cross, 2021). To combat the racial microaggressions and lack of CRP, the participants sought refuge in affinity groups such

as the BSU and guidance from their parents/family members. The supportive role of parents/guardians was a major theme among the majority of participants, one that may be a key element for future research. The researcher found that parents/family members played a pivotal role in speaking out on behalf of their children. For instance, some parents advocated when their child faced discriminatory practices. Other parents took the lead in running culturally enriching programs like the BSU, while others exposed their children to HBCUs and historically Black social organizations. And some parents advised their Black children on how to navigate a racist society.

The majority of participants did not have a Black teacher during their matriculation at SHS, which according to Cherng and Halpin (2016) is a key element in the social and academic development of Black students. Many pointed this out as an important element that was lacking in their high school experience. Two male participants who graduated from 1992 made note that the one Black staff member who was actively involved in their cultural experience and was viewed as a strong mentor was the custodian, who was also the advisor for the BSU.

The next section, Chapter 5, will include an additional discussion of the data, limitations of this study, implications for professional practice, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5

Summary and Discussion

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban public high school (PWSPHS) shapes the racial identity development of Black students. In addition, the researcher sought to identify the policies and practices that both benefit and harm the racial identity development of Black children as they matriculate through a PWSPHS. The researcher utilized semistructured interviews, a focus group, and data collection to learn about the lived experiences of Black alumni of Sunnyside High School (SHS). The theoretical framework for this study was based on the Nigrescence theory, which captures the various stages of African Americans as they move to a state of racial consciousness in their Black identity (Cross et al., 2022).

Review of the Problem

Research has found that African American children who matriculate through suburban public schools do so at serious risk to their racial identity development (L. A. Jones, 2018; Leath et al., 2019). It is important to examine the state of Black children in such suburban settings as more than 50% of the Black population in the United States resides in suburban areas (Diamond & Posey-Maddox, 2020; McGowen, 2017).

Although suburban schools entice Black families with a plethora of educational opportunities, these schools still remain a microcosm of a racist society, one in which Black people encounter a variety of microaggressions (Posey-Maddox, 2017; C. D. Smith & Hope, 2020).

In suburban schools, African American children encounter a variety of threats to their social, cultural, and academic development that their White classmates do not encounter (L. A. Jones, 2018; Lewis-McCoy, 2018). These threats include facing a higher rate of discipline than their White classmates, experiencing verbal and physical attacks, and having their claims of racism ignored (Chapman, 2013).

Overview of the Methods

For this study, the researcher used qualitative research, which Creswell and Creswell (2018) identify as a valuable method for learning about the meanings that people align to issues within society.

Context of Study

This study took place with Black alumni who graduated from SHS, a PWSPHS. SHS is the sole high school within the Sunnyside School District (SSD), which is located in Sunnyside Township, a 30,000-resident suburban township located outside of a large northeastern metropolitan city (Sunnyside, n.d.). During the time period in which the participants attended SHS, the school was a majority White school.

Participants

The selection of participants for this qualitative study were based upon the following criteria: (a) identified racially or ethnically as Black/African American, (b) were alumni of SHS, and (c) graduated from SHS prior to 2020. For this study, there were a total of 11 participants, two of whom were current employees of SSD. As a result, the researcher did use a proxy with the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certificate to conduct those two interviews.

To recruit the participants, a digital flier (see Appendix A) was created and shared to a social media site that was created specifically for Black alumni of SHS. In addition, the institutional review board director of SSD did send a copy of the digital recruitment flier to all current employees of SSD.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher utilized a triangulation approach, which is a key method of maintaining the validity of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2022). This included 11 one-on-one semistructured interviews, one focus group consisting of five participants, and a document review of both yearbook and school board meeting data. In addition, as a part of the document review, the researcher and his proxy did use the services of the SHS guidance technician to verify graduation records for all participants of this study.

Interviews. The researcher used semistructured interviews for this study, all of which took place online via the Zoom platform. Due to the researcher being an administrator at SHS, the researcher utilized a CITI-certified proxy for the two participants who were employees of SSD. The purpose of these interviews was for the researcher to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Black alumni who attended SHS. For each interview, the researcher used a script that consisted of nine questions (see Appendix H). All participants submitted a signed consent form (see Appendix E) prior to their interview.

Focus Group. For this study, the researcher conducted a focus group consisting of five participants, all of whom were randomly selected from the nine participants who were not employed by the SSD. The five participants who were selected did sign and submit an informed consent form that was specifically created for the focus group (see Appendix G). The interview

took place on Zoom and there were a total of five questions posed to the participants (see Appendix I).

Document Review. The researcher did utilize a document review for this study, which consisted of an analysis of SHS yearbooks to identify and confirm stated experiences, online board meeting minutes to capture a snapshot of policies related to diversity, and consultation with SHS's guidance technician to verify that all of the participants did in fact graduate from SHS.

Findings

There were a total of six major themes that were uncovered from the data collection, which include:

- Racial socialization: role of parents/family members

- Racist encounters

- Affinity spaces for Black students

- Insufficient number of Black teachers

- Lack of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)

- Attending a PWSPHS builds critical consciousness

Racial Socialization: Role of Parents/Family Members

When examining the racial identity development of African American adolescents, it is important to understand the concept of racial socialization, which is the process in which parents disseminate information about the role that race places within today's society (Tang et al., 2016).

Several of the participants in this study shared how their parents provided them with advice and/or tips on how to navigate a predominantly White world. The data collected from this research found that the Black parents and/or family members of some participants provided them

with protective messages that included mastering the skill of staying on guard when being the only Black person in a space, advocating for oneself when faced with racial adversity, and being aware that as a Black person you will encounter discrimination because of your race.

In addition to protective messages, the researcher's data also found several instances of proactive messages. Barr and Neville (2014) point out that proactive messages are acts of spreading positive information about African American heritage. These messages included exposure to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), knowledge on instrumental Black figures in history, and advocating on behalf of the educational and cultural needs of their children, whether it was on the district level or among staff at SHS.

Marcucci's (2020) research on parental capital within the United States found that African American parents are skilled at using their capital to improve the schooling experience of their children. The researcher also found this to be evident among the stories of the participants, some of whom shared how their parents involved them in historical Black social organizations that provided them with additional exposure to their culture as well as other Black residents within the greater community of Sunnyside Township.

Racist Encounters

Racism is rooted within the fabric of the U.S. education system, creating a system that benefits White students and places Black students at a disadvantage (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Flitner et al., 2023). Teachers arrive in their classrooms on a daily basis with internalized biases about Black people, particularly their intellectual ability to compete with White students (Pagán, 2022). These biases tend to enable White teachers to defend teaching practices that have been found to harm students of color (Kearl, 2022). The majority of the participants in this study

shared instances in which they faced racism, microaggressions, and/or implicit biases that were directed to them because of their race.

These racial encounters included racial insults from White peers and even in one instance from the parent of a peer. There were participants who experienced racial microaggressions from staff members to implicit biases from their counselors. In fact, the researcher noticed a trend from several participants who encountered moments with their White counselors in which they felt they were being advised to not attend college or pursue rigorous career paths. In essence, the researcher concluded that experiencing racism at a PWSPHS was par for the course for a Black student.

Affinity Spaces for Black Students

In experiencing these racialized moments, the researcher took note that many of the participants interviewed took refuge in affinity spaces such as the Black Student Union (BSU). Adolescence is a period in the life of African American children in which they face a tremendous amount of stress-related depression due to racial discrimination (Causey et al., 2015). Black affinity groups at predominantly White schools provide Black students with a safe haven to escape these daily racial stressors and at the same time gain social support from their fellow Black peers (Harper, 2013). The BSU at SHS, first reported to have been organized in the early 1980s by a Black parent, provided just that—a safe space for the Black students of SHS to congregate and socialize.

Data shared indicate that when the BSU at SHS was first cultivated, it was extremely proactive in organizing cultural events celebrating African American culture. However, the majority of the participants who graduated from 1987 to 2014 stated that the BSU was more of a social outlet, a place where the Black students basically hung out, as opposed to an entity that

made attempts to educate the SHS community and/or combat racist policies within the school building.

Land et al.'s (2014) qualitative research on the success of African American male high school students found that academic success among these students was aligned with the support of school-based mentors. Two of the Black male participants, Bilal and Randall, made it a point to acknowledge the mentorship and support of Nate, a SHS custodian, who led the BSU during their time at SHS. It was noted that Nate was caring, provided advice, and was always present to assist students and/or or listen to their concerns. Even though Nate was not a teacher or administrator at SHS, he took the time to facilitate the safe space for the Black students when other teachers did not do so.

Insufficient Number of Black Teachers

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), the teaching workforce in the United States is 84% White and only 8% Black. One particular reason why the extreme discrepancies in the number of Black teachers versus White teachers is troubling is that research has found that students of color tend to view a teacher of color in a more favorable light (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). The ability for students to connect with and have a greater connection with their teachers is vital to the social and academic experience that students encounter within the school building (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). White et al. (2019) note that "Black teachers contribute broadly to student learning, by offering their 'diverse family histories, value orientations, and experiences' that are often omitted in official curriculum" (p. 450).

Unfortunately, the majority of the participants in this study informed the researcher that they never experienced a classroom led by a Black teacher during their time at SHS. In most of the participants' responses, there did not exist a Black teacher within the building during their

matriculation. The participants made it a point to emphasize the lack of Black teachers during their matriculation. The researcher verified this by reviewing yearbook staff pictures taken during the period in which each participant graduated from SHS. The noted absence of Black teachers by participants will lead to further review later in this chapter.

Lack of CRP

CRP is the process of utilizing a student's culture and heritage as an asset and method to enhance the learning experience within the classroom (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Milner (2016) found CRP to be empowering as it provides students with the opportunity to excel in class knowing that their culture is validated within the classroom.

Research has found that there are barriers to the implementation of CRP, primarily from teachers who have centered their classrooms around a traditional curriculum that is void of multiculturalism (Kondo, 2022; Warren-Grice, 2017). In addition, White teachers bring to the classroom racial biases that can lend to defending policies and practices that in fact are harmful to students of color (Kearl, 2022).

All of the participants noted that their culture and heritage were not properly uplifted and/or supported within the classroom and halls of SHS. Participants did mention that the only time their culture was highlighted was during the traditional points of Black History Month and the discussion of slavery in their history class. Regarding the BSU, most of the participants viewed this club as a social organization and not as a disseminator of knowledge around Black culture. The researcher did hear participants identify harmful pedagogical practices such as racial spotlighting in the classroom, inappropriate classroom role-playing activities that caused a participant's mental anguish, and a lack of addressing racialized incidents properly, whether it be from a student or a staff member.

Attending a PWSPHS Builds Critical Consciousness

A heightened awareness to racial inequalities within society is the main ingredient to the establishment of a critical consciousness (Forenza, 2018; Moffitt et al., 2022). Critical consciousness can be viewed through three lenses: critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action (Fike & Mattis, 2023). Critical reflection is the ability to pinpoint racist policies and/or structures, critical motivation is one's intrinsic motivation to combat racial oppression, and critical action is activity taken to end racism (Diemer et al., 2015; Fike & Mattis, 2023; Heberle et al., 2020).

The data from this study found that attending a PWSPHS such as SHS prepared the participants to exist in a world that was predominantly White, whether that be navigating a job and/or a social setting where they are the only Black person in the room. The researcher also took note that their marginalized experiences at SHS were a factor in solidifying within them their choice to attend an HBCU. Attending an HBCU for Angela and Ellen appeared to provide them with the critical motivation to exist in a predominantly White world.

Regarding critical action, both Mike and Linda shared that their experiences at SHS called them to want to return to SSD and provide better opportunities for current Black students. In a way, the lack of Black teachers and/or staff members from their academic upbringing called them to action to seek out a predominately White school setting and address potential cultural shortcomings.

Limitations

There are limitations to consider when examining this phenomenological qualitative study. The first is that the researcher conducted this study at only one PWSPHS as opposed to

conducting this study across several of these schools. In addition, the researcher pulled data from only 11 Black alumni of SHS, thus capturing the experiences from a limited sample size.

An additional limitation of this study is that the researcher selected to use Black alumni as participants as opposed to Black students who are currently matriculating through a PWSPHS. The experiences of current students may provide an additional added value to identify how these schools are impacting the racial identity development of Black students in the current time period.

The researcher may bring certain biases to this study; for one, the researcher is a Black alumnus of a PWSPHS and has three children who attend a suburban school district, one of whom is a high school student in the district's PWSPHS. Most significant is that the researcher is also a current administrator at SHS. Although the researcher did use a variety of methods to collect valid data, such as peer review, member checking, and a CITI-certified proxy for participants identified as current employees of SSD, the researcher does have a close professional connection to SHS.

Implications for Practice

The researcher was able to identify several implications for practice regarding ways to support the racial identity development of Black students who attend a PWSPHS.

The Need for Strong Collaboration With Black Families and Communities

Forming educational leaders in a PWSPHS should prioritize practices that effectively engage Black families and culturally relevant community organizations. Key ingredients in sparking collaboration with Black families include examining policies and structures that may exclude and marginalize this very population from the educational process (Pennsylvania

Department of Education, 2022). In order to effectively collaborate and engage families and

communities, Butler et al. (2023) suggest that educators can

> invite family and communities to co-create and amend operational policies during
>
> planning meetings (e.g., dress codes since not every family can afford clothes that meet
>
> the dress code, discipline policies, attendance, lunch menus, etc.) and invite families and
>
> communities to curriculum development meetings. (p. 20)

To build connections with social organizations, a PWSPHS should examine local

community organizations that exist, specifically those with close ties to the African American

community. For instance, educational leaders of a PWSPHS can reach out to Jack and Jill of

America (n.d.) to identify if there are functioning chapters within their suburban townships. Jack

and Jill of America (n.d.), a historic social organization within the Black suburban community

and beyond, has roughly 50,000 members and 262 chapters throughout the United States.

Embedded within the programming of Jack and Jill of America (n.d.) are educational activities

surrounding science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Seeking ways to

collaborate with such an organization can not only provide access to community resources, but it

can also forge partnerships and key stakeholders.

Last, educational leaders of a PWSPHS should seek to collaborate with any of the nine

Black Greek letter organizations that comprise the National Pan-Hellenic Council (n.d.). The

National Pan-Hellenic Council is comprised of the following member organizations: Alpha Phi

Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Omega Psi Phi

Fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Sigma

Gamma Rho Sorority, and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity. There are currently 172 active National Pan-

Hellenic Councils within 38 U.S. states, all of which have of alumni chapters that provide

scholarship and education-related programs (National Pan-Hellenic Council, n.d.). For instance, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (n.d.), a historic African American fraternal organization of roughly 225,000 college-educated men, distributes roughly $1.2 million annually in student scholarships while also spearheading a variety of community-related programs surrounding education, social action, and business. Educational leaders of a PWSPHS should identify if these graduate chapters exist and then explore ways to possibly form a partnership or memorandum of understanding.

Enhancing CRP

Educational leaders should conduct annual diversity and equity audits of all course curriculum and policies to make sure that they are not culturally destructive. The researcher strongly advises partnering with local universities that are proactive in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that can provide additional consultancy and/or professional development opportunities for staff. In addition, the counseling department within a PWSPHS should make it a point to educate itself on HBCUs and, if feasible, place such schools on their to-visit calendar.

A core element of enhancing CRP is to improve the Black teacher pipeline. District and high school administrators should immediately implement think tanks to establish "grow-your-own" teaching programs within their districts, specifically their high schools. An example of such a program is "Call Me Mister," a Black male grow-your-own program based in South Carolina that was created to enhance the number of African American men teaching in elementary programs (R. Jones et al., 2019). According to R. Jones et al. (2019), this program recruits prospective teachers by offering them tuition assistance scholarships, loan forgiveness, and a variety of other incentives. Educational leaders at a PWSPHS should explore ways to partner with local universities to see if such programs can be created. To enhance participation

from the Black student population, district leaders should examine ways to embed

mentor/mentee programs with their school's BSU. This can include forming a partnership

between the high school's BSU and an elementary school within the district. Students of the

BSU can travel to the elementary school on a monthly basis to mentor an elementary school

student, thus forging a pathway to the teaching force.

Finally, educational leaders of a PWSPHS must examine ways to cultivate and support

affinity spaces within their buildings for Black students. This can simply include making sure

that there is an active BSU that is funded properly and provided with the necessary resources that

the club needs to function. This can include a regular meeting space and active facilitators. Last,

it is important that the BSU can be a key asset to cultivating better culturally relevant practices.

This can include having members of the BSU sit in on planning or curriculum development

initiatives.

The researcher recommends a further exploration of the key pull factors that bring Black

alumni from a PWSPHS back to similar education settings to work as a professional, whether

that be as a teacher, administrator, support staff member, or coach. For those purposes, further

research can center around a phenomenological study of Black alumni of a PWSPHS who are

current educators in a PWSPHS. A question to consider would be about what led to a Black

person's decision to return to a suburban district as an educator.

As mentioned in the limitations section of this study, the researcher pulled data from

Black alumni; however, it would be advantageous to add to the educational field literature that

examines the lived experiences of current students of a PWSPHS. In the same light, the

researcher is interested in examining ways in which predominantly White suburban middle

schools impact the racial identity of Black students. Conducting a similar qualitative study within

the middle school could provide additional insight on how to provide a more culturally enriching experience for Black students not just in high school but also in middle school.

Finally, the researcher is extremely interested in future research surrounding the impact of HBCUs on the racial identity development of Black alumni of a PWSPHS. The researcher is both an alumnus of a PWSPHS and an HBCU, and this has manifested in a peaked interest on the impact of HBCUs and whether they enhance or hinder the racial identity development of Black alumni of a PWSPHS.

Conclusion

This study was established to examine the extent to which attending a PWSPHS impacts the racial identity development of Black students. Through the lived and shared experiences of Black alumni of SHS, the researcher found that Black students attending a PWSPHS face constant threats to their racial identity. These threats come in the form of racist encounters with peers and staff, microaggressions, implicit biases, curriculum, and policies that do not uplift Black culture as well as teachers and other staff members who are not reflective of their race. In encountering threats to their racial identity, Black students seek race-based affinity spaces within the school building, rely on advocacy from their parents and families, and make efforts to connect with aspects of their culture that are not being taught in the school buildings. The experiences that Black students encounter in a PWSPHS do not lend to the strengthening of a critical consciousness that into adulthood may be of assistance in helping to navigate a racialized society. To better support Black students in a PWSPHS, educational leaders must prioritize professional development around CRP for all staff, conduct diversity and equity audits of their policies and procedures, and examine ways to forge stronger partnerships with Black families.

References

Anderson, K. P., & Ritter, G. W. (2017). Disparate use of exclusionary discipline: Evidence

on inequities in school discipline from a US state. *Education Policy Analysis Archives,*

25(49). https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2787

Anderson, L. A., Morton, L., & Trejo, A. N. (2022). To be young, conscious and Black:

The cumulative witnessing of racial violence for Black youth and families. *Journal of*

Family Theory & Review, *14*(3), 412–420. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12466

Andrews, D. J. C. (2012). Black achievers' experiences with racial spotlighting and ignoring in

a predominantly White high school. *Teachers College Record*, *114*(10), 1–46.

https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211401002

Appling, B., & Robinson, S. (2021). K–12 school counselors utilizing critical race theory

to support the racial identity development and academic achievement of African

American males. *Professional School Counseling*, *25*(1_part_4),

https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X211040043

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education:

A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(1),

163–206. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066

Bailey, T. K. M., Yeh, C. J., & Madu, K. (2022). Exploring Black adolescent males' experiences

with racism and internalized racial oppression. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*,

69(4), 375. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000591

Baldwin, J. (1991). *The fire next time*. Vintage International.

Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernandez, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: What teacher educators need to know. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 149–182. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12459718

Barr, S. C., & Neville, H. A. (2014). Racial socialization, color-blind racial ideology, and mental health among Black college students: An examination of an ecological model. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *40*(2), 138–165. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798412475084

Bell, M. K. (2015). Making space: Affinity groups offer a platform for voices often relegated to the margins. *Teaching Tolerance*, *50*, 31–33. http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-50-summer-2015/feature/making-space

Betters-Bubon, J., Pianta, R., Sweeney, D., & Goodman-Scott, E. (2022). Antiracism starts with us: School counselor critical reflection within an multitiered systems of support framework. *Professional School Counseling*, *26*(1a). https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X221086747

Bingham, A. J. (2023). From data management to actionable findings: A five-phase process of qualitative data analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620

Bottiani, J. H., Bradshaw, C. P., & Mendelson, T. (2017). A multilevel examination of racial disparities in high school discipline: Black and White adolescents' perceived equity, school belonging, and adjustment problems. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *109*(4), 532. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000155

Boucher, M. L., Jr. (2016). More than an ally: A successful White teacher who builds

    solidarity with his African American students. *Urban Education*, *51*(1), 82–107.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914542982

Branje, S., De Moor, E. L., Spitzer, J., & Becht, A. I. (2021). Dynamics of identity development

    in adolescence: A decade in review. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *31*(4), 908–

    927. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12678

Bristol, T. J., & Martin-Fernandez, J. (2019). The added value of Latinx and Black teachers for

    Latinx and Black students: Implications for policy. *Policy Insights from the*

    Behavioral and Brain Sciences, *6*(2), 147–153.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732219862573

Bryan, N., Johnson, L., & Williams, T. M. (2016). Preparing Black male teachers for the

    gifted classroom: Recommendations for historically Black colleges and

    universities (HBCUs). *The Journal of Negro Education, 85*(4), 489–504.

    https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.4.0489

Budhai, S. S., & Lewis Grant, K. S. (2023). Stoking the flames: A community cultural wealth

    analysis of Black parents' engagement in an empowerment organization. *Education and*

    Urban Society, *55*(3), 371–392. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245221076093

Butler, T., Fountain, T., Hodge, B., Lamb, E., Lockette, M., & Walsh, P. (2023). *Unpacking*

    the Pennsylvania culturally relevant and sustaining education competencies. Teach

    Plus. https://teachplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Cultural-Competencies.pdf

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed*

    perspectives. Sage.

Carney, N. (2016). All lives matter, but so does race: Black Lives Matter and the evolving role of

social media. *Humanity & Society*, *40*(2), 180–199.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597616643868

Causey, S. T., Livingston, J., & High, B. (2015). Family structure, racial socialization, perceived

parental involvement, and social support as predictors of self-esteem in African American

college students. *Journal of Black Studies*, *46*(7), 655–677.

Cavallaro, C. J., Sembiante, S. F., Kervin, C., & Baxley, T. P. (2019). Combating racial inequity

through local historical analysis: A community-informed social studies unit. *The Social

Studies*, *110*(1), 17–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2018.1524361

Chambers, T. V., Huggins, K. S., Locke, L. A., & Fowler, R. M. (2014). Between a "ROC" and

a school place: The role of racial opportunity cost in the educational experiences of

academically successful students of color. *Educational Studies*, *50*(5), 464–497.

Chapman, T. K. (2013). You can't erase race! Using CRT to explain the presence of race

and racism in majority White suburban schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural

Politics of Education*, *34*(4), 611–627.

Chapman, T. K. (2014). Is integration a dream deferred? Students of color in majority

White suburban schools. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *83*(3), 311–

326. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.83.3.0311

Cherng, H. Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student

perceptions of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher*, *45*(7), 407–420.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16671718

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and

mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.

Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of black: Diversity in African-American identity*.

>Temple University Press.

Cross, W. E. (2021). *Black identity viewed from a barber's chair: Nigrescence and*

>*eudaimonia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cross, W. E., Neville, H. A., Austin, C. L., & Reinhardt, J. S. (2022). Black Lives Matter

>and Nigrescence theory: When police violence triggers an encounter. *Journal of Black*

>*Psychology*, *48*(3–4), 309–326.

Crutchfield, J., Phillippo, K. L., & Frey, A. (2020). Structural racism in schools: A view

>through the lens of the national school social work practice model. *Children & Schools*,

>*42*(3), 187–193. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa015

Davis, C. R. (2017). "Why are the Black kids being suspended?" An examination of a

>school district's efforts to reform a faulty suspension policy through community

>conversations. *The School Community Journal*, *27*(1), 159–179.

Davis, P., Davis, M. P., & Mobley, J. A. (2013). The school counselor's role in addressing the

>Advanced Placement equity and excellence gap for African American students.

>*Professional School Counseling*, *17*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X0001700104

Davison, M., Penner, A. M., & Penner, E. K. (2022). Restorative for all? Racial

>disproportionality and school discipline under restorative justice. *American Educational*

>*Research Journal*, *59*(4), 687–718. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312211062613

Dedoose. (n.d.) *Dedoose*. https://www.dedoose.com

Diamond, J. B., & Posey-Maddox, L. (2020). The changing terrain of the suburbs:

>Examining race, class, and place in suburban schools and communities. *Equity &*

>*Excellence in Education*, *53*(1–2), 7–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2020.1758975

Diemer, M. A., McWhirter, E. H., Ozer, E. J., & Rapa, L. J. (2015). Advances in

    the conceptualization and measurement of critical consciousness. *The Urban Review*,

    47, 809–823. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-015-0336-7

Diemer, M. A., & Rapa, L. J. (2016). Unraveling the complexity of critical

    consciousness, political efficacy, and political action among marginalized adolescents.

    Child development, *87*(1), 221-238. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12446

Doucet, F., Banerjee, M., & Parade, S. (2018). What should young Black children know

    about race? Parents of preschoolers, preparation for bias, and promoting egalitarianism.

    Journal of Early Childhood Research, *16*(1), 65–79.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X16630763

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994). *The souls of Black folk*. Dover.

Durkee, M. I., & Williams, J. L. (2015). Accusations of acting White: Links to Black students'

    racial identity and mental health. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *41*(1), 26–48.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798413505323

Egalite, A., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect

    of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, *45,* 44–

    52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2015.01.007

Elmore, C. A., Mandara, J., & Gray, L. (2012). The effects of racial identity on African

    American youth well-being: A clarification of the research and meta-analysis. In J. M.

    Sullivan & A. M. Esmail (Eds.), *African American identity: Racial and cultural*

    dimensions of the Black experience (pp. 89–124). Lexington Books.

Endale, L. (2018). The multidimensional model of Black identity and Nigrescence theory:

    A philosophical comparison. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *12*(4), 509–525.

Fanon, F. (1967). *Toward the African revolution.* Grove Press.

Fike, K. J., & Mattis, J. S. (2023). Black emerging adults' critical consciousness and

    perceived neighborhood quality. *Emerging Adulthood*, *11*(5), 1223–1237.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968231187007

Fisher, B. W., Dawson-Edwards, C., Higgins, E. M., & Swartz, K. (2020). Who belongs

    in school? Examining the link between Black and White racial disparities in sense of

    school belonging and suspension. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *48*(5), 1481–1499.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22342

Flitner, A., McQuillin, S., Kornbluh, M., & Thompson, D. (2023). Spotlighting racism

    in schools: Teacher mentors and the mediating effect of school safety. *American Journal*

    of Community Psychology. https://doi-org.arcadia.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/ajcp.12680

Forenza, B. (2018). Awareness, analysis, engagement: Critical consciousness through

    foster youth advisory board participation. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*,

    35, 119–126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-017-0515-3

Foxx, K. (2021). Cultivating a sense of belonging: Black students at a predominantly White

    institution. *Negro Educational Review*, *72*.

Fraker, J. (2020). An exploration of Black housing and wealth inequality in the suburbs: A call

    to action. *Housing Finance International*, 38-48.

Freidus, A. (2020). "I didn't have a lesson": Politics and pedagogy in a diversifying

    middle school. *Teachers College Record*, *122*(7), 1–40.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012200714

Gale, A. (2020). Examining Black adolescents' perceptions of in-school racial

    discrimination: The role of teacher support on academic outcomes. *Children and Youth*

    Services Review, *116*, 105173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105173

Gale, A., Johnson, N. C., Golden, A., Channey, J., Marchand, A. D., Anyiwo, N., & Byrd, C.

    M. (2023). Reflecting on change: Critical consciousness as a protective factor for Black

    youth. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority*

    Psychology. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000612

Gay, G. (2013). Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *43*(1), 48–

    70. https://doi.org/10.1111/curi.12002

Gershenson, S., Holt, S. B., & Papageorge, N. W. (2016). Who believes in me? The effect

    of student–teacher demographic match on teacher expectations. *Economics of Education*

    Review, *52*, 209–224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.03.002

Gordon, M. S., & Cui, M. (2018). The intersection of race and community poverty and its

    effects on adolescents' academic achievement. *Youth & Society*, *50*(7), 947–965.

    https://doi-org.arcadia.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0044118X16646590

Grantham, T. C., & Biddle, W. H. (2014). From bystander to upstander teacher for gifted

    Black students accused of acting White. *Gifted Child Today*, *37*(3), 178–187.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217514530117

Greenfield, D. F., Innouvong, T., Aglugub, R. J., & Yusuf, I. A. (2015). HBCUs as critical

    context for identity work: Reflections, experiences, and lessons learned. *New*

    Directions for Higher Education, *2015*(170), 37–48.

Gregory, A., & Fergus, E. (2017). Social and emotional learning and equity in school

    discipline. *The Future of Children*, 117–136.

Griffin, C. B., Gray, D., Hope, E., Metzger, I. W., & Henderson, D. X. (2022). Do coping responses and racial identity promote school adjustment among Black youth? Applying an equity-elaborated social–emotional learning lens. *Urban Education*, *57*(2), 198–223. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920933346

Harper, S. (2013). Am I my brother's teacher? Black undergraduates, racial socialization, and peer pedagogies in predominantly White postsecondary contexts. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 183–211. doi:10.3102/0091732X12471300

Harrell-Levy, M. K. (2018). Sociopolitical efficacy as a mediator of pedagogical experience and sociopolitical involvement. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, *17*(2), 100–117. https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173418787790

Harrell-Levy, M. K., Kerpelman, J. L., & Henry, D. (2016). 'Minds were forced wide open': Black adolescents' identity exploration in a transformative social justice class. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *11*(2), 99–113. https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173418787790

Hart, C. M. (2020). An honors teacher like me: Effects of access to same-race teachers on Black students' advanced-track enrollment and performance. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *42*(2), 163–187. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373719898470

Hazelbaker, T., & Mistry, R. S. (2021). "Being colorblind is one of the worst things": White teachers' attitudes and ethnic-racial socialization in a rural elementary school. *Journal of Social Issues*, *77*(4), 1126–1148. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12489

Heberle, A. E., Rapa, L. J., & Farago, F. (2020). Critical consciousness in children and adolescents: A systematic review, critical assessment, and recommendations for future research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *146*(6), 525. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000230

Holme, J. J., Diem, S., & Welton, A. (2014). Suburban school districts and demographic change: The technical, normative, and political dimensions of response. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(1), 34–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13484038

Hope, E. C., Skoog, A. B., & Jagers, R. J. (2015). "It'll never be the White kids, it'll always be us": Black high school students' evolving critical analysis of racial discrimination and inequity in schools. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *30*(1), 83–112. https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558414550688

Hughes, M., Kiecolt, K. J., Keith, V. M., & Demo, D. H. (2015). Racial identity and well-being among African Americans. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *78*(1), 25–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272514554043

Hurtado, S., Alvarado, A. R., & Guillermo-Wann, C. (2015). Thinking about race: The salience of racial identity at two- and four-year colleges and the climate for diversity. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *86*(1), 127–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2015.11777359

Hypolite, L. I. (2020). "It just helps to know that there are people who share your experience": Exploring racial identity development through a Black cultural center. *Journal of Negro Education*, *89*(3), 233–248.

Ispa-Landa, S., & Conwell, J. (2015). "Once you go to a White school, you kind of adapt": Black adolescents and the racial classification of schools. *Sociology of Education*, *88*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040714555434

Jack and Jill of America. (n.d.). *About us.* https://www.jackandjillinc.org/our-history

Jang, S. T. (2020). Contextualized effects of racial/ethnic matching between students

    and teachers in urban, suburban, and rural high schools. *Teachers College Record*,

    122(11), 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146812012201110

Johnson, D. D., & Bornstein, J. (2021). Racial equity policy that moves implicit bias beyond

    a metaphor for individual prejudice to a means of exposing structural oppression. *Journal

    of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *24*(2), 81–95.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458920976721

Jones, L. A. (2018). Black fish in a White pond: Identity development of African American

    students in predominately White suburban schools. *Multicultural Education*, *26*(1), 35–

    38.

Jones, T. M., Williford, A., Malorni, A., McCowan, K., Becker, K., Halac, T., . . . & Spencer, M.

    S. (2023). The role of colorblind racism and White fragility in maintaining racist bullying

    in middle school. *Psychology in the Schools*, *60*(10), 3858–3877.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22954

Jones, R., Holton, W., & Joseph, M. (2019). Call me mister: Black male grow your

    own program. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *46*(1), 55-68.

Kearl, B. (2022). Disentangling SEL: Advocating for Black sociality, questioning White

    teachers' emotionality. *Theory Into Practice*, *61*(2), 188–198.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2022.2036064

Kelly, L. L. (2013). Hip-hop literature: The politics, poetics, and power of hip-hop in the English

    classroom. *English Journal*, 51-56.

Kettler, T., & Hurst, L. T. (2017). Advanced academic participation: A longitudinal analysis of ethnicity gaps in suburban schools. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *40*(1), 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353216686217

Kimelberg, S. M., & Billingham, C. M. (2013). Attitudes toward diversity and the school choice process: Middle-class parents in a segregated urban public school district. *Urban Education*, *48*(2), 198–231. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912449629

Kohli, R., Pizarro, M., & Nevárez, A. (2017). The "new racism" of K–12 schools: Centering critical research on racism. *Review of Research in Education*, *41*(1), 182–202. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16686949

Kondo, C. S. (2022). Walking the talk: Employing culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, *124*(4), 65–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681221096797

Lac, V. T., & Baxley, G. S. (2019). Race and racism: How does an aspiring social justice principal support Black student leaders for racial equity among a resistant White staff. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *22*(1), 29–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458918785655

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). *Critical race theory in education: A scholar's journey*. Teachers College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2022). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (3rd ed.). Wiley.

Land, A. L., Mixon, J. R., Butcher, J., & Harris, S. (2014). Stories of six successful African American males high school students: A qualitative study. *NASSP Bulletin*, *98*(2), 142–162. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636514528750

Latunde, Y., & Clark-Louque, A. (2016). Untapped resources: Black parent engagement

    that contributes to learning. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *85*(1), 72–81.

    https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.1.00

Leath, S., Mathews, C., Harrison, A., & Chavous, T. (2019). Racial identity,

    racial discrimination, and classroom engagement outcomes among Black girls and boys

    in predominantly Black and predominantly White school districts. *American Educational*

    Research Journal, *56*(4), 1318–1352. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831218816955

Leath, S., Pfister, T., Ball, P., Butler-Barnes, S., & Evans, K. A. (2021). A qualitative

    exploration of school racial diversity, friendship choices, and Black women's identity-

    based experiences in high school. *Journal of School Psychology*, *89*, 34–50.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2021.09.006

Lee, A., Henderson, D. X., Corneille, M., Morton, T., Prince, K., Burnett, S., & Roberson,

    T. (2022). Lifting Black student voices to identify teaching practices that discourage and

    encourage STEM engagement: Why #Black teachers matter. *Urban Education*, *59*(4),

    979-1011. https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211073898

Lee-Johnson, Y. L. (2023). Whitewashedness in teacher education: Intertextuality between

    colorblindness and the Ferguson event. *Urban Education*, *58*(3), 518–546.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085919857803

Lewis-McCoy, R. L. H. (2018). Suburban Black lives matter. *Urban Education*, *53*(2), 145–

    161. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917747116

Lewis-McCoy, R. L. H., Warikoo, N., Matthews, S. A., & Foley, N. F. (2023). Resisting

    amnesia: Renewing and expanding the study of suburban inequality. *RSF: The Russell*

Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, *9*(1), 1–24.

https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2023.9.1.01

Lu, C., & Newton, A. C. I. (2019). Being Black in a sea of color. *Journal Committed to*

Social Change on Race and Ethnicity (JCSCORE), *5*(2), 67–

93. https://doi.org/10.15763/issn.2642-2387.2019.5.2.66-93

Marcelo, A. K., & Yates, T. M. (2019). Young children's ethnic–racial identity moderates

the impact of early discrimination experiences on child behavior problems. *Cultural*

Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, *25*(2), 253.

https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000220

Marcucci, O. (2020). Parental involvement and the Black–White discipline gap: The role of

parental social and cultural capital in American schools. *Education and Urban Society*,

52(1), 143–168.

Marshall, C., Rossman, G., & Blanco, G. (2022). *Designing qualitative research* (7th ed.). Sage.

Maxwell, M., Brevard, J., Abrams, J., & Belgrave, F. (2015). What's color got to do with it?

Skin color, skin color satisfaction, racial identity, and internalized racism among African

American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *41*(5), 438–461.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414542299

McGowen, E., III. (2017). *African Americans in White suburbia: Social networks and*

political behavior. University Press of Kansas.

McKinney de Royston, M., Vakil, S., Nasir, N. I. S., Ross, K. M., Givens, J., & Holman, A.

(2017). "He's more like a 'brother' than a teacher": Politicized caring in a program for

African American males. *Teachers College Record*, *119*(4), 1–40.

https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900401

Milner, H. R. (2016). A Black male teacher's culturally responsive practices. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *85*(4), 417–432. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.4.0417

Moffitt, U., Rogers, L. O., Mzizi, Y., & Charlson, E. (2022). Race talk during the 2020 US presidential election: Emerging adults' critical consciousness and racial identity in context. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/07435584221145009

Mordechay, K., & Terbeck, F. J. (2023). Moving out and apart: Race, poverty, and the suburbanization of public school segregation. *American Journal of Education*, *129*(2), 205–235. https://doi.org/10.1086/723065

Mueller, J. C. (2017). Producing colorblindness: Everyday mechanisms of White ignorance. *Social Problems*, *64*(2), 219–238. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spx012

Nadal, K. L., Erazo, T., & King, R. (2019). Challenging definitions of psychological trauma: Connecting racial microaggressions and traumatic stress. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology*, *11*(2), 2–16. https://doi.org/10.33043/JSACP.11.2.2-16

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (n.d.). *Youth programs*. https://naacp.org/our-work/youth-programs

National Cancer Institute. (n.d.). *Dictionary of cancer terms*. https://www.cancer.gov/publications/dictionaries/cancer-terms/def/race

National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). *Definitions for new race and ethnicity categories*. https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-definitions

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups*. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *Race and ethnicity of public school teachers and their students*. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp

National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). *Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools*. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cge/racial-ethnic-enrollment#:~:text=Hispanic%20(61%20percent),Pacific%20Islander%20(53%20percent)

National Pan-Hellenic Council. (n.d.). *About the NPHC*. https://www.nphchq.com/

Neville, H. A., Awad, G. H., Brooks, J. E., Flores, M. P., & Bluemel, J. (2013). Color-blind racial ideology: Theory, training, and measurement implications in psychology. *American Psychologist*, *68*(6), 455–466. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033282

Pagán, O. (2022). A multilevel framework of racism as a barrier to teachers' implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy. *AERA Open*, *8,* 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584221106193

Palakshappa, D., & Fiks, A. G. (2016). Implications of poverty for practices serving suburban families. *Pediatrics*, *138*(6). https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-2548

Parker, K., Horowitz, J., Brown, A., Fry, R., Cohn, D. V., & Igielnik, R. (2018). *What unites and divides urban, suburban and rural communities.* Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/demographic-and-economic-trends-in-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/

Pavlakis, A. E. (2018). Poverty and student homelessness at the metropolitan margins: Sensemaking among school and community leaders in a growing suburb. *Teachers College Record*, *120*(11), 1–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812001104

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2022). Culturally-relevant and sustaining education (cr-

se) program framework guidelines. https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-

Administrators/Certification%20Preparation%20Programs/Framework%20Guidelines%2

0and%20Rubrics/Culturally-

Relevant%20and%20Sustaining%20Education%20Program%20Framework%20Guidelin

es.pdf

Pfeiffer, D. (2016). Racial equity in the post-civil rights suburbs? Evidence from US

regions 2000–2012. *Urban Studies*, *53*(4), 799–817.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098014563652

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. (n.d.). *Empowering generations of men*.

https://phibetasigma1914.org/

Posey-Maddox, L. (2017). Race in place: Black parents, family–school relations,

and multispatial microaggressions in a predominantly White suburb. *Teachers

College Record*, *119*(11), 1-42. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711901107

Redding, C. (2019). A teacher like me: A review of the effect of student–teacher

racial/ethnic matching on teacher perceptions of students and student academic and

behavioral outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, *89*(4), 499–535.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319853545

Rhodes, A., & Warkentien, S. (2017). Unwrapping the suburban "package deal": Race, class,

and school access. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54*(1_suppl), 168S–

189S. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216634456

Rivas-Drake, D., Seaton, E. K., Markstrom, C., Quintana, S., Syed, M., Lee, R. M., & Ethnic and

Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity in

adolescence: Implications for psychosocial, academic, and health outcomes. *Child Development*, *85*(1), 40–57. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12200

Rogers, L. O., Scott, M. A., & Way, N. (2015). Racial and gender identity among Black adolescent males: An intersectionality perspective. *Child Development*, *86*(2), 407–424. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12303

Rutan, D. Q., Hepburn, P., & Desmond, M. (2023). The suburbanization of eviction: Increasing displacement and inequality within American suburbs. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *9*(1), 104–125.

Rutledge, S. A., Cohen-Vogel, L., Osborne-Lampkin, L. T., & Roberts, R. L. (2015). Understanding effective high schools: Evidence for personalization for academic and social emotional learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*(6), 1060–1092.

Sackett, C. R., & Dogan, J. N. (2019). An exploration of Black teens' experiences of their own racial identity through photovoice: Implications for counselors. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *47*(3), 172–189. https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12140

Saleem, F. T., Anderson, R. E., & Williams, M. (2020). Addressing the "myth" of racial trauma: Developmental and ecological considerations for youth of color. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, *23*(1), 1–14.

Schwartz, S. J., Syed, M., Yip, T., Knight, G. P., Rivas-Drake, D., Lee, R. M., and Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group. (2014). Methodological issues in ethnic and racial identity research with ethnic minority populations: Theoretical precision, measurement issues, and research designs. *Child Development*, *85*(1), 58–76. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12201

Shappie, A. T., & Debb, S. M. (2019). African American student achievement and

    the historically Black university: The role of student engagement. *Current Psychology*,

    38(6), 1649–1661.

Shaw, J. T. (2016). "The music I was meant to sing": Adolescent choral students' perceptions of

    culturally responsive pedagogy. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *64*(1), 45–70.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415627989

Singleton, G. E. (2021). *Courageous conversations about race: A field guide for

    achieving equity in schools and beyond*. Corwin Press.

Smith, C. D., & Hope, E. C. (2020). "We just want to break the stereotype": Tensions in Black

    boys' critical social analysis of their suburban school experiences. *Journal of Educational

    Psychology*, *112*(3), 551. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000435

Smith-Bynum, M. A., Anderson, R. E., Davis, B. L., Franco, M. G., & English, D.

    (2016). Observed racial socialization and maternal positive emotions in African

    American mother–adolescent discussions about racial discrimination. *Child

    Development*, *87*(6), 1926–1939. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12562

Smith-Bynum, M. A., Lambert, S. F., English, D., & Ialongo, N. S. (2014). Associations

    between trajectories of perceived racial discrimination and psychological symptoms

    among African American adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology*, *26*(4), 1049–

    1065. http://dx.doi.org.arcadia.idm.oclc.org/10.1017/S0954579414000571

Sondel, B., Kretchmar, K., & Hadley Dunn, A. (2022). "Who do these people want teaching

    their children?" White saviorism, colorblind racism, and anti-Blackness in "no excuses"

    charter schools. *Urban Education*, *57*(9), 1621–1650.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085919842618

Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. Guilford Press.

Stovall, J. L. (2022). "We will not be afraid to share who we are": Black teachers'

    experiences with antiblackness during a global pandemic. *Journal of Negro Education*,

    91(3), 416–430.

Stroub, K. J., & Richards, M. P. (2017). Suburbanizing segregation? Changes in

    racial/ethnic diversity and the geographic distribution of metropolitan school segregation,

    2002–2012. *Teachers College Record*, *119*(7), 1–40.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900707

Sullivan, J., Wilton, L., & Apfelbaum, E. P. (2021). Adults delay conversations about

    race because they underestimate children's processing of race. *Journal of Experimental*

    Psychology: General, *150*(2), 395. https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000851

Szymanski, D. M., & Lewis, J. A. (2015). Race-related stress and racial identity as predictors

    of African American activism. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *41*(2), 170–

    191. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414520707

Tabron, L. A., & Chambers, T. T. V. (2019). What is being Black and high achieving going

    to cost me in your school? Students speak out about their educational experiences

    through a racial opportunity cost lens. *The High School Journal*, *102*(2), 118–138.

Tang, S., McLoyd, V. C., & Hallman, S. K. (2016). Racial socialization, racial identity,

    and academic attitudes among African American adolescents: Examining the

    moderating influence of parent–adolescent communication. *Journal of Youth and*

    Adolescence, *45*, 1141–1155. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0351-8

Tatum, B. D. (1997). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And*

    Other Conversations About Race. Basic.

Tauriac, J. J., Kim, G. S., Lambe Sariñana, S., Tawa, J., & Kahn, V. D. (2013). Utilizing

    affinity groups to enhance intergroup dialogue workshops for racially and ethnically

    diverse students. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, *38*(3), 241–

    260. https://doi.org/10.1080/01933922.2013.800176

Terrell, S. R. (2022). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples*

    (2nd ed.). Guilford Publications.

Theoharis, G., George, L., & Mauldin, C. (2023). The house is on fire: A reckoning of leadership

    and DEI initiatives in predominantly White schools. *Journal of Cases in Educational*

    Leadership, *26*(2), 118–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/15554589231158610

Thomas, E. E. (2013). Dilemmatic conversations: Some challenges of culturally responsive

    discourse in a high school English classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, *24*(3), 328–347.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2013.03.004

Threlfall, J. M. (2018). Parenting in the shadow of Ferguson: Racial socialization practices in

    context. *Youth & Society*, *50*(2), 255–273. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X16670280

Tolbert Smith, D., Jones, T., & Cardella, M. E. (2022). A narrative investigation of

    Black familial capital that supports engineering engagement of middle-school-aged

    youth. *Journal of Pre-College Engineering Education Research (J-PEER)*, *12*(1), 2.

    https://doi.org/10.7771/2157-9288.1308

Ture, K., & Hamilton, C. V. (1967). *Black power: The politics of liberation in America*.

    Vintage Books.

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Quintana, S. M., Lee, R. M., Cross, W. E., Jr., Rivas-Drake, D.,

    Schwartz, S. J., . . . & Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group.

    (2014). Ethnic and racial identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An

integrated conceptualization. *Child Development*, *85*(1), 21–39.

https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12196

U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *About the topic of race*.

https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *The state of racial diversity in the educator workforce*.

https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-

workforce.pdf

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2022). *Suspensions and expulsions*

in public schools.

https://ocrdata.ed.gov/assets/downloads/Suspensions_and_Expulsion_Part2.pdf

Warren-Grice, A. (2017). Advocacy for equity: Extending culturally relevant pedagogy in

predominantly White suburban schools. *Teachers College Record*, *119*(1), 1–26.

https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900102

Welton, A. D., Diem, S., & Holme, J. J. (2015). Color conscious, cultural blindness:

Suburban school districts and demographic change. *Education and Urban Society*, *47*(6),

695–722. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124513510734

White, T., Woodward, B., Graham, D., Milner, H. R., IV, & Howard, T. C. (2020). Education

policy and Black teachers: Perspectives on race, policy, and teacher diversity. *Journal of*

Teacher Education, *71*(4), 449–463. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119879895

Willey, C., & Magee, P. A. (2018). Whiteness as a barrier to becoming a culturally

relevant teacher: Clinical experiences and the role of supervision.

https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.1.2.3

Worrell, F. C., Mendoza-Denton, R., Vandiver, B. J., Fhagen, P. E., & Cross, W. E., Jr.

    (2020). Incorporating a race salience subscale into the Cross Racial Identity Scale

    (CRIS). *Journal of Black Psychology*, *46*(8), 638–658.

Worrell, F. C., Vandiver, B. J., & Fhagen, P. E. (2023). Nigrescence theory from 1971 to

    2021: The critical contributions of William E. Cross, Jr. *American Psychologist*, *78*(4),

    389. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001052

Xu, L., Duan, P., Ma, L., & Dou, S. (2023). Professional identity and self-regulated

    learning: The mediating role of intrinsic motivation and the moderating role of sense of

    school belonging. *SAGE Open*, *13*(2), https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231177034

Yu, X., Seeberg, V., & Malone, L. (2017). Moving on up: Urban to suburban

    translocation experiences of high-achieving Black American students. *Education and

    Urban Society*, *49*(9), 832–849. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516675925

Zhou, T., Molfino, T., & Travers, J. (2021). The cost of COVID: Understanding the full financial

    impact of COVID-19 on districts and schools. *Education Resource Strategies*.

Zirkel, S., & Johnson, T. (2016). Mirror, mirror on the wall: A critical examination of the

    conceptualization of the study of Black racial identity in education. *Educational

    Researcher*, *45*(5), 301–311. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16656938

Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

Volunteers Needed

To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Dissertation Research Study:
SHS BLACK ALUMNI

I would like to invite you to participate in this dissertation research project which will include a one time 45 to 60 minute interview (in person or virtual).

A second opportunity to participate in a small focus group (virtually) will also be offered to all participants. As with the individual interviews, the focus group should run no more than 60-90 minutes.

This study involves minimal risk to participants' physical and psychological well-being that is no greater than one would encounter in everyday life. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decline to participate without penalty. Virtual Sesssions will be conducted via Zoom. For those who select in-person, it will be held at Arcadia University

Seeking Individuals Who:

- **Racially or ethnically identify as Black/African American**

- **Alumni of SHS**

- **Graduated from SHS at anypoint prior to 2020**

To register you can use any of the below contact options:
Option 1: dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com
Option 3: Scan the QR code posted on this flyer

ARCADIA UNIVERSITY **Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., M.Ed.**

Appendix B

Google Form Registration

Dissertation Participation Registration

Topic: To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., and I am a doctoral candidate at Arcadia University (Glenside, PA) in the Educational Leadership program. My dissertation study is seeking to investigate the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban public high school shapes the racial identity development of Black students. For this study I am seeking individuals who:

- Racially or ethnically identify as Black/African American
- Alumni of SHS
- Graduated from SHS at any point prior to 2020

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project, which will include a one-time 45- to 60-minute interview (in person and or virtual). In-person interviews will be held at Arcadia University and those done virtually will be conducted via the Zoom platform. A second opportunity to participate in a small focus group (virtually) will also be offered to all participants. As with the individual interviews, the focus group should run no more than 60-90 minutes. Selection for the focus groups will be randomly selected from the pool of participants who agree to participate.

This study involves minimal risk to participants' physical and psychological well-being that is no greater than one would encounter in everyday life. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decline to participate without penalty. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw during the study, your data collected up to that point will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw after completing this study, you may contact the student researcher or faculty advisor.

Please note that if you are a current employee of Sunnyside School District, you will be contacted by Brian Wallace, my proxy, who will both schedule and conduct your interviews.

The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the Arcadia University community. The dissertation that results from this work will be published in hard copy and will be housed at Landman Library on campus.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email at dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Bruce Campbell at (215) 572- 2170 or campbellb@arcadia.edu.

Thank you,

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd

* Indicates required question

1.What is your first name?*

2. What is your last name? *

3.What was your maiden name (used during your high school matriculation)? Please enter

N/A if this does not apply to you.*

4. What is your gender?*

5. Do you identify racially or ethnically as Black or African American?*

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

6. What year did you graduate from SHS?*

7. Please provide a contact phone # to reach you.*

8. Please provide a contact email.*

9. Do you currently work for the SSD?*

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

10. During your matriculation at SHS, were you involved in any school sports or school-based

extracurricular activities (clubs)? If so, please list the ones you participated in. If no, then

simply list "none."

Appendix C

Proxy Confidentiality Agreement

Research Topic: To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High

School Shape the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

This Nondisclosure Agreement is made effective as of _____, by and

between Ross T. Hamilton, Jr. (Researcher) and _____ (Proxy).

The researcher has requested and the Proxy agrees that the Proxy will protect the confidential

data and information disclosed within the researcher's dissertation research study. Confidential

information includes the real names of participants, statements made during their interview, and

locations identified for this study.

The proxy acknowledges and understands that this confidential agreement has been developed to

maintain the confidentiality and trustworthiness of the researcher's dissertation study.

Please sign below:

_____   _____   _____
Print Name (Researcher)   Signature (Researcher)   Date

_____   _____   _____
Print Name (Proxy)   Signature (Proxy)   Date

Appendix D

Participant Selection Confirmation Email

Date

To {Enter Participant's Name}:

Thank you so much for volunteering to participate in my dissertation research. This qualitative research study is seeking to "*identify the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban high school shapes the racial identity development of Black students.*" For this study I will conduct interviews of individuals who:

- Racially identify as being Black or African American
- Alumni of SHS
- Graduated SHS at any point prior to 2020

The interview process will last no more than 45-60 minutes and will be conducted online (via Zoom) and or in person at Arcadia University; please email me your preference. The next important step is to set up your interview time; please <u>click</u> to schedule your appointment.

Please note that if you are a current employee of Sunnyside School District, you will be contacted by Brian Wallace, my proxy, who will both schedule and conduct your interviews.

Lastly, please read and sign the attached informed consent form. You can scan and email it to dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com prior to your interview.

Sincerely,

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education
Arcadia University
dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com

ATTM

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape
the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Dear {Participant},

My name is Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., and I am a doctoral candidate at Arcadia University
(Glenside, PA) in the Educational Leadership program. My dissertation study is seeking to
investigate the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban public high school
shapes the racial identity development of Black students. For this study I am seeking individuals
who:

- Racially or ethnically identify as Black/African American
- Alumni of SHS
- Graduated from SHS at anypoint prior to 2020

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which will include a one-
time 45- to 60-minute interview (in person or virtual). In-person interviews will be held at Arcadia
University and those done virtually will be conducted via the Zoom platform. A second
opportunity to participate in a small focus group (virtually) will also be offered to all participants.
As with the individual interviews, the focus group should run no more than 60-90 minutes.
Selection for the focus groups will be randomly selected from the pool of participants who agree
to participate.

Please note that if you are a current employee of Sunnyside School District, you will be
contacted by Brian Wallace, my proxy, who will both schedule and conduct your interviews.

This study involves minimal risk to participants' physical and psychological well-being
that is no greater than one would encounter in everyday life. Your participation in this study is
voluntary, and you may decline to participate without penalty. You may also withdraw from this
study at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw during the study, your data
collected up to that point will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw after completing this study,
you may contact the student researcher or faculty advisor.

The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this
research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could
identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data
encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members
of the Arcadia University community. The dissertation that results from this work will be published
in hard copy and will be housed at Landman Library on campus.

If you have any questions, please contact dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com. You may
also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Bruce Campbell, at (215) 572- 2170 or
campbellb@arcadia.edu.

Thank you,

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd

Please sign below if you are willing to participate in the dissertation research project outlined above.

Print Name_____

Signature_____   Date_____

Appendix F

Participant Selection for Focus Group Confirmation Email

Date

To {Enter Participant's Name}:

Thank you so much for volunteering to participate in my dissertation research. This qualitative research study is seeking to "*identify the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban high school shapes the racial identity development of Black students*." For this study I will conduct interviews of individuals who:

- Racially identify as being Black or African American
- Alumni of SHS
- Graduated SHS at any point prior to 2020

This small focus group (4-6 people) will last no more than 60-90 minutes and will be conducted online via Zoom. The next important step is to check your availability. Please <u>click</u> my Calendly scheduler to select all the dates and times that work best for you. A date and time will be selected based on the general availability of all participants. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Lastly, please read and sign the attached informed consent form. You can scan and email it to dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com prior to your interview.

Sincerely,

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education
Arcadia University
646-206-2534
dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com

ATTM

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study Focus Group

To What Extent Does Attending a Predominantly White Suburban Public High School Shape
the Racial Identity Development of Black Students?

Dear {Participant},

My name is Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., and I am a doctoral candidate at Arcadia University
(Glenside, PA) in the Educational Leadership program. My dissertation study is seeking to
investigate the extent to which attending a predominantly White suburban public high school
shapes the racial identity development of Black students. For this study I am seeking individuals
who:
- Racially or ethnically identify as Black/African American
- Alumni of SHS
- Graduated from SHS at anypoint prior to 2020

I would like to invite you to participate in a small focus group (3-6 people) that will last
no more than 60-90 minutes and will be conducted online via Zoom. The next important step is
to set up your interview time; please <u>click</u> my Calendly scheduler to select all the dates and times
that work best for you. A date and time will be selected based on the general availability of all
participants. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Your agreement to participate in a focus group means that you may be disclosing
personal information or other sensitive information to other participants in the group. You are
asked to not share with anyone else the identity of others in this group (in other words, to
maintain their anonymity), to keep confidential what people say during the focus groups, and to
not share what was discussed in this meeting with anybody outside of this group. Audio/video
recording is not allowed, nor is the use of cell phones.

There may be potential risks involved for the participants if other members should choose
to disclose information from or about another participant. Although the researcher is committed
to following procedures for maintaining confidentiality of participant identity, ultimately the
researcher cannot control what focus group participants will choose to share or not share outside
the parameters of the focus group meeting itself. You may opt out of the study now or at any
time during the discussion if you feel uncomfortable with the topic without penalty. If you decide
to participate, you indicate that you understand these risks and are willing to continue
participation. At any time during the discussion if you feel uncomfortable with the topic you may
choose to remain quiet or to discontinue your participation.

The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this
research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could
identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data
encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members
of the Arcadia University community. The dissertation that results from this work will be
published in hard copy and will be housed at Landman Library on campus.

       If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (646) 206-2534 or e-mail at dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Bruce Campbell, at (215) 572- 2170 or campbellb@arcadia.edu.

Thank you,

Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., MEd

Please sign below if you are willing to participate in the dissertation research project outlined above.
Print Name_____
Signature_____   Date_____

Appendix H

Interview Protocol for Participants (One-on-One Interviews)

Date	
Start Time	
End Time	
Location	
Interviewer	
Interviewee	

Interview Protocol Script

Introduce	Good day, my name is Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Arcadia University. In addition, I currently work as an AP at SHS. Prior to my role as an AP, I served as the first ADEC for SSD. Prior to SSD, I worked for 16 years as a high school social studies teacher. For transcription purposes, I will both record this interview and take personal notes. This video will be deleted upon completion of my research study. For transcription purposes, your name will be redacted and a pseudonym will be assigned.
Introduction for Proxy	Good day, my name is Brian Wallace, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Arcadia University. Because you are an employee of SSD, I have been selected to interview you on behalf of my colleague Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., a fellow doctoral student at Arcadia University and researcher for this study. A proxy, such as myself, is used

	in any cases in which the interviewer is potentially in a position of power over the interviewee. To maintain further confidentiality, prior to activating any recording, I will ask that you turn off your video and change your screen name to a pseudonym.
Purpose of Study	The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experiences of Black alumni of PWSHS, particularly the extent to which attending such a school shaped their racial identity development.
Definition of Racial Identity Development	"Racial identity development in most theorized models highlights the dramatic changes adolescents face as they merge their individual and group identities to better understand their culture as well as the role of racism and oppression in their lives" (Sackett & Dogan, 2019, p. 173).
Confidentiality	• Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may decline to participate without penalty. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw during the study, your data collected up to that point will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw after completing this study, you may contact the student researcher or faculty advisor. • The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in

	the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university. • This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the Arcadia University community. The dissertation that results from this work will be published in hard copy and will be housed at Landman Library on campus. • If you have any questions, please feel free to email dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Bruce Campbell, at (215) 572- 2170 or campbellb@arcadiau.edu. • Ross Hamilton state: If needed, you can call me at 646-206-2534. • Brian Wallace (Proxy) state: If needed, you can call me at 215-450-5879.
Ask Interviewee	Do you have any questions?

Interview Questions

Purpose	Questions
Support Systems/Sense of Belonging (Foxx, 2021)	1. Tell me about what your experience was like as a Black student at SHS. 2. Describe the spaces at SHS in which your racial identity was both uplifted and celebrated. What was done in these spaces that made you feel this way? 3. Tell me about the spaces at SHS where your racial identity was not uplifted and celebrated. What was done in these spaces that made you feel this way?

Racial Identity Experiences in Education Settings (Lu & Newton, 2019)	4. Describe your interactions at SHS with your fellow classmates both in and outside of class. 5. Tell me about your interactions with the staff members (teachers, administrators, general staff) at SHS.
Nigrescence Theory (Cross, 2021; Sackett & Dorgan, 2019)	6. Tell me about how Black culture and race was addressed both in the classroom and throughout the building. 7. How have your lived experiences around race while a student at SHS impacted your life today?
	8. Is there any additional information related to this study that you would like to share?

Closeout Script

| **Read the following** | Thank you so much for volunteering to participate in this study. Once the transcription has been completed, I will provide you with a copy for your review.

Before we go, would you be interested in participating in a follow-up focus group around this study? This focus group will take place via Zoom and will include a total of 3-6 people who are Black alumni of SHS.

If yes:
I will use a randomized selection process of all participants who are interested; if you are selected then I will reach out via the contact information you provided.

If no:
Thank you so much for your time. Have a great rest of your day. |

Appendix I

Interview Protocol for Focus Group Participants (Nonemployees of SSD)

Date	
Start Time	
End Time	
Location	
Interviewer	
Interviewees	

Interview Protocol Script

Introduce	Good day, my name is Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Arcadia University. In addition, I currently work as an AP at SHS. Prior to my role as an AP, I served as the first ADEC for SSD. Prior to SSD, I worked for 16 years as a high school social studies teacher. For transcription purposes, I will both record this interview and take personal notes. This video will be deleted upon completion of my research study. For transcription purposes, your names will be redacted and a pseudonym will be assigned.
Introduction for Proxy	Good day, my name is {state name}, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Arcadia University. Because you are an

	employee of SSD, I have been selected to interview you on behalf of my colleague, Ross T. Hamilton, Jr., a fellow doctoral student at Arcadia University and researcher for this study. A proxy, such as myself, is used in any cases in which the interviewer is potentially in a position of power over the interviewee. Upon completion of this interview, I will provide Mr. Hamilton with a written transcription of this interview; for confidentiality, your name will be redacted and I will assign you with a pseudonym. This video will be deleted upon completion of the study.
Purpose of Study	The purpose of this study is to learn more about the experiences of Black alumni of PWSHS, particularly the extent to which attending such a school shaped their racial identity development.
Definition of Racial Identity Development	"Racial identity development in most theorized models highlights the dramatic changes adolescents face as they merge their individual and group identities to better understand their culture as well as the role of racism and oppression in their lives" (Sackett & Dogan, 2019, p. 173).
Confidentiality	• As part of this group meeting, you may be disclosing personal information to other participants in the focus group. Please only use the assigned pseudonyms to address other members of the group, if necessary. Audio/video recording is not allowed. Please do not use cell phones.

- We ask that participants respect the need for confidentiality regarding other participants' identities and regarding what people say during the focus groups. There are potential risks involved for the participants if other members should choose to disclose information from or about another participant.

- To maintain confidentiality of identities, upon the start of recording I will ask for all participants to change their name to a pseudonym.

- You may opt out of the study now, or at any time during the discussion if you feel uncomfortable with the topic, without penalty.

- If you decide to participate you indicate that you understand these risks and are willing to continue participation. At any time during the discussion if you feel uncomfortable with the topic you may choose to remain quiet or to discontinue your participation.

- The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protection and data encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

- This study will be shared with my dissertation committee and other appropriate members of the Arcadia University community. The

	dissertation that results from this work will be published in hard copy and will be housed at Landman Library on campus. • If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (646) 206-2534 or email at dissertationstudy2024@gmail.com. You may also contact my committee chairperson, Dr. Bruce Campbell, at (215) 572- 2170 or campbellb@arcadia.edu.
Ask Interviewees	• I will now ask each of you to orally acknowledge your understanding of this informed risk and to identify if you would like to continue participating or opt out for this study without penalty. *After indicating this, go through each person to confirm.* • Do you have any questions? • OK, at this point we are about to start the recording. I will now need each of you to assign a pseudonym in place of your current screen name. *Once this has been confirmed, start the recording feature.*

Interview Questions

Questions
1. In what ways has your high school experience shaped your current racial identity? 2. Tell me about the experience that you had as a Black student attending SHS. 3. Describe the safe places where Black students typically migrated to at SHS. 4. What were the policies at SHS that either supported or hindered your racial identity development? 5. Is there anything else that you want to share?

Closeout Script

Read the following	Thank you so much for volunteering to participate in this study. Have a great rest of your day. For confidentiality purposes and to maintain the integrity of this study, I ask that you do not share any of the comments made by members of this focus group. Have a great rest of your day!