Boston College

Lynch School of Education

Department of

Lynch School of Education Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education Professional School Administrator Program (PSAP)

ANTI-RACIST EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN THIS MOMENT OF RACIAL RECKONING

Dissertation

by

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with Stephen Dacey, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, Ana Tavares

submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

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May 2022

Abstract

ANTI-RACIST EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BLACK EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN THIS MOMENT OF RACIAL RECKONING

Laniesha Gray

This qualitative case study explored anti-racist educational leadership during a time of crisis, specifically the COVID-19 pandemic and our nation's recent racial reckoning, within a Massachusetts school district. The study used Critical Race Theory as its theoretical framework and Community Cultural Wealth as its conceptual framework. This study examined the experiences and perceptions of Black educational leaders and the associated outcomes of leveraging community cultural wealth for communities of color. Data were collected through interviews, a focus group, a survey, and a review of documents. Findings revealed an experience of racism for Black educational leaders consistent with research that asserts that Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders face racist challenges (Frank et al, 2019). Findings also present the perception of an opportunity in this historical moment for anti-racist work at the individual and system levels through increased attention to racism across the country, specifically anti-Blackness. Black educational leadership in the district experienced a decrease in daily microaggressions. In pursuit of anti-racist work, Black educational leaders leveraged social and resistant capital to sustain them in the field.

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Acknowledgments

I am thankful to my Chair, Dr. Andrew Miller, for his consistent support and belief in my ability to persevere despite the challenges of this current moment. I am thankful for the guidance of my reader and superintendent mentor, Dr. James Marini, whose practical experience reminded me of the importance of both aspirational and social capital in the pursuit of educational equity. I am thankful to my reader, Dr. Anne Homza, who pushed me to think more deeply about how my positionality impacts my research. I also thank Dr. Vincent Cho for his stewardship of our program and my dear friend Dr. Sara Suliman whose encouragement in the face of personal adversity made all the difference. I am a better researcher-practitioner because of each of them, my Boston College professors and cohort, my dissertation-in-practice team, my colleagues at Shady Hill School, and the other learning communities of which I am a part. Special thanks also belong to my parents, Lillian and Demetrius, and my partner, Kurtis, as their unwavering belief in my potential helped make my doctoral study possible. I am forever grateful.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the Black educational leaders in my study site who offered a counternarrative by participating in this study. My liberation is bound up with theirs. Without their words, my words would not be.

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CHAPTER 1:

Anti-Racist Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis[1]

Anti-racist leadership is more important now than ever before. During the first COVID-19 summer, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery were instrumental in forcing the nation to acknowledge its relationship with systemic racism. By the winter of 2021, anti-Asian hate came to the forefront of the nation's media (Cabral, 2021). Throughout the pandemic, Black people, indigenous people, and other people of color (BIPOC) have carried disproportionate burdens: the COVID-19 infection and death rates affected Black and Latinx populations at a higher rate than White communities (Ladson-Billings, 2021), more BIPOC students were in fully remote learning environments by choice and/or by circumstance, and Asian students faced the fear of physical and psychological violence as the scapegoat for the pandemic (Balingit et al., 2021).

The emergence of racism, however, is not limited to high-profile racial incidents covered in the national media. In fact, racism can be described as the "smog in the air;" the ever-present air that we breathe (Tatum, 2017, p. 86). As institutions that often mirror society at large, America's schools are not immune to the effects of racism. Racism emerges in education in multiple ways at every level and often exists when an organization's policies and practices, unintentionally or by design, negatively impact a particular group of people based on race. A school's culture, habits, symbols, and rules can also contribute to institutional racism. Symptoms of racism in schools can be found

[1] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Stephen Dacey, Laniesha Gray, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, and Ana Tavares.

in the disproportionate representation of students of color in disciplinary matters, special education, and lower-level classes (Diem & Welton, 2020). Additionally, individual and structural racism has resulted in lower expectations for students of color, especially from White teachers, and these expectations lead to lower academic outcomes (Gándara, 2015; Khalifa, 2011; Tatum, 2017).

This research, in addition to the impact of the global pandemic and the increased awareness of structural racism in our society, suggests a dire need for school leaders to enact anti-racist leadership practices in their schools. Anti-racist educational leadership, which includes attitudes and beliefs about race and racism, policies and practices aimed at dismantling structural racism, and system-level commitment to anti-racism, provides an effective response to racism in schools which has been amplified by the current crises. In this complicated time when states across the country are moving to ban racial education from public schools (Covarrubias et al., 2018; O'Kane, 2021), an anti-racist approach informed by theoretical elements of Critical Race Theory is a necessary approach to understanding how racial inequities emerge in education.

For example, it has been suggested by Welton (2018) that anti-racist practices can disrupt systemic racism by looking at the learning of both students and educators, acknowledging and maneuvering in the context of resistance to anti-racism in our majoritarian White culture, and looking at systems of organizational change towards greater equity. As explored in more detail in the literature review below, Diem and Welton's (2021) contemporary work on anti-racist leadership in practice has recognized that school leaders need targeted preparation and professional development on how to be anti-racist. This research, however, has tended to stop short of naming specific strategies

for how school leaders, in the present moment, can engage in anti-racist efforts in multiple contexts.

In this study, we hope to fill this gap in the research on anti-racist leadership practices by investigating how educational leaders make sense of anti-racist leadership, as well as how educational leaders perceive the limitations and support for anti-racist leadership in their schools or districts, especially in the current context of the global pandemic and racial reckoning. Our study intends to identify the actions that leaders have taken in response to this moment of crisis and to identify the ways in which anti-racist leadership practices have been supported or limited within a single district.

Therefore, this dissertation-in-practice presents a qualitative case study of a single district in Massachusetts that has a stated goal of creating an anti-racist school community. In this study, we directly respond to Diem & Welton's (2021) plea for research that focuses on how leaders "ensure their everyday actions are drawn from anti-racist orientation" and the practices they need to employ to purposefully address "social, political, and educational oppression" (Diem & Welton, 2021, pp. 3-4). Thus, our dissertation in practice research questions are:

1) In what ways, if at all, do educational leaders enact anti-racist leadership practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and this moment of racial reckoning in their schools or districts?
2) What are leaders' perceptions of the limitations or supports for anti-racist leadership practice as they navigate leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and this moment of racial reckoning in their schools or districts?

Throughout this dissertation, we provide answers to these questions by presenting five

studies that take up distinct but related questions stemming from these two group research questions. Table 1 provides details about each members' research questions, conceptual framework, and methodology, demonstrating the conceptual connection across the studies, as well as the thematic connection between the individual studies and the group study.

Table 1

Investigator's Individual Research Questions

Researcher	Research Question (RQ) Conceptual Framework (CF)	Unit of Analysis
Dacey	1. How, if at all, do school leaders support their White teachers in developing their anti-racist White racial identity? CF: White racial identity development as an anti-racist leadership practice	Educational leaders at multiple levels (principals, assistant principals, deans, department chairs, etc.)
Gray	1. How has Black leadership been affected by this current moment of racial reckoning? 2. What aspects of community cultural wealth, if any, do Black leaders leverage in their practice? CF: Community cultural wealth as a specific part of anti-racist leadership practice	Black educational leaders at multiple levels (principals, assistant principals, deans, department chairs, etc.)
Po	1. How do Asian Women school leaders perceive their navigation of leadership during the COVID 19 pandemic and racial reckoning? 2. In what ways do the racialized or gendered experiences of Asian female leaders inform their instructional practice? CF: Sympathetic Instructional Leadership	Asian female educational leaders at multiple levels (principals, program leaders, department chairs, etc.)
Smith	1. In what ways, if at all, do educational leaders perceive or make sense of the emergence of anti-racism in predominantly White schools? 2. What are the conditions that support or constrain the enactment of anti-racist practices in predominantly White schools?	Educational leaders at multiple levels (principals, assistant principals, deans, department chairs, etc.) in predominantly White schools (defined as >70% White student body).

	CF: Emergence of anti-racism in schools through attitudes and beliefs, policies and practices, and school-level commitment (Welton et al., 2018)	
Tavares	How do Latinx educational leaders make sense of their leadership practice during this moment of racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic? CF: Culturally Responsive Leadership and Community Cultural Wealth	Latinx educational leaders at multiple levels (teacher leaders, program directors, department chairs, etc.)

As shown in this table, each of these studies provides insights into the anti-racist leadership practices enacted by school leaders in this current moment. These studies also illustrate the supports and the constraints for the enactment of anti-racist leadership. In the remainder of this chapter, though, we describe the theoretical and conceptual lenses and empirical research that collectively informed all five studies and allowed us to better make sense of our group research questions. To familiarize the reader with the prior research that informed our study, we then review relevant literature on leadership in times of crisis, as well as anti-racist leadership in schools.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This group study was informed by complementary theoretical and conceptual perspectives related to the practice of anti-racism in schools: Critical Race Theory (CRT), for its emphasis on the acknowledgment that racism is endemic to society, and a framework for anti-racist leadership initially developed by Welton et al. (2018), for its implications for educational leaders in their advancement of anti-racism in their schools or districts. Specifically, to make sense of questions related to anti-racism in education, we drew on two tenets of CRT in combination with an adaptation of a conceptual framework for anti-racism from Welton et al. (2018). The tenets of CRT provide specific lenses through which researcher-practitioners can analyze and make sense of the effects

of racism in education. In particular, the permanence of racism and counternarratives are particularly useful across each of our individual studies and our collective study.

Critical Race Theory

Emerging from critical legal studies, CRT argues that racism is and always has been "endemic in U.S. society," happening all the time at the individual, institutional, societal, and epistemological levels (Tate, 1997, p. 234). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were among the first scholars to apply CRT to analyze the inequities built into our society's educational system. In subsequent research, Capper (2015) applied CRT specifically to educational leadership and distilled six primary tenets that can be used by school leaders in their efforts to mitigate the effects of racism. Those tenets are the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, counternarratives, interest convergence, critique of liberalism, and intersectionality (Capper, 2015). Two of the tenets, the permanence of racism and counternarratives, were particularly useful across each of our individual studies and our collective study, they are outlined below.

Permanence of Racism

According to Capper (2015), understanding that racism is part of the fabric of our society can help educational leaders recognize that they are complicit in racism (Khalifa et al., 2014). Furthermore, all schools and districts perpetuate racism through the culture, organization, policies, and practices they utilize (Capper, 2015). Within the context of educational leadership, CRT has been useful in highlighting how the permanence of racism has impacted the experiences and outcomes of both teachers and students of color (Capper, 2015). Therefore, in this study, we used the permanence of racism tenet to help

us identify instances of overt racism, subtler forms of racism like microaggressions, as well as impacts of structural racism, as shared by our participants.

Counternarratives

Critical race theorists describe the importance of the personal narratives of people of color "as a way to communicate the experiences and realities of the oppressed" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 58). Legitimizing the counterstories of people of color allows educational leaders to recognize daily microaggressions and the societal and institutional racism that people of color experience (Capper, 2015). It also provides a counter-narrative to popular beliefs, such as meritocracy, so often held by people in majoritarian groups. BIPOC educators also carry cultural wealth that uniquely helps diverse students succeed (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, in this study, we used the tenet of counternarratives to provide an opportunity for our participants to be heard as they shared their experiences and perceptions of working in the district of our study.

Anti-Racism in Schools

As mentioned above, this study was premised on the centrality of an anti-racist approach to school leadership being able to interrupt the reproduction of systemic racism in schools. Anti-racism is the system of thoughts and practices, at the individual and system level, that aim to confront and eradicate racism and promote ideologies and practices for racial and ethnic equity (Blakeney, 2005; Diem & Welton, 2021). The anti-racist leadership conceptual framework used in this qualitative case study was adapted from Welton et al. (2018) because it provides practical implications for school leaders to engage in anti-racist work. These researchers frame anti-racist leadership as

encompassing attitudes and beliefs, policies and practices, and system-level commitment. This three-pronged framework anchored our investigation.

Attitudes and Beliefs

A critical first step in cultivating an anti-racist school environment is addressing the race-neutral and colorblind ideologies and assumptions often held by teachers and parents. Diem and Welton (2021) find that some educational leaders avoid discussions about race by offering superficial initiatives such as "multicultural programs and celebrations, or one-off diversity workshops or professional development that was never applied to practice" (p. 30). These superficial celebrations fail to interrupt racism because they are self-congratulatory without leading to any real change. Colorblind assumptions discredit the acknowledgment of racism, thereby bypassing the need to address racism directly or at all (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). Anti-racist leadership according to Diem and Welton (2021) acknowledges race as a factor in schools and that racial awareness must be raised. They critique neoliberal approaches that involve color-evasive mindsets and promote policies that take critical aim at persistent patterns of academic achievement related to underserved students of color.

Policies and Practices

The enactment of anti-racist policies and practices specifically designed to dismantle structural racism in schools is also critical for anti-racist change. Examples of anti-racist policies and practices might include de-leveling courses or incorporating racial content into the school curricula. One critical anti-racist practice is culturally relevant pedagogy, which asserts the importance of the socio-political context in education (Ladson-Billings, 2021). When considering the communities most impacted by policies

and practices aimed at dismantling historical inequity, educational leaders must connect with their students' present-day concerns, such as the unequal consequences of the COVID-19 virus in BIPOC communities so that students can mitigate the impact they are experiencing within their communities (Diem & Welton, 2021; Freire, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2021). It is important for members of a marginalized group to feel understood by others who share in the experience of marginalization in order to build resistance (Delgado Bernal, 2012). As part of this anti-racist conceptual framework, there is a need for asset-based approaches that contextualize the multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual communities within a sociohistorical context that moves away from a majoritarian approach that pathologizes communities of color (Covarrubias et al., 2018). An anti-racist leader promotes a learning environment that affirms the identities of students in order to combat systemic forms of racism (Capper, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

System-Level Commitment

Individual work on race consciousness is necessary but insufficient by itself. Therefore, Welton et al. (2018) state that to enact system-level anti-racism, educators must create an anti-racist environment for all community members, develop an anti-racist curriculum, recruit, and retain diverse faculty and staff, welcome all perspectives and have difficult conversations, and bring a network of equity organizations to support the work of schools and the district. Diem and Welton (2021) also posit that educational leaders need to dismantle racist ideologies, structures, and processes, such as school choice, standardized testing, data-use practices, and school funding protocols that perpetuate racism.

Connections Between CRT and Anti-Racist Leadership Perspectives

The permanence of racism and the importance of counternarratives, in combination with Welton et al.'s (2018) conceptual framework for anti-racist leadership, gave us the tools to ask educational leaders about their enactment of anti-racist practices, as well as their perceptions of limitations or supports for anti-racism in their schools. This conceptual framework gave us scholastic acknowledgment that racism is everywhere and ordinary and embedded historically and systemically. It provided the perspective, language, and framework to uncover how educational leaders see themselves as complicit in racism, as well as how their schools, by culture, policy, and practice perpetuate structural racism. It helped us make sense of how educational leaders at all levels engage in issues of race and racism, particularly in the current crises of the global pandemic and current racial reckoning.

Review of Empirical Literature

We began this study by reviewing empirical scholarship in order to connect our study to previous research on anti-racist leadership. First, we describe recent research on how crisis and crisis response impact the role of school leaders because the global pandemic and recent racial reckoning represent a moment of crisis for educational leaders. Next, we present our review of empirical studies on anti-racist leadership practices at both the individual and institutional levels, as well as obstacles school leaders encounter when trying to enact anti-racist policies and practices since we are asking participants about their enactment of anti-racist leadership.

Research on Leadership in Times of Crisis

Literature on leadership in times of crisis was essential to our collective work. The research is still growing, addressing post-pandemic recovery and planning as schools grapple with meeting the diverse needs of students (Ladson-Billings, 2021a). Nonetheless, recent literature on the role of schools found that the majority of the literature focused on disaster preparedness, but very little on disaster response and recovery (Fortuna et al., 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2021a). Crisis leadership and crisis management are considered two related aspects of dealing with crises that affect an organization (Mutch, 2015). According to Boin et al. (2005), effective crisis leadership entails identifying new threats, developing plans to meet those threats, and putting resources in place to absorb negative impacts while working to stabilize and return to normal.

Moments of crisis disrupt routines, create an atmosphere of ambiguity, and cause leadership uncertainty (Morrison, 2017). All too often, because of a lack of crisis leadership training, school leaders inadvertently misstep in their crisis response, thus complicating the situation and prolonging the recovery of communities (Morrison, 2017). Crises like the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted for educational leaders a gap in teacher pre-service programs and professional development programs for adapting to changing and uncertain circumstances. Three recent crises, the September 11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane María, provide insight into those leading schools during times of crisis from educational leaders who supported their communities through these crises.

The research on school leadership in times of crisis for the past decade or so perceived their leadership roles as managerial and static (Portin et al., 2006). Superintendents and principals made sure that their schools functioned effectively and efficiently by maintaining schedules, responding to the needs of parents and students and focusing on performance and outcomes (Harris, 2020). These educational leaders were ultimately accountable for their actions and while ideas of distributed leadership or shared leadership were increasingly part of the leadership discourse, most studies of school leadership still tended to focus on the role of the superintendent or the principal as managers (Leithwood et al., 2020). Crises like COVID-19 and national racial reckoning have dramatically changed perceptions of leadership and leadership practices within schools (Ladson-Billings, 2021b). Principals and superintendents are leading schools and districts in innovative ways that are more reliant on technology (Harris, 2020). As educational leaders support students and families from the COVID-19 pandemic and the national racial reckoning they must also contend with evolving leadership practices in response to the current moment.

Research on Anti-Racist Leadership

According to the conceptual framework described by Welton et al. (2018), anti-racist practices emerge in an educational institution primarily through attitudes and beliefs, policies and practices, and system-level commitment. Each of these categories informed our investigation, as we explored anti-racist practices in schools as perceived by educational leaders through the lens of our conceptual framework. We review relevant literature and research within each of these areas below, starting with attitudes and beliefs.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Research has consistently shown that anti-racism is most effective when teachers have personally reflected on their own racial identities while developing self-awareness around race and privilege. In qualitative studies of both pre-service and veteran teachers, research has shown how teachers' limited information and limited experience can negatively impact anti-racist pedagogical efforts, ultimately leading to perpetuated stereotypes and reinforced hegemonic ideologies (Davila, 2011; Graff, 2010). Similarly, in a study about how educators can personalize cultural and political knowledge to cultivate anti-racist practices, Seidl (2007) described the importance of teachers' acquisition of a "more sophisticated understanding regarding the history of racism and race relations and its impact and influence on our current relationships and in our teaching lives" (p. 177). Dlamini (2002) discovered that teachers' underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding race often go unresolved, often limiting substantive action and change.

Studies have shown that many faculty and staff are at best neutral on issues of race in their schools and often avoid considering how race and racism impact them and their communities (Allen & Liou, 2019; Lewis, 2001; McMahon, 2007; Swanson & Welton, 2019; Welton et al., 2015). Many educators are very uncomfortable talking about race, and often divert the discussion to the education of the "whole child, not just their race" or saying things like "we can't do anything about that – we're here to help kids learn" (Brooks & Watson, 2019, p. 644).

Other qualitative case studies demonstrate how teachers actively resist equity-centered, anti-racist actions. In one study of a large, comprehensive high school in

California, researchers found that White educators tend to blame society when students do not reach their potential, often referring to concepts such as the school-to-prison pipeline to make broad assumptions about students and their families (Allen & Liou, 2019). Similarly, in another study, Swanson and Welton (2019) found that some teachers even refuse to participate in equity-centered professional development programs, demonstrating "conflicting understandings" about race-conscious improvement efforts (p. 747). These colorblind, race-neutral ideologies, coupled with White fragility and active resistance, cause principals to revert to "safer, racially neutral" discussions around equity (Swanson & Welton, 2019, p. 748).

Political tensions also arose in the research as a significant obstacle to anti-racism in schools that maintained racially inequitable conditions. Teaching faculty who embraced an anti-racist approach clashed with those who resisted it, which caused administrators to compromise the major tenets of anti-racist leadership. Similarly, some parents often pressure school leadership into maintaining the status quo. Rather than confront the tension and conflicts surrounding issues of race, school leaders sought to maintain "an institutional culture of harmony" (Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Solomon, 2002, p. 188).

Knowledge from the review of these studies helped us recognize the obstacles that educational leaders face when trying to enact anti-racist practices. Findings from these studies also helped us create more meaningful questions as we interviewed our participants.

Policies and Practices

Most of the research on anti-racist teaching practices fall into three main categories: 1. including racial content and inequality in course content, curricula, and activities, 2. teaching from an anti-racist pedagogical approach, and 3. anti-racist organizing within the school community (Kishimoto, 2018). We will discuss the first two components here and will address the third component in our discussion of system-level commitment.

There is a growing body of empirical research on how teachers incorporate content, activities, and discussions that confront racism into course curricula. Most of the studies investigated how teachers challenged Eurocentrism by including racial content in the syllabi, course materials, course activities, and curriculum (Kishimoto, 2018; Solomon, 2002). Outside the classroom, teachers also established race-based heritage groups, such as the Black Heritage Club, and have tried to bring in professionals from racial minority communities to speak to students (Solomon, 2002). Unfortunately, these efforts are often superficial in nature and do not directly investigate serious issues of racism, race consciousness, and racial identity development that are crucial to anti-racist practices (Miner, 2009; Solomon, 2002).

Beyond introducing inclusive course content and creating heritage groups, classroom discussions are particularly relevant activities in anti-racist pedagogy. In a study of how European American and African American students responded to classroom discussions about historical racism, Hughes et al. (2007) found that “European American children who learned about historical racism had more positive and less negative views of African Americans than did children who received similar lessons that did not include

information about racism" (p. 1701). Classroom discussions on race are one way that anti-racism can be enacted at the classroom level.

Similarly, Roberts et al. (2008) used observations and focus groups to examine how students "talked about race and racism while participating in a curriculum that introduced the analytic lens of story types: stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and counterstories (p. 334). The researchers found that "students yearn for spaces and curricula that provide the context and history within which they can ground their experiences and analysis" (p. 350). Additionally, when teachers focus on issues of race and racism and seek to incorporate the students' perspectives, the authors reviewed found "everyone involved can engage in more thoughtful and creative analysis of the system of racial oppression in which we live to develop the tools to change it" (p. 350). Equally important to understand is the impact an anti-racist pedagogical approach provides beyond course content and curriculum. In particular, it challenges assumptions, develops students' awareness of their own privilege, decenters authority in the classroom, and creates a community of learners (Kishimoto, 2018).

Research has demonstrated the importance of how teachers question and elicit answers, describe and address students, value what students have accomplished outside of school, connect the lives of the students to the curriculum in a meaningful way, and validate and elevate marginalized cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Lee, 1998). Even further, qualitative case studies have also offered evidence that pedagogy that "acknowledges the importance of racial and cultural identities, teaches through collaboration and dialogue, examines power and oppression, examines discrimination as systemic, critiques traditions of schooling, and advocates for social action" are all

effective strategies in developing an anti-racist approach to teaching (Borsheim-Black, 2015, p. 409).

This research demonstrates how individuals adapt their pedagogy to make their curricula and classroom practices more anti-racist. The findings from these studies helped us make sense of how educational leaders enact anti-racist practices in their schools and aided our investigation as we collected and analyzed data from our participants.

System-Level Commitment

Research has shown that "systemic level anti-racist change never actually happens," as scholars and practitioners are "bogged down with individual commitment" and often "neglect the larger institution" (Welton et al., 2018, p. 6). Although individual anti-racist work is critically important, research shows that there must be a system-level commitment to ensure that the entire school community is working towards creating an anti-racist environment (Welton et al., 2018).

Previous systemic level commitment research has focused primarily on school policies and practices that attempt to create an anti-racist environment for all constituencies, with particular emphasis on school discipline and the recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff, as "numerous scholars and commentators have held that there is a growing mismatch between the degree of racial/ethnic diversity in the nation's student population and the degree of diversity in the nation's elementary and secondary teaching force" (Boser, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 40). Specifically, national data show a gap that continues to exist between minority students and teachers in the U.S. school system. For example, a recent study showed that "41% of all elementary

and secondary students were minority, but only 16.5% of all elementary and secondary teachers were minority" (Boser, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 40).

Research studies have attempted to explain the shortage of minority teachers, most often finding that particular school conditions are strongly related to minority teacher departures (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The most important factors in retaining minority teachers are "the levels of collective faculty decision-making influence in their school and the degree of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms" (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 43). Other factors, such as pay scale, opportunities for professional development, and school resources had much less impact on minority teacher turnover.

Another school-wide effort in anti-racism enacted by educational leaders is equity audits, whereby administrators "systematically collect and examine data to identify equity gaps," often done in stages (Diem & Welton, 2020a, p. 138). Community-based equity audits have also been employed to go beyond the school as the unit of analysis. In addition to equity audits, equity-centered policy analysis models have also been established that can be used to determine whether a policy is just and ethical (Diem & Welton, 2020a).

Like the findings from studies on policies and practices, the research on system-level commitment to anti-racism helped us make sense of how educational leaders enact anti-racist practices at a broader scale. This knowledge aided our investigation as we asked our participants about how they viewed anti-racist practices at the organizational level.

Conclusion

The five studies of this research explore anti-racist leadership practices, as well the educational leaders' perceptions of the supports and constraints related to anti-racist leadership. The individual studies of Gray, Po, and Tavares also explore the ways in which the positionality of educational leaders impacts their enactments of anti-racism and their perceptions of the ways in which this moment of history impedes or creates opportunities for anti-racist leadership.

Chapter 2 describes the qualitative methods used across all five studies. It includes the criteria for the study's site and participant selection, interview protocols, document review, and focus groups. The methods of data collection and analysis is also reviewed in this section, along with the positionality of the researchers and the limitations of this study.

The first study, conducted by Steve Dacey, investigates the role that White racial identity development plays in informing anti-racist leadership in the district. The second study, conducted by Laniesha Gray, looks at how community cultural wealth informs Black leadership during this moment in history. The third study, conducted by Cicy Po, investigates the perceptions of Asian Women leaders as informed by their racialized and gendered experiences. The fourth study, conducted by Tom Smith, investigates anti-racist leadership in predominantly White schools. And finally, Ana Tavares conducted a study on how Latinx educational leaders make sense of their leadership during this moment in history, using culturally relevant leadership as a frame.

This dissertation concludes with Chapter 4, a synthesis of all five individual studies that describe the themes and tensions that arose as our participants advanced their mission to work for anti-racism.

CHAPTER 2:

Methods[2]

This group study employed qualitative methodology to explore the ways in which educational leaders enacted anti-racist leadership practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and this moment of racial reckoning in their schools and developed a detailed understanding of the leaders' perceptions about the limitations or supports for anti-racist leadership practice in their schools. The phenomenon of anti-racist leadership was best studied using qualitative methods because we were interested in collecting the perceptions of multiple educational leaders with a variety of experiences based on their different roles and racial and ethnic identities. This allowed us to "achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives…and how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Our qualitative research took the form of a case study of a single district, which was a valuable way to explore a contemporary phenomenon, like anti-racist leadership, situated in the real world (Yin, 2018). A case study of a single district was chosen for this study because it allowed for practical implications for district leaders in the field. Our case study was informed by CRT and analyzed using Welton et al. (2018) and Diem and Welton's (2021) anti-racist framework in order to explore the ways in which anti-racist leadership practices were enacted, if at all.

Site Selection

Our selected school district for this case study met several criteria that allowed the researchers to gather evidence for each individual study. The district had the following

[2] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project. Stephen Dacey, Laniesha Gray, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, Ana Tavares.

criteria for the study: (a) was a large K-12 district in Massachusetts serving 8 to 12 schools, which provided the researchers the greatest possible variation in participants; (b) had multiple schools in which White students represented over 60% of the student body; (c) had diverse school leaders who were recognized by their district leaders as being concerned with equity work; and (d) was committed to equity as identified by their mission, vision, and strategic plan, which helped to ensure that our participants were information-rich and able to respond to our interview protocols.

In order to identify a district that best met these criteria, we first consulted the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website, particularly student, faculty, and staff demographic data. In looking through these data, we analyzed districts with representation from Black, Latinx, and Asian communities in positions of leadership, as well as predominantly White student populations. We presented a list of potential districts to our group mentor, who was able to connect us with the superintendent of a district that met our criteria. This district will be referred to as the District throughout this dissertation.

Once we had established our relationship with the superintendent of the District, we began to recruit participants that met the individual criteria of our individual studies, as described in more detail in the respective Chapter 3 methods sections. The following section will briefly describe how participants were generally selected for the individual studies.

Participant Selection

An initial screener interview with the district superintendent, not used as part of the data collection process, was conducted to identify key leaders involved in anti-racist

work, as well as leaders who identify as White, Black, Asian American, and Latinx. The superintendent gave us the names and contact information of principals, assistant principals, directors, and teacher leaders across these demographics. We then used snowball sampling, in which we asked participants to recommend other individuals to be sampled, to account for any potential biases from the superintendent choosing our participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

The superintendent first emailed the initial list of participants, inviting them to participate in this study. We then contacted the participants directly to describe the purpose of our study and formally invite them to participate. All our participants were identified by district leadership as committed to anti-racism in their schools and identified as Latinx leaders, Black leaders, Asian American women, leaders who work in predominantly White schools, or leaders who work with predominantly BIPOC students. Our participants included principals, assistant principals, other members of the administrative team(s), as well as other personnel who may have had an impact on the creation and enactment of school policies and practices. Therefore, participants also included teacher leaders, school counselors, and other support staff with relevant experience within the school(s).

Data Collection

Our data collection methods included interviews, document review, surveys, and a focus group to answer our research questions. These qualitative methods allowed us to construct knowledge and understanding by exploring how educational leaders enacted anti-racist leadership practices, as well as how they perceived their environment supported or constrained their efforts.

Interviews

In order to explore anti-racist leadership practices, as well as to understand perceptions of the supports and constraints related to anti-racist leadership, our study utilized interviews. In our study, interviews were semi-structured, meaning there were some specific questions asked of all respondents, but most of the interviews were guided by a few pre-determined questions to be explored, as well as issues that arose during the conversation. In the unstructured portion of the interview, neither the questions nor the order in which the questions were asked were predetermined, which allowed us to flexibly respond to the participant as their thoughts and ideas developed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Our research team conducted 26 interviews of school personnel leading specific areas of anti-racist work; these interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length. This number of interviews allowed us maximum variation across schools and roles. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using a transcription service.

As described in more detail in each of our chapter three methods sections, the interviews were designed to discover what educational leaders were doing in response to this moment of crisis during a time of racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the perceptions of the limitations or supports, as described by educational leaders, that allow for impactful anti-racist leadership practices. The interview questions were categorized by elements of our conceptual framework and literature review. For example, we had questions about attitudes and beliefs regarding anti-racism, anti-racist policies and practices, system-level commitment to anti-racism, as well as leadership in times of crisis. Our individual interview protocols are included in Appendix A. We acknowledge the emotional and personal risks assumed by the participants in our study, as we asked

questions about anti-racist practices. Our consent forms were designed to ensure confidentiality following BC IRB processes.

Document Review

For our study, we selected documents that responded to our research question on how issues of race and racism in the school and in the larger community were prioritized, responded to, or discussed. Our goal was to use the qualitative data collected from documents to reinforce or challenge our understanding of educational leaders' perceptions of anti-racist leadership in response to the current crises.

Documents were used in the same manner as data from the interviews in that "the data can furnish descriptive information, verify emerging hypotheses, advance new categories of hypotheses, offer historical understanding, and track change and development" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 182). Documents offered the advantage of stability over interviews and focus groups because the presence of the investigator did not alter what was being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We also recognized that documents were not created for the purpose of the study and therefore it required some resourcefulness on the part of the researchers to locate and analyze the data.

The documents were grouped into several categories: district-level, school-level, public, and non-public. Documents were further categorized based on three elements of our conceptual framework: attitudes and beliefs, policies and practices, and system-level commitment.

We searched for relevant public documents on the district's website, which contained information on the district's mission and values, as well as its goals and objectives related to anti-racism. The website contained anti-discrimination and anti-bias

policies. We searched for these documents using keywords such as anti-racism, racism, bias, discrimination, etc. to identify documents that contained information pertaining to our research questions. The district website also contained links to individual school websites, which were examined for relevant public documents, such as equity plans and communications to families.

After gathering as much public information as possible, we then collected relevant non-public documents such as professional development program overviews from individual schools and departmental email communications related to anti-racism. A list of all documents that were reviewed can be found in Appendix B.

Survey

We issued a district-wide survey (Appendix C), adapted from the National Latino Leaders/Principals Survey (Appendix D) to survey the general trends in the district and to query for how respondents perceived the impact of this historical moment of the pandemic and racial reckoning on their leadership for anti-racism. The National Latino Leaders/Principals Survey is a validated survey as part of a study of leaders across the country, led by Frank Hernández, Elizabeth Murakami, and Sylvia Méndez-Morse; these researchers studied and reported their work in 2015 on how these leaders/principals described their schooling experiences, how their racial/ethnic backgrounds opened opportunities or constrained their work as school leaders, and what their challenges and successes have been. The survey included general school information, perceptions of school performance, professional development, experience and training of the respondent, perceptions of race, gender, successes, obstacles, and background questions. These survey questions helped us understand trends in the district as they related to work

for racial equity, a stated purpose of the district. The participants included district and school-based educators, student support staff, and leaders. Recruitment of participants happened with the Superintendent's support and was issued through district communication channels. These survey respondents were recruited as already being involved in anti-racist work in the district.

Focus Groups

Our study utilized one focus group that contained two participants in order to explore anti-racist leadership practices, as well as to understand perceptions of the supports and constraints related to anti-racist leadership. The number of focus groups was limited by participant availability. Morgan (1988) explains that "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (p. 12). Cresswell and Guetterman (2019) further explain that focus groups are useful when participants are hesitant to provide information and given the sensitive nature of discussions about race and racism the group environment, rather than an individual interview, seemed to provide a degree of comfort that encouraged the participants to provide information related to the anti-racist leadership actions in their school and district. The focus group participants were self-selected in response to an open invitation sent via email by a building administrator to the entire building staff. The focus group featured school leaders in order to gather data about their perceptions of anti-racist leadership practices and their response to the global pandemic and racial reckoning. A sample protocol for focus groups is included in Appendix E. Again, we acknowledge the emotional and personal risks

assumed by the participants in our study as we asked questions about anti-racist practices. Our consent forms were designed to ensure confidentiality following BC IRB processes.

Data Analysis

Because our individual studies were loosely coupled within our overall study, much of the data was collected as a group but analyzed individually. Our data analysis started with a preliminary exploratory analysis to get a general sense of the data, and this was followed by establishing a coding process to make sense of the data (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019). A detailed explanation of each investigator's coding processes can be found in our individual Chapter 3s.

Positionality

Given the focus on issues of race and racism in this study, it is important to note the role that positionality played in our research. Our work reflects the positionality of each researcher within our diverse group. The researchers in our group have both educator and district-level leadership experience in public, charter, Catholic, and independent schools, serving elementary, middle, and high schools. Among this group is an Assistant Principal, Director of Equity and Inclusion, Dean of Teaching and Learning, Elementary Superintendent, and a Head of School. The research team includes two White men, a Latina, a Black woman, and an Asian-American woman. As research practitioners who are simultaneously researching anti-racist practice and continuing our commitment to equity in schools and in our systems, we recognize that the questions we asked and the inferences we drew from our findings are influenced by our racialized experiences as well as our respective culture, class, and gender (Creswell, 2012). Knowing this, we checked for bias by developing interview protocols jointly, maintaining process journal

entries, and collectively reviewing interview transcripts while looking for patterns and themes. Each researcher identified themselves to the participants in the study by role and home school or district, as well as their self-identification by the social constructs of race and gender.

As a dissertation-in-practice group, we've seen each other through academic challenges, family illness, the birth of two children, and other life stressors as we've simultaneously led our respective schools through this pandemic. We acknowledge the significant emotional labor required to both research and work for racial equity. As we co-constructed knowledge together, we've woven processes into our meetings to ensure we remain connected to both the mission of our work and each other. We committed to negotiate and balance the emotional labor—with the recognition that so often this burden is carried by people of color—by beginning most meetings with check-ins and closings with a pluses and deltas protocol that addressed both successes and growth. Finally, we offer additional details of our positionality in the individual studies in chapter 3.

Limitations

As with any qualitative case study, the methodological choices we made in our inquiry came with some limitations. Our qualitative investigation was a snapshot of educational leaders' perceptions at a specific moment in time. In addition, the relatively small sample size makes it difficult to generalize some of the findings to the entire district or to other districts in Massachusetts. The makeup of our group of researchers, which consisted of three women of color and two White men, was also a limitation. Although our interview protocols were created and reviewed collectively as a group, it is

possible that the race and/or gender of the interviewer impacted the responses of the educational leaders being interviewed. Upon reflection, however, none of the group members felt that the interviews were compromised or negatively impacted by the race or gender of the interviewers, but it is impossible to know for sure. One great asset of our group, however, was our ability to discuss the data and findings in great detail as a racially mixed group of women and men.

Despite these limitations, the perceptions of our participants will certainly add value to those looking to better understand anti-racist leadership and the conditions that support or constrain the enactment of anti-racist practices, especially in the current crises of the global pandemic and racial reckoning.

CHAPTER 3[3]:

An Examination of the Experience of Black Educational Leaders in this Moment of Racial Reckoning

Introduction

A growing body of educational research demonstrates the positive impacts of teachers of color on short and long-term academic outcomes of students of color (Ahmad & Boser, 2014). Specifically, the research finds that having a single teacher of color can boost academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment for students of color (Ahmad & Boser, 2014). In light of the research, recruiting and retaining a diverse and effective educator workforce can be a promising

[3] This chapter and study present the individual intellectual contributions of the author: Laniesha Gray

strategy for districts to address educational inequity and the opportunity gap that exists for students of color. The recruitment and retention of racially diverse faculty and staff have been of particular importance in recent research, as "numerous scholars and commentators have held that there is a growing mismatch between the degree of racial/ethnic diversity in the nation's student population and the degree of diversity in the nation's elementary and secondary teaching force" (Boser, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 40). Specifically, national data show a gap continues to exist between minority students and teachers in the U.S. school system. For example, a recent study showed that "41% of all elementary and secondary students were the minority, but only 16.5% of all elementary and secondary teachers were minority" (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 40). In Massachusetts, approximately 40% of public school students are students of color, while this is true for only 10% of the public school educators. Black educators are underrepresented in schools while Black students are projected to increase (Lopez, 2017; NCES, 2020; Pew Research, 2017, 2018; US Dept. of Ed., 2016). The lack of racial diversity in the U.S. teacher workforce has historical roots that date back to the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education (1954).

Several studies have specifically demonstrated the importance of Black educators and how they can positively affect academic outcomes for both white and historically marginalized students (Freeman, 1997; Howard, 2002; Khalifa, 2011; McMahon, 2007; Reed, 2012). But research has also demonstrated that Black educators are leaving the profession at much higher rates than their white peers (Frank et al, 2019). Research studies have sought to explain the shortage of minority teachers, finding that particular school conditions are strongly related to minority teacher

departures (Ingersoll & May, 2011). These factors include: “the levels of collective faculty decision-making influence in their school and the degree of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms” (Ingersoll & May, 2011, p. 43). Moreover, toxic and racist school environments were named by 97% of Black educators as a reason to leave the profession (Frank et al, 2019). Understanding Black educators, who are experiencing a defining moment of racial terror in the United States (Hooker, 2016), must be prioritized to understand why they are rapidly leaving the field. In this current moment of racial reckoning, the disproportionate burdens Black people have carried since the outbreak of the Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) Disease in addition to the frequent omission of the Black educational leader experience from scholarship despite the impetus to retain provides a warrant for studying Black leaders. Therefore, this study examines the experiences and perceptions of Black educational leaders and the associated outcomes of leveraging community cultural wealth for communities of color in this current moment.

In addition, and as shown in more detail below, previous research on community cultural wealth (CCW), a model of human and cultural resources which challenges the pathological view of marginalized communities, has demonstrated the importance of cultural integrity and positive identity formation as tools to confront racism and discrimination (Holleran & Waller, 2003; Rone, 2002). These findings suggest, then, that people of color are more likely to succeed in environments in which they feel validated and racially affirmed (Rendon, 1994, 2002). But since much of the literature developed in educational literature in the last century was produced without including the voices or perspectives of Black school leaders (Dantley, 1990, 2002; Matthews &

Crow, 2010; Tillman, 2004b), a gap in what is known about the experiences of Black school leaders in crisis times such as our own persists. At a time when racial violence is being committed publicly against Black people in our broader society at increasing rates (U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, 2019), it is essential for Black researchers to both interrogate and record our collective history (Gooden, 2012).

Therefore, this study sought to examine the experiences and perceptions of Black educational leaders and the associated outcomes of leveraging community cultural wealth for communities of color in the middle of the current moment in schools and American society. Informed by the context established in this introduction, this study addresses the following two research questions:

1. How has Black leadership been affected by this current moment of racial reckoning?
2. What aspects of community cultural wealth, if any, do Black leaders leverage in their practice to help sustain them in the profession?

This study, part of a qualitative case study of a suburban Massachusetts school district attempting anti-racist leadership practices, is an investigation of how Black leadership has been affected by this current moment of racial reckoning with the recognition that this moment is a phenomenon. As expressed by Merriam and Tisdell, knowledge is constructed as phenomena are experienced (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study sought to understand how Black leaders are making sense of the effects and impacts of this moment on their leadership practice and how, if at all, they are leveraging community cultural wealth to sustain them in the field.

In this dissertation, I argue that this current moment highlighted racism as a

societal ill in this District. Whereas an experience of racism, including racial ignoring and invisibility, is a typical experience for Black students and educators (Carter Andrews, 2012; Griffith et al., 2019), the current moment through its heightened media coverage of racial violence against Black people nationalized the conversation about race and racism and thus validated the experience of Black leadership in the District. As a result of this validation, conversations about race and racism began taking place district-wide as this current moment created an opportunity for communities to interrogate their own racism.

In this chapter, I present an experience of racism for Black educational leaders consistent with research that asserts that BIPOC educational leaders face racist challenges (Frank et al, 2019). Study participants reported a series of challenges, including working through microaggressions, isolation, stereotyping, and doubts surrounding their competency in the workplace. However, despite an experience of racism, this study presents that Black educational leaders perceived an opportunity in this current moment in support of anti-racist leadership practice. According to a district-wide survey, focus group data, and interview data, study participants reported that this historical moment created opportunities for anti-racist work at the individual and system levels through its attention to racism across the country and focus on anti-Blackness. As a result of this moment, Black leadership experienced a decrease in daily microaggressions. In pursuit of anti-racist work, Black leaders in the District leveraged social and resistant capital to sustain them in the field.

In this chapter I demonstrate how the recent racial strife across the country and the COVID-19 pandemic has nationalized the problem of racism and thus

validated the lived experience of Black educational leaders, I present findings of decreased daily microaggressions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its related protocols and the discovery of social, navigational and resistant forms of capital as tools to help sustain Black leaders in the profession.

Conceptual Framework

Insofar as the American school curriculum continues to center mainstream experiences and reinforce white dominance, counternarratives provide a necessary and alternative perspective. Both Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) approaches have resulted in new understandings of how marginalized communities resist systems of dominance and oppression (Yosso, 2005, p.363). To address this study's research questions, I use Critical Race Theory (CRT) as my theoretical framework and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) as my conceptual framework. A model of community cultural wealth can be found in Appendix F.

Critical Race Theory asserts that race is a social construct embedded in American systems and policies that is a significant factor in determining social inequity in the United States (Ladson-Billings and Tate IV, 1995). Informed by the tenets of critical race theory, in particular the permanence of racism (Ladson-Billings and Tate IV, 1995), it serves as the theoretical framework relating to this study's research questions by centering marginalized communities and counternarratives as necessary tools to fight systemic inequities. Given that this study is about understanding the experiences and stores of knowledge Black educational leaders bring to the field, this theoretical orientation contributes to a study on anti-racist leadership because it seeks to center the leadership demographic most marginalized and adversely impacted by this

current crisis (Milano, 2021).

Informed by these CRT perspectives and to adequately account for how Black educational leaders navigate their leadership, I chose to use Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth framework. Community cultural wealth is a model of human and cultural resources which challenges the pathological view of marginalized communities. Defined as six areas or capitals, the Community Cultural Wealth Model includes the following: Linguistic, Familial, Aspirational, Navigational, Resistance, and Social (Yosso, 2005). Understanding these forms of capital enables better knowledge of the assets that different members bring to learning communities. Yosso expands on Ladson-Billings' scholarship on race and uses it to challenge traditional interpretations of cultural capital (Bordieu, 1977). I chose CCW to be the frame through which to conduct this study because of its emphasis on the importance of revisionist history or the counterstory/counternarrative. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) define counter-storytelling as "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told" (p. 26). Delgado and Stefanic (2012) define revisionist history as a "reexamination of America's historical record, replacing comforting majority interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities' experiences' (p.20). This conceptual framework informs my work as the process of revision is paramount. The process of revision intentionally centers on the voices of the Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) who have been marginalized. Community cultural wealth offers a more precise and exact lens to challenge traditional interpretations of cultural capital which tends toward a deficit view of communities of color as places of cultural impoverishment (Khalifa, 2016; Yosso, 2005). Thus, a study of underrepresented, Black educational

leaders that seeks to center their racialized experiences requires this anti-deficit lens as a necessary tool to fight systemic inequity. The core parts of the CCW framework used in this study are an emphasis on counternarratives and a focus on social and resistant capital. A model of community cultural wealth can be found in Appendix F.

Literature Review

This literature review highlights research on the experiences and perception of Black educational leaders, some of the contemporary factors that contextualize their experience, and the associated outcomes associated with community cultural wealth in communities of color. Though this is a study of leadership, I adopt the insights provided by Gist, Bianco, and Lynn (2016) and use 'leader' and 'educator' interchangeably for this literature review. As they state, "teachers of color share socio-political histories of marginalization by educational institutions, structures, policies, and practices, as well as transformative pedagogical and resistant community-based practices, in which positioning them from a group standpoint when theorizing and conducting research affords more comprehensive and complex understandings of their experiences" (Dilworth & Brown, 2008). It is for this reason that, for this section of the literature review, I share findings from key studies that center on the voices and experiences of Black teachers and leaders.

Research on the Experiences and Perceptions of Black Educational Leaders

There is a long history of educational reforms in the United States to address racism (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Though Black school leaders often are spearheading the initiatives that drive anti-racism work in schools, there has been little scholarship on Black educators and the racist experiences that shape their everyday lives (Gooden,

2012). Approximately 97% of the Black teachers surveyed in a recent study reported experiencing some form of racial microaggressions regularly at school (Frank et al, 2019). Black educators have named racism and the racialized incidents they experience in schools as reasons that they are leaving the profession rapidly (Frank et al, 2019). While the American student body is increasingly racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, the teaching population itself, however, does not mirror this same diversity. In my review of this research on the experience of black leaders in American schools, there were three categories of findings: how black leaders experience racism, how black leaders feel devalued, and how black leaders feel isolated. In addition, there is one additional branch of research focusing on the effectiveness of black leaders/educators, which I include at the end of this literature review section.

Routine Experience of Racism

In this subsection, I reviewed three empirical studies that demonstrate an experience of racism for Black educators. Though the recognition that Black people experience systemic racism in both the United States and in American schools is not a new topic in educational leadership, recent racialized incidents provide a warrant for discussing the experience of Black educators in this current moment. While researchers have found that some educators view racism as individual events and incidents, others view them as systemic or a part of school curricula (Allen & Louis, 2019, p. 678). A recent study titled *Examining the Trajectories of Black Mathematics Teachers* found that, compared to other factors like salary and support from school leadership, Black educators' experiences of racism were a major factor in their decision to leave the profession (Frank et al, 2019).

A common theme in the literature discussing the Black educators' racist experience is the routine nature of microaggressions. Educators of color experience microaggressions, subtle slights, and insults, regularly (Frank et al, 2019). Researchers Frank, View, Powell, Lee, Williams, and Bradley document the experiences of Black mathematics teachers pre- and post-school desegregation (Frank et al, 2019). In the Frank et al study, it was found that Black teachers' experiences of racism played a major role in why they wanted to leave the profession. Approximately 97% of the teachers surveyed in this study reported experiencing some form of racial microaggressions (Frank et al, 2019). 325 Black math teachers were surveyed across the US and asked questions related to feelings of racial isolation at school, how much support they felt they received, and whether they considered leaving the field. A major finding of this study was that racist microaggressions are statistically significant when it comes to determining Black teacher satisfaction. While personal factors such as salary, sex, and age accounted for ten percent of educators' thoughts of leaving the field, their experiences of microaggressions were nearly twice as impactful at seventeen percent (Frank et al, 2019). Microaggressions aren't inconsequential. They affect a teacher's psychological well-being. The target of racism and discrimination experience their stigmatization as sources of everyday stress (Lee, Soto, Swim & Bernstein, 2012). This stress has been associated with adverse consequences on mental and physical health (Lee, Soto, Swim & Bernstein, 2012).

Another study analyzed more than 5,500 teacher evaluations in Chicago to better understand the race gap in teacher performance ratings and found that the gap was largely a reflection of "differences in the school and classroom settings in which

teachers teach, rather than real differences in teacher performance" (Steinberg & Sartain, 2021). These findings reveal another form of racism Black teachers experience in schools as the researchers concluded that Black teachers were "disproportionately targeted for remediation and dismissal, relative to their White peers," (Steinberg & Sartain, 2021).

As can be seen from these findings, black leaders endure a common experience of racism in the workplace and this experience is a significant motivating factor in their decision to leave the field. Therefore, in my investigation of Black leaders' experience in this district, I examined the racialized experience of Black leaders in the District by way of the study methods to get a sense of their perceptions of isolation and any potential experience(s) of racism.

Experience of Devaluation

In this subsection, I reviewed two empirical studies that demonstrate an experience of devaluation for Black educators. Most often, microaggressions take the form of Black teachers feeling that their competence is unfairly questioned, or their contributions aren't acknowledged (Frank et al, 2019). A common theme present in the literature on the Black teacher experience was a sense of feeling undervalued or othered in the profession (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Two qualitative studies released by *The Education Trust* sampled Black and Latinx educators and found that Black and Latinx teachers feel disrespected and de-professionalized in their jobs, despite often exerting more emotional and actual labor than their colleagues (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). One hundred fifty Black teachers and ninety Latinx teachers with different levels of experience in public and public charter schools were sampled in seven states

(Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Researchers used data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS, 2012) to target states and districts with high numbers of teachers of color. Eighty percent of Black participants were women and nearly one-third were veteran teachers with more than 15 years of experience (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Black teachers reported consistently that they felt that their expertise and professional contributions were dismissed and that they experienced negative treatment, including a lack of recognition, from their colleagues (Griffin & Tackie, 2017).

A pattern emerged from the outcome of these studies that analyzed the results of focus groups with 150 Black teachers and 90 Latinx teachers from public schools across the country (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). The teachers believed their race and cultural background influenced their work in a way that was beneficial for students and the larger school community but those same attributes impeded their professional growth and created extra stress and obstacles for them at school (Griffin & Tackie, 2017). Given that toxic and racist environments were named by 97% of Black educators as a reason to leave the field (Frank et al, 2019), this warrants further investigation into how Black educators are making sense of the effects and impacts of this moment of racial reckoning on their leadership practice and thus this study and its research questions. As can be seen from these findings, Black leaders experience devaluation by colleagues in their respective careers and the workplace. Therefore, in my investigation of Black leaders' experience in the District, I applied this knowledge to the work of my study by interrogating whether Black leaders in this context shared an experience of devaluation in their professional life and whether they believed their race and cultural background was positively or negatively impacting their practice in this current

moment.

Experience of Isolation

In this subsection, I reviewed three empirical studies that demonstrate an experience of isolation for Black educators. Black educators report feeling isolated in schools as they are underrepresented (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Despite the suggested benefits of diversity, studies have found that the elementary and secondary educator workforce is still overwhelmingly homogenous (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). 82 percent of public-school teachers are white (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Education leaders are also predominantly white. The lack of racial diversity in the U.S. teacher workforce has historical roots that date back to the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). There is extensive scholarship documenting the implications of *Brown* on Black employment in public schools at a time where Black teachers were the primary educators of Black students in segregated schools (Anderson, 1998; Siddle-Walker, 2000). Researchers estimate that 38,000 Black educators lost their jobs in Southern and border states within ten years of the ruling with Black principals receiving the bulk of the dismissals (Oakley, Stowell, & Logan, 2009). Yet, Black school leaders are studied very little. In an attempt to navigate this isolation, Black school leaders have established race-based heritage groups or affinity spaces, such as the Black Heritage Club, as sources of support for each other (Solomon, 2002). These studies merit further investigation into how to retain Black educators and what these leaders are doing right now in this current moment to sustain themselves. As can be seen from these findings, Black leaders experience isolation in the workplace. Therefore, in my investigation of Black leaders' experience in this District, I specifically addressed a

potential experience of isolation and asked questions regarding what Black leaders are doing to sustain themselves in the field. These findings informed this study by offering a perspective of what Black school leaders are experiencing in the research and the tools Black school leaders have leveraged as they navigate their racialized experience.

Black Educator Effectiveness

In this subsection, I reviewed four empirical studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of Black educators. Race plays a role in the educators' expectations of students. Despite being disproportionately impacted and underrepresented in the field, additional evidence has emerged that highlights the importance of teacher diversification in K-12 education (Griffin, 2017). Studies have reflected Black educators' higher expectations for all students which contribute to better student outcomes (Khalifa, 2011; Teranishi, 2002). A two-year study of a school's educators, principal, students, and family members found that White teachers make more agreements with Black students to allow for their disengagement in exchange for "counterfeit social capital" with those students (Khalifa, 2011). Black teachers in this study did not "acquiesce" to student disengagement in this same way (Khalifa, 2011, p. 711). One concern explored in the scholarship is that White teachers with limited experience with diverse student populations sometimes express fear and lower expectations for these learners (Bransford et al, 2005). In contrast, studies show that Black educators positively affect academic outcomes for historically marginalized students (Khalifa, 2011; McMahon, 2007; Reed, 2012). Having at least one Black teacher in third through fifth grade reduces a Black student's probability of dropping out of school by 29% (Griffin, 2017). For very low-income Black boys, the results are even greater as their chance of dropping out fell by

39% percent if they were taught by a Black teacher (Griffin, 2017). Research has found that principals of color can enable greater recruitment and retention of educators of color (US. Dept. Ed, 2016; Hazard, 2019), Studies show that Black teachers are more likely to stay longer at schools with Black principals and that when those schools hire new teachers, they're more likely to be teachers of color (Hazard, 2019). Despite demonstrated effectiveness as both teachers and principals, Black educators are still rapidly leaving the profession (Frank et al, 2019) warranting further investigation into what might help them persist. As can be seen from these findings, Black leaders have greater efficacy in the field as it relates to academic outcomes for both white and historically marginalized students as compared to their White colleagues (Freeman, 1997; Howard, 2002; Khalifa, 2011; McMahon, 2007; Reed, 2012). As noted above, several studies demonstrated the importance of Black educators and reflected Black educators' higher expectations for all students which contribute to better student outcomes (Khalifa, 2011; Teranishi, 2002). Therefore, in my investigation of Black leaders' experience in this district, I addressed how educators perceive the impact of their race on their practice and what stores of knowledge Black leaders found important and impactful to their overall practice.

Research on Community Cultural Wealth

In this section, I will review the literature and empirical research that has been conducted using Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) as a frame. A model of Community Cultural Wealth can be found in Appendix F.

Community As Capital

As an anti-racist leadership approach, Community Cultural Wealth provides a

lens through which to examine the experiences and practices of communities of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). There has been some scholarship on the positive role and agency of community contexts (Jayakumar et al., 2013). Funds of knowledge-the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being"-are an available resource that students of color learn from their families and their social groups (Yosso, 2005).

Funds of knowledge lead to increased educational aspirations and ideologies in students of color (Kiyama, 2011). However, very few studies have shifted the analysis to the role and agency of the Black community in fostering success (Palmer & Gasman, 2008; Rone, 2002). In a study of the Young Black Scholars (YBS), a community-based college preparatory program in Los Angeles, researchers document such success and highlight the positive role of the community in facilitating college access (Jayakumar et al., 2013). Through in-depth interviews and surveys with twenty-five middle- and higher-income Black college students, the study showed that students' perceptions of YBS' support of their college aspirations were qualitatively different from perceptions of their schools' support (Jayakumar et al., 2013). Study participants predominantly fell in the middle- and higher-income range and in addition to structured community support, they also had access to their high schools' college-preparatory tracks (Jayakumar et al., 2013). Researchers theorized that participants leveraged community cultural wealth as an act of resistance to deficit-based narratives (Jayakumar et al., 2013). This study, which demonstrates the importance of community support as a source of wealth and capital for the Black community, begins to fill a scholarly gap as it sheds light on the

continuing significance of race in the schooling experience (Jayakumar et al., 2013).

People of color are more likely to succeed in environments in which they feel validated and racially affirmed (Rendon, 1994, 2002). This understanding can inform the schooling context to more effectively educate students of color in ways that are culturally affirming and socially transformative (Jayakumar et al., 2013). Villegas and Lucas (2007) have emphasized the importance of believing that all students can learn and deserve equal access to educational opportunities. However, as detailed in the previous section of this literature review and as Walker's (2011) and Baker's (2019) research confirmed, some teachers hold deficit views about Black students. Yosso (2005) and Valencia (1997, 2010) name that the strongest form of racism in our schools is deficit thinking where some teachers hold negative perceptions about our students who come from different races, cultures, or other identities, and pathologize that difference (Yosso, 2005, p 77). From this mindset emerges a cultural deficit model, characterized by descriptions of people and their cultural values as "pathological, [and] deficient in the cognitive, emotional, linguistic, and spiritual resources" (Dudley-Marling, 2006, p. 1). The cultural deficit perspective attaches labels and identifies weaknesses in students' backgrounds that suggest that students of color are "victims of lifestyles that [hinder] their ability to benefit from schooling" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 4). Other researchers conclude that schools need to work on educators' cultural competence and cultural responsiveness to counter the low expectations of historically marginalized students (Aveling 2007; Diem and Welton, 2021).

To this end, a study explored the use of an intervention tool to shape teacher candidates' perceptions of and attitudes about BIPOC students by including Critical

Race Theory and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) theory in a required diversity course (Moeller & BIielfeldt, 2011). This study explored the initial steps of integrating Critical Race Theory and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) theory (Yosso, 2005, 2006) into the teacher education curriculum. The study asked if the candidates applied their knowledge of CCW in reflecting on their in-person interactions as hosts for Native American students in a diversity workshop (Moeller & BIielfeldt, 2011). It further asked which types of CCW capital the candidates identified most frequently as they reflected on their experiences with Native American students. Results indicated that candidates can identify CCW in the field, with some types of capital more frequently identified than others (Moeller & BIielfeldt, 2011). Because the potential exists for knowledge to shape perceptions (Kolb, 1984), the study concluded that CCW could be a valuable addition to the teacher education curriculum. It also found that a more intensive focus on CCW and the addition of pre-contact activities, such as the sharing of counterstories (Yosso, 2006), may also promote knowledge translating into perceptions of and attitudes toward BIPOC students which provide further warrant for this study and its research questions.

Community Cultural Wealth, its aforementioned assets, and its connection to Critical Race Theory have been cited as a tool to help support the understanding of the environmental and societal conditions in which we learn and live. With this in mind, and with the understanding that community cultural wealth can be valuable in understanding how Black leaders are being affected by this moment and sustaining themselves in the field, this framework informs my research as I sought to discover what forms of community cultural wealth Black leaders may be leveraging through interviews and survey data.

Methods

This study is a qualitative research study designed to explore the experience, perceptions, and practice of Black school leaders in this current moment of racial reckoning. This study is part of a larger five-person group study investigating anti-racist leadership during this time of crisis. The five individual studies are loosely coupled within the overall study.

This study's site is a large, suburban, predominately White public school district in Massachusetts with over twenty schools. This specific district was chosen as the study site as it serves the purposes of this particular study by providing a diverse set of Black educational leaders to sample while also providing the specific demographic participants needed for the overall group study; Latinx leaders, Black leaders, Asian-American women leaders and leaders who work in predominantly White schools. This school district has a named commitment to anti-racism which was a requirement for this study which sought to investigate anti-racist leadership in this current moment. A full discussion of the larger group study design can be found in Chapter 2.

Participant Selection

This study's target group was Black educational leaders. Only 6% of Massachusetts educators are Black as reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). There are 92 Black educators in the district. To select this study's participants, I consulted with the district's superintendent of schools who shared a list of Black educational leaders in the district. Then, I used snowball sampling by asking study participants to recommend other

educational leaders in the district to be participants to ensure a rich pool of information (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with recruited participants from the district. The interviewees worked across multiple schools in the district and held various leadership roles. Among the participants were a Principal, an Assistant Principal, two Deans, a Director, and a School Counselor. I also conducted a focus group and distributed a district-wide survey to recruited educational leaders.

Data Collection

This study's data was collected from semi-structured interviews, a focus group of school leaders, a district-wide survey, and document reviews. Public documents, public data sets, and relevant communications were also collected. These data collection procedures were chosen to gather a comprehensive and diverse sampling of both the participant experience and the district setting with which to contextualize and triangulate. Data were de-identified and kept secure on a password-protected server.

Data Analysis

My data analysis began with a preliminary exploratory analysis to get a general perception of the data, followed by an established coding process to make sense of the data and emergent themes. Data were organized by common themes and patterns with the research questions at the center. Considering my conceptual framework, coding categories included the tenets of both critical race theory and community cultural wealth.

Interviews

This study sought to understand the racialized experience of Black educational leaders and how if at all, community cultural wealth informed their practice. Six semi-

structured interviews were conducted with recruited participants from the district at multiple levels. Five of the six interview participants were of the 6% of Black educators in Massachusetts as reported by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). The sixth interview participant self-identified as South Asian. Interview participants were purposefully selected based on the participants' positionality and role in the school or district. This study's interview questions were intentionally open-ended to capture the participants' experiences (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019). The interview questions were guided by both my theoretical and conceptual frameworks and asked specifically about each educational leader's experience and perception of this current moment and its effect on their practice. Each interview lasted sixty minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B.

Survey

A district-wide survey was conducted to capture perceptions of this moment and to compare the information collected in the survey against previous research and state data for emergent themes. Thirty-seven survey responses were collected from recruited participants from the district at multiple levels and of different racial backgrounds. The survey data was collected to learn more about the district climate and the experience of educators working in the current district context.

Document Review

This study includes an analysis of documents such as the district strategic plan, the district equity plan, professional development offerings, the district website, and

school and district communications. Public documents, public data sets, and other relevant information were also collected for a contextual understanding of the climate and insight into how the district and community it is set in were addressing issues of race and racism. Given this moment of racial reckoning and its media coverage, the national conversation regarding critical race theory, and anti-racist leadership, it was important to gather documentation with which to contextualize.

Focus Groups

Focus group observation was also conducted to help understand the educational context and the attitudes regarding the anti-racist leadership practices within the schools and district. This study's focus group had two participants. Focus groups are useful when participants are hesitant to provide information (Cresswell & Guetterman, 2019). Given the sensitive nature of discussions about race and racism, this focus group was necessary to offer an environment that might provide a feeling of safety that encourages the participants to share more openly related to the anti-racist leadership actions in their school and/or district. The focus group protocol can be found in Appendix E.

Positionality

As a Black educational leader at a predominantly White, independent school in Massachusetts, my own professional and educational journey is a counternarrative and informs my perspective. I am a first-generation college graduate who attended underserved Boston Public Schools until I gained admission to an independent school very similar to the one I currently work at. I've both attended and taught in a variety of educational settings: public, independent, urban, suburban, predominantly White, and majority Black contexts in Massachusetts. Growing up in Boston, Massachusetts

amongst the vulnerable has taught me to consider where power and social capital lie in every interaction. When I think about my leadership, this perspective is one of the primary things I value. Therefore, who I am as a researcher impacts how I interpret this study's findings. I'm empowered by the idea that Black children will inherit a more just world. I'm motivated by the possibility that my own students might be the catalyst for it. I share the positionality and the experience of racism that most of this study's participants spoke of. My lived experience is the impetus behind this study.

Findings

The research questions grounding this study consider how Black educational leaders are experiencing this moment of racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings for this study relate to the tenets of critical race theory and community cultural wealth. As such, the findings in this study are organized to first describe the experiences and perceptions of Black educational leaders and how they have been affected by this current moment. Secondly, I discuss how educational leaders are leveraging community cultural wealth to help sustain them in the field. These themes are grounded in the context of the last two years, understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and national racial reckoning on BIPOC communities, further providing context for analysis of the findings in response to the research questions.

In this chapter, I present an experience of racism for Black educational leaders consistent with research that asserts that BIPOC educational leaders face racist challenges (Frank et al, 2019). Study participants reported a series of challenges, including working through microaggressions, isolation, stereotyping, and doubts surrounding their competency in the workplace. However, this study presents that Black

educational leaders perceived an opportunity in this current moment in support of anti-racist leadership practice despite an experience of racism. According to a district-wide survey, focus group data, and interview data, study participants reported that this historical moment created opportunities for anti-racist work at the individual and system levels through its attention to racism across the country and a focus on anti-Blackness. As mentioned above and as a result of this moment, Black leadership experienced a decrease in daily microaggressions. In pursuit of anti-racist work, Black leaders in the District leveraged social and resistant capital to sustain them in the field.

Validation of Racist Experiences

Study findings assert that the COVID-19 pandemic and this current moment of racial reckoning marked by the recent racial strife across the country have nationalized racism and thus validated the experience of Black educators by forcing school leaders to respond to issues of race and racism in the schoolhouse. Amid the pandemic, there was a documented rise in racially motivated violence across the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, 2019). Of all 4,930 reported hate crimes motivated by race or ethnicity, 48.5% were "victims of crimes motivated by offenders' anti-Black or African American bias", compared with 15.7% as "victims of anti-White bias", 14.1% as "victims of anti-Hispanic or Latino bias" and 4.4% of "anti-Asian bias" (U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, 2019). This rise of racially motivated violence, in conjunction with the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, all murdered at the hands of either white police officers or white vigilantes, became instrumental in forcing the nation to acknowledge its relationship with systemic racism. Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) Disease, Black people,

indigenous people, and other people of color (BIPOC) have carried disproportionate burdens (Milano, 2021). The infection and death rates affect Black and Latinx communities at a higher rate than White communities; they are two to three times likelier to be hospitalized, and twice as likely to die, according to recent estimates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Researchers have found that "racism — not race — is the risk factor for spread" (Milano, 2021).

Whiteness is collectively constructed by multiple players and its construction has implications for the students' and educators' experience of teaching and learning (Yoon, 2012). Educators of color experience "Whiteness at work" even in schools that commit to equity (Yoon, 2012). In line with the research, interviews with Black school leaders across different schools and in various roles had a common theme of racist experiences amongst them. Several study participants made mentioned microaggressions and burnout as challenging aspects of their daily work experience in the District. Regarding racial incidents in the District, one participant shared that "there are times when White students are using the N-word or White students are committing microaggressions." While discussing racism, a different participant stated: "We [Black leaders] know that this qualitative data is very necessary in order to justify what we know is that reality, even though we don't need the justification. But to explain it to White people in power, they need data, right?" He continued: "My own narrative is all I need…I don't need to talk to somebody that's doing what I do in a different building, because I understand that it happens everywhere." The threat of "social injustice and racial strife" has always been a part of the Black American experience (Lee, Soto, Swim & Bernstein, 2012). When asked in the district survey how often racial tensions occur at school or in the district,

over half of the respondents (58%) responded ‘occasionally’. 35% of respondents answered either ‘very often’ or ‘often’. Though recent events like racial unrest in the summer of 2020 and the controversy regarding both CRT and racial literacy curriculums have nationalized the conversation on race, Black educators have long been hyper-aware of their racialized identities.

An incident in an AP Chinese class in the District at the start of the pandemic further illustrates the District’s growing awareness of racism and race-related issues. A Zoom bombing occurred in which someone outside the classroom joined a Zoom class and used racial slurs and epithets to target BIPOC community members. A participant shared: “We were just getting used to learning Zoom, and we didn't know how to shut things down. And so out of that our Human Rights Council was born…as part of the pandemic, it became race front and center." According to the district-wide survey, 100% of survey respondents reported engaging in some type of professional development related to anti-racist leadership or culturally responsive pedagogy since March 2020. These crises have highlighted the racial inequities that exist in our society and as such exacerbated the inequities that exist in our schools (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Given this, the pandemic has been identified as “an opportunity” to highlight and address the longstanding disparities that Black people both face and intuitively understand through their lived experience (Ladson-Billings, 2021). The extensive media coverage of the current racialized violence and the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 Disease has on the Black community impacted the experience of Black leaders in the District. Black leaders in the district received negative feedback and death threats as a result of their anti-racist work. In an interview, a Black school leader described parent feedback

towards another Black administrator in the district as vitriolic when discussing the experience of Black educators in the district. They stated: “Given COVID and the vitriol, especially as administrators that we've been receiving from parents…one of the elementary principals…he often wondered, were parents coming for him harder because he is a Black admin of color?... He left the district.” The pandemic was described as “eye-opening” in relation to societal issues. A Black participant explained in an interview how this current moment helped them grow professionally when they stated: “Professionally, it [the pandemic] really opened my eyes to the disparities in education. And even within [the district] the haves and the have nots, that gulf seemed to widen even more.”

As expressed in the literature review, microaggressions and their routine nature can have a corrosive effect on well-being. In interviews, participants reported a series of challenges, including working through stereotyping and doubts surrounding their competency in the workplace. It was said in an interview that there was a feeling of needing to appear perfect to overcompensate as a result of race. A participant stated:

“There's that added layer of having to feel like you need to be perfect all the time. Or at least, like, as close to perfect. I feel like I worked my ass off in order to sort of prove something…But I just feel like I need to work that much harder to prove I can be in this space. And you can trust me in this space.”

Another participant shared the following regarding their experience being at work: “It’s obviously difficult, you know, to be. To just be, but I think the racial reckoning aspect of it is freeing for me…I don't know that I've ever shown up to work

before if that makes any sense. And so I'm showing up." This finding of validation of racist experiences is notable given the research regarding White educators, their perceptions of racism, and my theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Despite the racist conditions that exist in schools, White educators typically do not see themselves as "raced or privileged," even though it is their positionality that allows them to avoid considering how race and racism impact their students or their communities (McMahon, 2007, p. 687; Swanson & Welton, 2019). The acknowledgment of racism by White educators at the district level as indicated by interview and survey data demonstrates a climate shift for these Districts' leaders as the impact of racism on Black educational leaders is significant.

District Support in this Current Moment

As a result of this current moment, the district has renamed its priorities in support of anti-racism. Though study participants in this District reported an experience of racism consistent with research that asserts that BIPOC educational leaders face racist challenges, despite experiences of racism, a finding was that Black educational leaders perceived an opportunity in this current moment in their pursuit of anti-racist leadership practice. According to the district survey and in participant interviews, it was generally felt that this historical moment created opportunities for anti-racist work at the individual and system levels through heightened media coverage and attention to racism across the country, thus validating the racist experience of Black educators in the District. When asked in the district survey to rate the level at which this moment of our nation's racial reckoning affected your work for equity, 82% of respondents answered that this moment either greatly created the opportunity for equity work (46%) or somewhat created

opportunity for equity work (35%), even though only 20% of survey respondents were Black.

The District began several new initiatives in direct response to this moment of racial reckoning. When discussing district leadership, a participant shared that the superintendent "is really thoughtful" about the issue of race and said that the district's motto has been updated to include the word 'equity'. Though there is continued progress to be made, the participant stated of the superintendent: "That whole equity piece and anti-racism piece he is bringing I'd like to think is ringing true." One participant shared that COVID has really shined a much-needed spotlight on the experience of Black leaders when they said in an interview:

"There are things that I feel like would not have happened pre-COVID that [the district] is doing now. There's a lot of work to still be done, but I think about the fact that we now have staff affinity groups–that was created out of COVID…it was really important that we create that time within the school day within the schedule. So you know, it's not an add-on, it's a part of. I don't know if that would have happened pre-COVID."

Several participants also shared that the district-level changes in practice that the district has made as a result of this moment have sustained them in their work in their current context. In sharing about professional development, a study participant shared that "every single PD last year was on racial identity." They continued:
"When [the superintendent] said we're going to focus on active anti-racism, the interim principal said, this is what we're doing all year. So every staff meeting was about that. And it really was like, we went first in before we went out. And so really thinking about where

do you come from? What is your racial identity? How do you see race in your classroom and having those conversations? But the thing was, those conversations, the breakout conversations, for the most part, were in affinity groups."

Before the start of the pandemic, affinity groups in this District did not exist. They were created in response to this current moment. Through the district's creation of affinity groups, there was an acknowledgment of isolation and experiences of racism that felt supportive to Black leaders. This is further contextualized by a string of racial incidents in the news regarding the district and the experience of Black administrators within it. Two school principals in the District received racist and confrontational messages regarding the anti-racism work in the district and their discussions with their school communities regarding racism and current events in the media. This current moment of racial reckoning necessitated that individuals undergo personal growth and learning about race and racism in solidarity with communities of color, including racial identity development, which the district prioritized as a professional development need this past year as it focused its efforts on anti-racism. A participant shared the following about support at the district level:

"I think staff of color feel more supported now than maybe when I first started ten years ago. I also think that there just weren't that many of us ten years ago. There's now a good number of us, the department chairs have done a really good job, sort of trying to make sure that they are hiring more diverse candidates that are qualified for the job."

These supporting points confirm previous research on Black leaders' experiences, particularly in regard to racism.

A Decrease in Daily Microaggressions

As described in this study's literature review, experiences of racism, including microaggressions, was a regular occurrence and normal part of the job pre-pandemic for Black educational leaders (Frank et al, 2019). Though study participants shared an experience of racism in the district and are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, several Black school leaders perceived this moment to be a respite from the regular microaggressions they experienced. Black leaders reported a better quality of life due to the pandemic, due in part to a decrease in daily microaggressions as a result of the pandemic and its related COVID-19 protocols. District responses to this current moment, including a district push to be anti-racist and socially distant protocols and practices like remote learning options for both educators and students, resulting in policies that were perceived as supportive by Black leadership.

One Black participant, when reflecting on their pandemic experience in an interview, shared that "it wasn't a bad pandemic for [them] and [their] husband." They expressed advancing their personal goals during the pandemic. This participant continued: "We spent a lot of time together, we bought a house, like a lot of good things happened." For some participants, they were able to spend quality time with loved ones and this current moment created opportunities for more meaningful conversations about race. They stated: "We got to hang out with a core group of friends that really brought us all together and me once again, being the only Black friend, my friends sort of coalesced around me and wanted to learn, for the first time I felt genuinely, what it is like being a Black gay man." Many Black participants described feeling better connected both among themselves as Black school leaders and as a wider leadership team with their White

colleagues now that the intensity of the racial divide in this country was finally seen by their White counterparts. Many mentioned the importance of representation or presence of people of color being important or a part of their practice pre-pandemic and that they noticed the support of White community members during the pandemic. One participant shared: “I've had parents reach out to me because I am Black, just to check in and see how I'm doing which I find fascinating. I know that's not the norm.” In an interview, a participant shared having an opportunity to better connect with family and friends due to decreased socializing and social distancing. The participant stated: “We always got together every week. We just gave us more time to spend together…our bubble, our pod was tight.” In addition to an opportunity to connect with loved ones, the pandemic also offered respite and opportunities to pause and reflect that weren’t available before this moment.

Participants described feeling both physically and psychologically safer due to being able to work from home, free from the danger of contracting COVID-19 and daily microaggressions. A Black participant reported: “The pandemic provided for me. The pandemic imposed, pregnant-pause allowed me time to reflect, reevaluate, and then kind of refocus…if it weren't for that, I would have been just still on my grind, just the honest grind, just doing this gig.” Participants experienced personal and professional gains during this time as Black participants were promoted, entered the District’s leadership pipeline program, and received awards during the pandemic. A Black participant shared: “When I had a chance to sit back and go, okay, well, there's other things you might want to do…oh, yeah, let's go back to school. You always like school. Let's get this certificate. Let's get the certification. If it weren't for the pandemic, that wouldn't have

happened."

As established by these findings, the pandemic offered a better quality of life for Black leaders. Participants favorably discussed teaching and leading from home. A participant shared being disappointed about returning to work after remote learning in an interview. Pre-pandemic, participants shared significant microaggressions as a part of their regular experience in the district and named a need to overlook them to stay employed. A Black participant stated in an interview:

"It's the coded language…when a White kid is in the office and they don't like what I'm saying to them they'll say 'I don't feel safe' or when I tell a White parent how their child has been disrespectful and misbehaving–they can tell I'm a Black man over the phone. They say, 'Well, you sound very mean'...or like last year, last year a parent was like 'What are you doing here? Like, [she] had no idea who I was. I mean, she knew who I was because I coached football and I'd coached her older son. And so she's like, 'what are you doing here?'And I was like, 'I work here. And she's like…'What do you do here?'And I was like 'I'm the assistant principal'. And she's literally standing in front of the main office with my picture…it's those small, micro-aggressive interactions with White people. I'm just like, alright, if I checked every single person every single time I wouldn't have a job…so I pick and choose what hill I'm going to die on."

By being home without the expectation of being in the school building, daily microaggressions decreased resulting in participants feeling more emotionally and psychologically safe.

This finding of a decreased experience of microaggressions and, therefore, a more positive experience is notable given previous research on the disproportionate

impact the Black community experiences as a result of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the endemic nature of racism. This contextualizes the significance of this current moment and its impact on Black leaders in the District. Black participants' discussions of the pre-pandemic experiences were consistent with the earlier research which documents their racist experience. Given this current moment, opportunities to further anti-racist work were made possible in this District. Remote learning provided them respite and safety from microaggressions.

Leveraging Community Cultural Wealth in Practice

As discussed in previous chapters, community cultural wealth describes six forms of capital that often go unrecognized as assets to students of color in their schooling. By examining deficit theorizing as a modern form of racism, Yosso shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of communities of color and instead focuses on the "array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). Yosso asserts the strength and resourcefulness of BIPOC communities in the face of racism and discrimination. These approaches have resulted in new understandings of how marginalized communities build solidarity and resist dominant cultures and policies that perpetuate inequity (Yosso, 2005, p.363).

In this section, I present findings on community cultural wealth in practice in the District. This study sought to identify how if at all, Black leaders are leveraging community cultural wealth in the field to help sustain themselves. This study found that in response to this current moment, Black educational leaders sustain themselves

through leveraging community cultural wealth by both drawing on their funds of knowledge and the newly created affinity group spaces in the District as sources of support (social capital). Black leaders also develop their critical consciousness as a leadership asset (resistant capital). Black educational leaders in the district rely mainly on these two forms of cultural capital to sustain them in the field: social capital and resistant capital. These forms of capital interact and overlap with each other to increase the impact and efficacy of Black leadership.

Affinity Groups As Social Capital

Social capital acts as a system of support for Black leaders who feel otherwise isolated. Social capital consists of the networks of people and community resources that support minoritized individuals as they navigate social institutions. A major aforementioned system of support in the district created as a byproduct of the pandemic was affinity groups. This asserts the importance of the affinity space as social capital.

As discussed in this study's literature review, research on community cultural wealth asserts the importance of cultural integrity and positive identity formation in the face of racism and discrimination (Chavous et al., 2003; Holleran & Waller, 2003; Rone, 2002). Study participants made many statements and references across interviews about the role of belonging, connectedness, and the importance of developing relationships with their students and colleagues of color to feel affirmed in their work. There were also many references made to personal connections or lived experience, and/or investment in the work as a gateway into the profession or as a reason to stay. The district, like many other school communities in an attempt to support Black school leaders in navigating

cultural isolation in schools, established affinity spaces as sources of support as a byproduct of the pandemic and this current moment of racial reckoning. Study participants made references to feeling isolated in the pre-pandemic district. Regarding isolation, a participant said of their experience: “It's exhausting being the only black person in a building…The amount of energy that I have to use throughout the day, long term, I don't know what to do…I'm just struggling.” Many study participants discussed the importance of affinity spaces in interviews. As one participant shared: “I went last year. It was super helpful…It just felt very affirming. It felt very validating to know that I'm not the only one having this struggle because what happens is you have one or two people of color in one building, and it feels like you're isolated and it's only happening to you. But then when you're in an affinity group, and you see how many other Black, Brown, Latinx, or Asian people are in the district, and you're all together…the camaraderie of it is like, okay, we're not alone in this.” Affinity group spaces served as a way to foster connectedness and belonging in the District amongst communities of color.

Affinity groups were also named as a source of emotional safety and support in the district. In discussing affinity groups in an interview, a participant shared: “That's how I keep my sanity…I go to the spaces where I feel the safest to just speak my mind…we have affinity groups for administrators, we have affinity groups for faculty, we have affinity groups for students. And I try to tap into all of those because I get something out of all of them.” As Smith describes in his dissertation, White study participants also understand and experience the positive impact of affinity spaces in the district even though they don’t participate in them. Study participants mentioned the educational value the affinity groups offer to the greater school community. One

participant stated that "the Black student union [in the district] has really been very lively. They educate each other, but they also educate the greater community with awareness programs." Study participants interviewed by Smith also discussed how affinity spaces are a learning tool for White colleagues as they provide a window into the collective experience of students of color. One participant stated, "We do exit polls of students of color as they leave to figure out what their experience was like. And often invite them back to talk to the faculty."

This finding establishes affinity groups as social capital and leadership assets. These findings contribute to the understanding of how marginalized communities build solidarity and resist dominant culture and policies that perpetuate inequity (Yosso, 2005, p.363). It is through these groups that educators and students of color come together to share funds of knowledge and the counternarratives – the stories of people of color in predominantly White schools – as a critical element of anti-racist practice.

Critical Consciousness As Resistant Capital

Through the experience of racism, communities of color develop skills and strategies to help them navigate schools and workplaces where they must negotiate microaggressions and discrimination. The racialized experiences of Black educational leaders in the district are critical to their consciousness and practice. Findings on community cultural wealth assert that Black leaders in the District are leveraging critical consciousness as a resistant form of capital to sustain in their contexts. Resistant capital is defined as the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenge inequality (Yosso, 2005). Black educators develop a knowledge base as a result of their culture and their roles in their communities that make them better

educators and leaders (Ahmed & Bozer, 2016).

Findings indicate that Black leaders develop leadership strengths from their experience of leading in predominantly White spaces. Cultural intuition and their proximity to marginalization have been named as assets that directly inform how they navigate predominantly White spaces (Delgado Bernal, 2016; Yosso & Burciaga, 2016; Covarrubias et al., 2018). Findings assert that Black leaders are leveraging resistant capital by speaking out against systems of dominance and oppression and working for equity in the face of them. Whereas Black educational leaders are more apt to recognize injustice, call out issues of racism in current events, and center race and social justice in their work (Lee, Soto, Swim & Bernstein, 2012), White colleagues struggle to achieve the same level of awareness and activism. The lived experience of communities of color motivates them to transform oppressive institutions and structures. Aspiring to leadership, sharing experiences of racism and devaluation, and advocating for students of color in majority White spaces are some of the important ways that Black leaders resist anti-Black racism and oppression in schools.

As one participant named, refusing to code-switch, be inauthentic or doubt your abilities is an act of resistance and a form of resistant capital. When discussing their experience as a Black school leader, this participant shared:

“I don't have imposter syndrome anymore. I'm just unapologetically Black…I try my hardest not to code-switch. I try my hardest to speak my truth and to just speak my mind all the time…And if I don't, then I'm doing our kids a disservice. I'm doing this role a disservice if I don't just speak from a very honest space. Because the perspective of Black people isn't always incorporated into the outcome or a decision.”

The importance of representation of Black students and other teachers of color was mentioned as being important to the practice of Black leaders. Many Black leaders named the importance of being present in majority-White school spaces to be a mirror and advocate for the students of color they teach. Many Black school leaders named their own challenging experiences of racism as K-12 students as a primary driver for their anti-racist work. A participant stated: “I'm seeing kids that look like us and come from where we come from and talk like we talk…they're getting treated just like I got treated or you got treated 20 years ago,” they said. “Now, I have all these degrees behind my name…and so I'll raise a whole lot of hell you know, I'm pointing out racist teacher after racist teacher or ruffling feathers.” Another participant reflected back on their own school experience and stated the following: “I wish that there was an administrator who looked like me in schools whose office I could go to and get away from the madness…someone with that kind of clout in school who could assess me and see me for who I am...I think I definitely do that for students.” As a result of the difficulties and challenges Black people are facing and the tenacity it takes to survive them, Black educational leaders develop resilience and are more critically conscious regarding racial injustice and racial inequity than their White peers. There’s an awareness of injustice on a deeply personal level that contributes to growing activism that informs their practice. The funds of knowledge and critical consciousness that Black leaders leverage are often byproducts of systems of dominance and oppression. However, they are valuable cultural assets that they bring to their work and leadership.

These findings are notable given previous research. Despite a racist experience, Black educators are more effective at supporting all learners and achieving better student

outcomes in the classroom than their White counterparts (Ahmed & Bozer, 2016). These findings demonstrate that Black leaders did establish a positive racial identity and racial consciousness despite routine microaggressions. The importance of culturally responsive teaching has been documented as a key component in effectively teaching the increasingly diverse student body in American public schools. Banks et al. (2001) argues that "if teachers are to increase learning opportunities for all students, they must be knowledgeable about the social and cultural context of teaching and learning…teaching should be culturally responsive to students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups" (p. 197). Most Black leaders in the District assert that they worked for equity and justice pre-pandemic and named this as important to their practice. As Swanson and Welton (2019) define, a person is race-conscious if s/he is able to "readily identify the problems associated with racism and are willing to participate in critical discussions about race" (p. 736). Though there was also evidence of other forms of CCW being leveraged, social and resistant capital in this District amongst Black leaders were the most salient and readily identifiable across the data.

Discussion

This study endeavors to support the understanding of how Black leadership has been affected by this current moment of racial reckoning and what aspects of community cultural wealth, if any, do Black leaders leverage in their practice. This study identifies the counternarratives, assets, and stores of wealth Black school leaders leverage in order to contribute to the scholarship on how they are sustaining themselves in the profession. This study found that the recent racial strife across the country and the COVID-19 pandemic has nationalized the problem of racism and thus validated the

lived experience of Black educational leaders. These findings are connected to my research questions by presenting an experience of decreased daily microaggressions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its related protocols and the discovery of social and resistant forms of capital as tools to help sustain Black leaders in the profession.

These findings were unexpected given the sociopolitical context of the District. The District is in a city approximately 7 miles West of the City of Boston and is widely regarded as one of the best places to live in Massachusetts. Its schools are considered to be some of the best in Massachusetts. Given its context, it's notable that this study found a better quality of life for Black educational leaders as I originally expected this moment to further isolate them given the research, the majority-White context and the compounded impacts of COVID-19. There is a gap in the research regarding the experience of Black leaders generally and a greater gap in the literature regarding Black educational leaders in predominantly White school contexts. The increased capability of Black leaders to perform despite enormous strain and struggle is a result of racist, oppressive systems. For Black leaders, there is no considering their belief system and social position within the context of the present moment without first interrogating the majority position and dominant culture by virtue of being othered. Many Black leaders expressed critical consciousness and social justice leadership as inherent in their practice and a significant part of their approach. My recommendations discuss factors that could lead to successful outcomes in districts for Black leaders in service of the students they educate and recruitment and retention efforts.

For similar districts, I recommend that district leadership continue to increase racial diversity by recruiting diverse faculty and staff, further work to identify, remedy

and prevent the imapcts of racism on communities of color, and ground the curriculum and other programming in anti-racist principles district-wide. Across our five studies, it was found that many of these initiatives are happening in some schools but they are not yet district-wide approaches. I also suggest that similar districts work to understand the increased leadership capacities for resilience, cross-cultural communication, and cultural competence as leadership assets of Black educational leaders in the district develop due to the unique challenges they face. The efficacy of Black educators has been documented in educational research and it's important to acknowledge that not only is racism endemic it also morphs. Given that, it is necessary to highlight and affirm the success of Black educators in light of their racist experiences. My findings indicate that participants use specific types of capital (social, resistant) more frequently than others. Previous studies have found that a more intensive focus on community cultural wealth and the addition of pre-contact activities, such as the sharing of counterstories (Yosso, 2006), may also promote knowledge translating into positive perceptions and attitudes of BIPOC communities. Anti-racist practices along with the concept of community cultural wealth can address critical gaps. The findings seem to suggest that further research on topics related to microaggressions, like racial battle fatigue, is also critical to the understanding of this topic.

My findings are of interest to those who want to learn more about the experiences of Black school leaders. There may be lessons learned in this study that could help inform practices that could further develop culturally proficient professional development and district-level anti-racist leadership programs. As researchers and educators work to explore the integration of critical race theory and community cultural

wealth into the teacher education curriculum, there's an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained through this study in reflecting on their interactions with BIPOC students, families, and colleagues. My study is of particular interest for those teaching in districts with a commitment to anti-racism or who are navigating the compounded impacts of the Coronavirus-2019 Disease and racial injustice in their school community.

CHAPTER 4[4]:

Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

Despite decades of reform since the Civil Rights Era, racial disparities persist in schools. Students of color are projected to increase in our schools and leaders of color remain underrepresented. Anti-racist leadership is more important now than ever before. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how educational leaders engage in anti-racism in a single District in Massachusetts that is committed to anti-racist practice and how these same leaders perceived limitations or support for anti-racist initiatives. To make sense of the perspectives of leaders in this District at a time when their current professional context has been defined by a global pandemic, we sought to answer the following two research questions:

RQ1: In what ways, if at all, do educational leaders enact anti-racist leadership practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and this moment of racial reckoning?

[4] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project. Stephen Dacey, Laniesha Gray, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, Ana Tavares.

RQ2: What are leaders' perceptions of the limitations or supports for anti-racist leadership practice as they navigate leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and this moment of racial reckoning?

Across our five studies, we found evidence of anti-racist leadership practices, ranging from policy and practice changes to individual actions and initiatives, some of which responded to racist incidents during the pandemic. Across all five studies, participants spoke about their efforts to engage teachers, parents, and students to better support anti-racist initiatives aimed at dismantling structural racism within their school communities. In Dacey, Gray, Po, and Smith's studies, findings showed extensive professional development initiatives dedicated to anti-racism, including racial identity development in the District; all studies found benefits to the formation of staff affinity groups, as well as time provided within the school day to meet in these affinity groups. In Tavares and Po's studies, participants shared about opportunities initiated by individuals to help the District advance anti-racist work and about the ways that they and others advocated with those in formal decision-making roles. In Tavares's study, participants' responses illuminated the commitment needed from all educators at all levels across the District to effectively lead in order to enact anti-racist practices. In Po and Smith's studies, participants identified the intentional changes to policies and practices aimed at dismantling structural racism in their schools, such as more equitable grading policies, multi-level classes, a less Eurocentric curriculum, eliminating weighted grade point average calculations, and prioritizing the hiring of diverse faculty and staff.

As can be seen from these and other examples we presented in our individual dissertations, school and system leaders in this District could, in fact, point to significant

anti-racist leadership work happening across the District and perceived that this work was consistent with the District's anti-racist goals. Our findings suggest that outside of district-wide or school-sanctioned anti-racist initiatives, the District was also supportive of individual school leaders attempting to implement anti-racist initiatives that support racial equity and justice. As shown in more detail in Dacey's dissertation, some participants' perceptions of support included having a presumed license from the central office to promote their own racial equity initiatives; there was a sense that no approval was needed from the District hierarchy for launching initiatives such as book clubs or human rights councils. Other participants, as found in Tavares and Po's study, did advocate for funds to run racial equity programs or were given class responsibility reductions to do building-level or District-level anti-racist work. Still, other participants felt support through the creation of affinity groups and in the efforts made to hire more diverse candidates. Therefore, the fact that the District intentionally supported the work of individual leaders who sought to accomplish anti-racist practices suggests that formal and informal leadership could be leveraged in this district to advance systemic anti-racism. This is consistent with research on change in organizations requiring work from all levels of an institution, and that individuals are dynamic agents (Bonilla & Lebrón, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

However, in looking across all five studies, a consistent finding was that school and system leaders perceived several limitations in the pursuit of anti-racist leadership practice. According to the District survey and as described in more detail in Gray, Tavares, and Po's dissertations, while it was generally felt that this moment in history has opened up opportunities for anti-racist work through heightened media attention to

racism, district leaders also expressed that the pandemic hindered the advancement of the work across the District.

Similarly, our findings also identified several other limitations to the enactment of anti-racist leadership practices. One such limitation is the noted lack of Black Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) voices in leadership roles supporting anti-racist initiatives. As described in Tavares's dissertation, the six Latinx educators in the study noted that there was little to no representation beyond themselves at their school and specifically, no Latinx principals. In addition, Dacey found opportunities for staff to engage in White racial identity development relied on informal conversation and discussion amongst White colleagues; there was a noted lack of formal opportunities designed specifically for White racial identity development, likely being obstructed by various forms of resistance exhibited by White educators in the District. Po and Tavares's dissertations found BIPOC leaders reported isolation and little support when confronting daily or peak incidents of racism themselves. The work of some BIPOC leaders in the District felt unrecognized as found in Tavares's study. Across both Po and Tavares's studies, participants reported that only a small fraction of the work is acknowledged through formal structures and despite the Districts' vocal support of anti-racist work, there is fatigue among those in the trenches. Finally, the ability to enact anti-racist leadership practices was limited by the lack of mandates from leadership to require staff to engage in anti-racist practices such as racial identity development work and equitable grading practices. So while anti-racist practices existed, we also found that the opportunities for anti-racist work were limited by the lack of BIPOC voices, lack of formal structures for White racial identity

development, and resistance to systemic changes. Navigating these constraints is critical to creating anti-racist change.

Ultimately, in looking across and making sense of these findings, there is some evidence to suggest that leaders working to advance the work of anti-racist leadership in this District are often forced into navigating a set of fundamental tensions in the District. One tension is illustrated by the District's desire for systemic change and the need for authentic engagement at the individual and interpersonal levels. Although there were significant small group efforts to dismantle structural racism, systemic anti-racist change was not institutionalized. According to participants, universal buy-in from constituents did not develop, and as a result, there was a disconnect between policy and practice. Secondly, leaders of color developed greater leadership capacity as a result of the racialized challenges that they face, but remained challenged by the consistent experience of racism they endured.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we will provide more detail about each of these fundamental tensions, including how our findings led us to make sense of these tensions in the District, as well as the implications for research, practice, and policy that we have noted as a result of these tensions. Our goal in the remainder of this dissertation is, in taking stock of how educational leaders enacted and perceived anti-racist leadership practices in their roles within this District, to consider the significance of findings as it points to new directions in institutional change and care of human resources to deepen understanding of anti-racist educational leadership. Throughout these remaining sections, we have included implications that District and school-level leaders within and outside

the District may consider when attempting to pursue anti-racist practice, as well as suggestions for areas of future research grounded in our findings and conclusions.

The Tension Between Small Group Effort and Systemic Change

Findings from our studies demonstrate that there is significant tension between school leaders' desire to create systemic anti-racist change and the need for authentic engagement at the small group or individual level. As seen in Dacey's and Smith's studies, school leaders did not mandate specific anti-racist practices, such as more equitable grading practices and multi-level classes, for fear of resistance and teacher burnout. The lack of mandates not only resulted in inconsistent implementation of anti-racist practices but also allowed teachers to resist or avoid engaging in anti-racist work and placed disproportionate burdens on teachers who were dedicated to the advancement of anti-racism in their school. The lack of mandates also created gaps in the District's anti-racist programming.

As seen in Tavares' and Po's studies, there was significant anti-racist work done by individuals and small groups in this District who had been given permission from District leaders to experiment with anti-racism in their respective roles. For example, Tavares spoke to one educator who addressed the lack of BIPOC representation in the texts given to students with supervisors which led to purchasing materials they could share with their students so that they could read text that was representative of who they are. Similarly, Po's research revealed several effective small group anti-racist efforts. For example, one of the most consistent themes across all of the participants' stories was the important role of mentorship. One elementary educator leader was grateful for the strong mentorship within her building and noted that the presence of another Asian leader had

supported her during her most challenging times. This same leader took the initiative to secure funds to support race literacy, which allowed her to purchase books with diverse voices to put in front of kids. Another example included lead teachers writing a script that could be used for phone calls home to support Asian families during some of the most trying days of the spring of 2021.

In addition, Smith's study found that school leaders in the District feared that mandates for anti-racist work would lead to disengagement among the mostly White faculty. As a result, many of the anti-racist changes were not universally implemented. For example, a department chair felt that school leaders would lose buy-in and engagement if they tried to mandate specific grading practices. According to Dacey, another participant shared that White faculty were not ready to engage in mandatory professional development around White racial identity.

Across the five studies, we also found that teacher fatigue and burnout were also major constraints on school leaders' ability to mandate anti-racist practices. For example, one vice principal shared that one of their biggest challenges is to push forward with anti-racist work without burning everyone out. Another school leader lamented that the current school year might be even more challenging than last year, which was in the middle of the pandemic. Ultimately, both White and BIPOC school leaders were unable or unwilling to ask teachers to do anti-racist work in addition to what they were already doing with several other programmatic changes already underway.

Smith found that, without mandates, there was a fear amongst the participants that individual anti-racism would be counterproductive. According to participants, this inconsistent implementation led to disparate experiences for the students, whereby some

teachers employed anti-racist practices while others did not. As reported by Smith, because of an inability to hold teachers accountable, some teachers prioritized being passionate teachers of their content over instructional ownership of engagement of students and the belief in their educability. This differential prioritization overburdened teachers who do prioritize anti-racist education with having to be the pioneers for advancing how to make high rigor accessible to heterogeneous groups of students.

Dacey and Smith's dissertations demonstrate that school leaders experienced resistance from teachers that came in the form of not having enough time to focus on anti-racism, as well as fear of losing autonomy. When a school leader was planning professional development for faculty, she had to change the plan at the last minute to give faculty time to adjust to a new school schedule. Anti-racist work was put on hold to give teachers time for other new initiatives. Another participant relayed a response from one of her teachers who said they would retire if they were forced to teach multi-level classes. This resistance highlights the dilemma faced by school leaders as they tried to create systemic anti-racist change in their schools.

Other forms of resistance emerged as avoidance or shielding. For example, Dacey found that some White staff identify with a marginalized group that is not necessarily based on race or ethnicity, thereby masking their Whiteness. One participant stated that White faculty will often bring up other forms of their identity to avoid talking about race. As a result of feeling overlooked, these faculty did not fully engage in the racial identity work. These findings illustrate the fundamental tension felt by school leaders in how to enact systemic anti-racist change without making mandates that teachers might avoid or actively resist.

Implications for Research

Findings from this study are consistent with prior research that describes the obstacles that educational leaders must negotiate in making systemic anti-racist change. First, as stated in Chapter 1, research has shown that most practitioners are too "bogged down with individual commitment" to make anti-racist change systemic and often "neglect the larger institution" (Welton et al., 2018, p. 6). Although individual anti-racist work is critically important, research shows that there must be a systemic level commitment, to ensure that the entire school community is working towards creating an anti-racist environment (Welton et al., 2018); the findings of this study suggest that one systemic level commitment can manifest as ways to hold individuals accountable. Participants across all five studies shared their perception that the District has not quite done enough at the organizational level to make substantial and long-lasting anti-racist change. Our study provides further evidence that even in a District that is publicly committed to anti-racism, making systemic anti-racist change is incredibly difficult.

Second, research has shown that "for change to occur system-wide, institutions need to address change at multiple levels of scale, especially the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels" (Welton et al, 2015, p. 10). The findings from our study indicate that this District has made extensive changes with its anti-racist work at the individual and interpersonal levels, even if some of the results have been mixed. It is at the organizational level where this District has not yet made third-order changes that will have system-wide impacts. For example, one change that has been described by Oakes et al. (2005) as a necessary organizational change is the deleveling of classes. While this District has done significant work in creating multi-level classes, it has yet to de-level its

curriculum. Our study suggests more research is needed about what kinds of system wide changes are likely to be successfully adapted and what change is more likely or more sustainable when approached at school levels and then replicated.

Third, research has also shown that school leaders must navigate the resistance from teachers that inevitably arises when attempting anti-racist work. The resistance found in this study most often came in the form of White educators thinking they are experts, White educators' desire to focus on content, White educators shielding themselves, and White educators believing that the timing is not ideal for anti-racist work. According to participants, this resistance caused educational leaders to change their approach to the enactment of anti-racist leadership. For example, omitting Whiteness from the racial identity professional development workshops for faculty was a capitulation made by school leaders to encourage buy-in from White faculty. This is consistent with the research of Solomon (2002), Swanson & Welton (2019), and Theoharis & Haddix (2011), who found that school leaders are often forced to compromise anti-racist principles to overcome the resistance from White faculty. Therefore, our findings suggest that future research should ask questions like: what happens when anti-racist leadership does not compromise and includes White racial identity development in the professional development plan?

Last, research on schools engaging in strategic anti-racist improvement has largely found that, despite good intentions, efforts to dismantle systemic racism rarely lead to fundamental anti-racist change (Castagno, 2014; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Welton et al., 2015). Findings from our study confirm that there are often unintended consequences of supposed "common sense" policies and practices that could be one

reason that fundamental anti-racist change fails to develop. For example, the inconsistent implementation of anti-racist practices was an unintended consequence of school leaders' policies allowing teachers the freedom to experiment with anti-racist work. To this end, they could ask questions about how school leaders should examine the outcomes of well-intentioned policies they put in place in order to advance the anti-racist work in their school.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Our findings suggest several implications for practice that this District, or a District like it, could consider reaching its goal of creating systemic anti-racist change. These implications include how to capitalize on the small group efforts being made in the District, consideration of mandates for anti-racist practices, how to navigate the resistance and avoidance that arises from teachers, and an examination of the relationship between policy design and policy outcomes.

The findings suggest that school leaders consider how individual initiatives for District goals can spread through collaboration across the institution. The literacy specialist gaining budgetary authority over selecting books by authors of diverse voices is a good example of a building practice that could be implemented across the District. Attention to diverse voices in the purchasing of books is the sort of anti-racist initiative that needs to become a District-wide practice, and it can't wait for a motivated volunteer to write a grant to make this change across the District. Likewise, an English teacher was able to bring a network of tens of thousands to do a book study and to bring the author to the District's virtual campus; however, this massive one-time effort was not mandated across the District as a practice to advance anti-racist education.

Although most, if not all, participants in our study strongly believed in the anti-racist work being done in the District, they also acknowledged the resistance they encountered from faculty and staff in the implementation of anti-racist policies and practices. This resistance contributed to the disconnect between the purpose and design of school policy and the experiences of people of color in the District. Therefore, the District could continue to develop an understanding of anti-racist practice for all members of the organization. This may include mandates for the implementation of certain anti-racist practices so that faculty and staff will less likely be able to avoid addressing the structural racism that exists in their school community. In addition, consider mandatory professional development for all faculty and staff on topics such as White racial identity development and culturally responsive teaching.

Our findings suggest that District leaders focus on the analysis of policies and outcomes so that they could "carefully diagnose the causes of specific outcomes in their schools and engage in purposeful design and redesign of organizational routines to facilitate different outcomes" (Lewis & Diamond, 2015, p. 176). As part of this process, school and District leaders could consider the effective collection of evidence documenting disparate experiences and outcomes, disaggregated by race. As part of this evidence collection, how schools engage with BIPOC students, families, faculty, and staff in the creation of feedback loops for the design and redesign of policies and practices may provide additional data to further the anit-racist work at the systemic level.

The District should feel encouraged because research asserts that race and equity need to be a part of our daily lives in order for anti-racist practices to be effective (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). Therefore, our studies suggest that even in a White,

affluent, anti-racist District, anti-racism is not a checkbox, but an ongoing, never-ending process. Therefore, educational leaders should find hope in the many small group anti-racist efforts demonstrated throughout the studies and consider ways to operationalize these small group efforts in order to make them systemic. The most significant message for educational leaders and policy makers in the District is to keep going.

The Tension Between BIPOC Leaders Leading through Racism and as a Result, Gaining Increased Capacities

Educational leaders of color share experiences of racism working in public school systems. Many BIPOC leaders develop a greater capacity to lead as a result of their racist experience. BIPOC leaders mitigate the experience of racism for students and colleagues while mitigating it for themselves; furthermore, these BIPOC leaders are leading within systems that perpetuate racism. The different challenges include working through micro and macro aggressions, doubts by others of their competency, cultural isolation, stereotyping, and pigeonholing as the people who should solve racism in schools, to name a few impacting their leadership path. The data from interviews of the District's BIPOC educational leaders indicate leadership strengths developed directly from their experience of leading in predominantly White spaces. Through these challenges, BIPOC leaders have developed capacities from their positionality as influential to their leadership practice. These capacities include the use of cultural intuition to connect with communities of color; the use of navigational capital and critically negotiating with colleagues; the use of social capital and growing alliances and networks; and lastly, to persist in anti-racist work.

BIPOC leaders named their cultural intuition and their proximity to marginalization as assets that directly inform how they navigate predominantly White spaces and to support students (Delgado Bernal, 2016; Yosso & Burciaga, 2016; Covarrubias et al., 2018). Respondents in Tavares's study spoke about connecting with students, families, and colleagues using the Spanish language, as shared in the interviews, "where I could just, you know, feel like I'm in a community that feels like family" thereby connecting through their linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005). Findings indicated that Black students of the Black Leadership Advisory Council had initially chosen a White educator to be their facilitator and later, they discovered that they couldn't be their true selves. Asian students who faced overt racist attacks found themselves reaching out to Asian educators and leaders for mentorship on advocacy and affinity group care. As our survey findings indicated and supported by Gray's findings, educational leaders leverage their racial identity to better connect with students and colleagues.

Participants in Gray's study spoke about the creation of affinity groups as forms of social capital. The work of growing alliances and building BIPOC networks created communities amongst educational leaders in the District that were unrealized before the pandemic. These affinity groups and alliances helped to mitigate the effects of cultural isolation that affected communities of color. Asian leaders in Po's study spoke of growing leaders who can also lead others and grow alliances to gain credibility for acknowledgment. Most of the Latinx leaders in Tavares's study, who are small in number across the District, spoke of their knowledge of the equity work of other Latinx leaders in the District.

Critical negotiations with colleagues to counter racial inequity involve the use of navigational capital. BIPOC leaders have to navigate the social systems that do not favor their race, ethnicity, or culture. In Tavares's and Po's studies, participants shared the ways in which they critically negotiate with educators to not pathologize students; one way they did this was to drive educators to communicate with and learn from families to humanize students and to connect with the students beyond the school setting as an asset to help students succeed.

In Gray's, Po's, and Tavares's studies, the skill of maintaining hope and persistence is paramount to moving past moments of harm and conflict to "agency and action" (Marshall and Marsh, 2021). Some participants spoke of needing to find ways to continue to work with racist colleagues and to negotiate for anti-racist student outcomes with those same colleagues.

Implications for Research

Often, leaders of color are leading anti-racist work in majority White spaces where they may experience microaggressions and witness the racialized violence enacted against the Black community and anti-Asian hate in the media (Yancey-Bragg, 2021, Stop AAPI Hate, 2021; Donaghue, 2021). The acknowledgment of these BIPOC leaders' assets is supported by a growing body of literature on how educational leaders of color use their cultural knowledge and experiences in the field (Méndez-Morse & Mártinez, 2021). Yosso (2005) details the "array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged" which directly supports the findings across the individual studies (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). Therefore, our findings suggest that future research should

investigate the importance of alliances and the importance of building networks that have racial congruence with other BIPOC colleagues.

The literature on leaders of color robustly affirms that these leaders matter in the advancement of racial equity in schools (McMahon, 2007; Khalifa, 2011; Reed, 2012). However, the foci of these studies often cite the difficulties they face through isolation and the ways in which they give in to despair by not staying in their positions (Agosto et al., 2013; Viano & Hunter, 2017). This study calls on future researchers to further investigate the strengths and critical assets of leaders of color who have persisted in their roles, especially given all the ways they matter for racial equity in schools and for the academic outcomes of students of color in particular (Kholi, et al., 2015; Kholi, et al., 2019). We ask researchers to take a deeper look at the assets of leaders of color, uncovered across the studies of Gray, Po, and Tavares, thereby adding to the growing literature on building race-consciousness among educational leaders (Diem & Welton, 2021). Our study implies that more research is needed in the strengths of BIPOC leaders, including that of cultural intuition, the use of navigational capital, and critically negotiating with colleagues, the use of social capital and growing alliances and networks, and to persist in anti-racist work.

Leaders of color have to lead through racism, work through the perceived or expected forgiveness of racist events while maintaining the belief in the educability of these colleagues who transmit transgressions for anti-racist work in schools (Mukkamala & Syuemoto, 2018, Valencia, 2010). This very skill is also what culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on in maintaining the belief in the educability of our students, especially those who have been pathologized by racism to explain performance

differentials. This study suggests that further research could elucidate how the lived experiences of leaders of color are connected to professional development for both leaders of color and all educators in the work for racial equity (Hernandez et. al., 2014; Milligan and Howley, 2015; Toure and Dorsey, 2018).

Implications for Practice and Policy

Given that BIPOC leaders share experiences of racism and that many BIPOC leaders develop a greater capacity to lead as a result of their racist experience, this tension implies for the District a need to look first at the assets of leaders of color and learn from them, and, secondly, to move the burden to be borne across the District for anti-racist work.

The skills and knowledge that leaders of color acquire because of the challenges that they face are important to formally develop across the District. As one White educator had named, there are certain skills that White educators may likely need to cede to leaders of color, as students of color in a racist climate may prefer mentorship and guidance of leaders of color, especially when facing racist experiences. However, the skills of allyship, belief in the educability of all colleagues, and the persistence to work through and resist racist incidents are skills that all members of the District can aspire to.

Because the majority of the people working in this District are White, the onus of responsibility for anti-racism must fall on White educators, not on the minority BIPOC. One implication is that districts such as the one studied may choose to seek a unified professional development approach for this work, most importantly on White racial identity development. Districts such as the one studied, which enjoys both motivated

educators and leaders as well as community support for equity work, are in a position to nationally lead this work.

Conclusion

The District has made a strong public commitment and aspires to advancing anti-racist work. As evidenced by its public statements for racial equity, the District's anti-racist intent has been animated by the work of the educators and leaders. The findings address the ways in which educational leaders enact anti-racist practices and their perceptions of the limitation or supports for anti-racist leadership during the COVID 19 pandemic and during this moment of racial reckoning.

Currently, our studies found commitments by District leadership and across educational leaders that directly supports anti-racist practices. Efforts within individual schools and led by members of those school communities is evident, as detailed across our findings including a collective acknowledgment of racism heightened by the current national attention. Once again, across the five individual studies, overall understanding of the efforts laid out by the District to address anti-racist work was demonstrated by the common language or nomenclature used by the members of the organization, gained through common professional development.

Given what we've found, antiracist change can happen when the work is shared between BIPOC and Whites, when coalitions are built, and when there is resolve to direct strategic decision making with an anti-racist lens. Our findings suggest that when a district acknowledges the existence of racism, it is positioned to make a commitment to anti-racist work. Research participants shared that the District's public commitment emboldened small group efforts that courageously enabled discourse. Our findings

showed that when resources are given to innovative efforts, affinity groups can be supported, and new curriculum writing can be mobilized. Identification of resistance against anti-racist efforts allows that resistance to be countered. Small groups within the district have begun to address racism and propose anti-racist practices to help mitigate the impact of structural racism.

As identified by Welton, et al. (2018), educators committed to anti-racism must work to shift attitudes and beliefs as they relate to race and racism. As shared by study participants across our studies, some of the ways the District has worked to demonstrate its commitment to becoming conscious of racism has been through engaging in professional development related to racial identity in some schools, the creation of affinity groups to support BIPOC educators and responding to racist incidents in its school communities. Study findings suggest that next steps for similar Districts committed to this work are to make a system-level commitment to this work by ensuring that White racial identity development takes place across all schools.

We assert that a predominantly White public school district can pursue anti-racist change and we highlight that White adults have a responsibility for this work. Our study's participants identified resistance to anti-racist efforts that were subsequently met with capitulation by school leaders. Out of Welton et al.'s framework for anti-racism, attitudes and beliefs rose as the predominant source of resistance that our study participants met. These attitudes and beliefs are embedded in the culture. Efforts to change that culture include increasing the numbers of individuals and small groups working for anti-racism, developing professional development to teach new culture, and finally, through the focused work of affinity groups and coordinated leadership groups

for anti-racist change such as the human rights council, innovations of new micro-community cultures have the capacity to interact with others. However, there were times when leaders prioritized getting the work done over mandating that all take part in the work.

We recognize that these leaders, in pursuing anti-racist change, made capitulations that then upheld the status quo. At times they made these capitulations for self-preservation, or to contain resistance to allow the work of others to move forward. We as researchers and practitioners are also enculturated by endemic racism, and we recognize that some of the actions of leaders to pursue anti-racism may uphold racism; we can be anti-racist while having racist ideology. For most efforts to move forward, leaders reported having to face white interest convergence. And thus, a question that this study inspires is to ask what tools leaders can employ other than the racist ones we have been taught to lead with. We acknowledge the importance of a multitiered approach by supporting both the small group efforts and a system-wide approach to anti-racist leadership practice. The district's context matters, one approach is insufficient to address the complexity of racism; there is no one effort that provides a solution to endemic racism. We persist in anti-racist work.

This is a well-resourced District that has chosen to invest in human resources, professional development time, and instructional materials for anti-racist work. New roles and committees have been instituted, there are BIPOC leaders at the building level and in the District, and individual initiatives asking for support for instructional materials for race literacy have been supported. Additionally, the District demonstrates its commitment by choosing to welcome this research team to investigate anti-racism in its schools during

an historically difficult time - during the COVID-19 pandemic. While interview participants shared the low representation of Latinx leaders in the District, DESE data shows this District holds 10% of the state's Asian building leaders. Many of the participants of color also named that the District's support for their anti-racist work is felt when they come up against resistance from the community.

Data suggests that the tensions can be addressed by considering the cultural competency of all administrators who are in supervisory and evaluative roles. Districts like this might clarify what standard it is using to evaluate their staff for cultural competency. Similarly, it could be helpful if the anti-racist leadership personnel had evaluative power over the department heads, so there could be a mechanism to support the continued development of department heads in culturally competency, thereby allowing department heads to hold educators accountable for anti-racist work.

As this study finds that race matters and that different leadership, as informed by racialized experiences, has different assets, future research should investigate for deeper understanding of partnerships between Whites and BIPOC leaders. Additionally, Districts like these can investigate the particular assets that leaders of color bring to the work. The development of anti-racist practices and the learning and teaching of this intellectual work must permeate all levels of the District and become the responsibility of all members of the organization.

For Districts like the one used in this study, those that are predominantly White, have relative affluence, and positive will towards anti-racist work, this study offers some implications for District practice. The data collected suggest that districts may want to find ways to measure the impact of policy and protocol mandates on the intended

outcomes in order to interrogate how the District's intentions are being lived out. Another area for districts to consider is how they may use both the role and power of policy setting and the energy of grassroots initiatives to drive for systemic change. Finally, based on the narratives of leaders of color who lead for anti-racism in this District, similar districts ought to consider different leadership support and preparation for leaders of color, especially in predominantly White spaces: that they need different support compared to White leaders. These leaders of color offer different capacities that the District can learn from.

Researcher Reflections

In conclusion, there was a great deal of individual learning that took place throughout this process. Collectively, we learned that there is an incredible amount of emotional learning that accompanies the academic learning and scholarship about race and racism. As a result of this study, we have a greater belief in our collective capacity to learn and grow towards anti-racism. Because racism is endemic, anti-racist work requires vigilance to dismantle it. As researcher-practitioners leading culturally responsive practice and confronting racism, it is imperative to invest in our own learning and unlearning while supporting colleagues at all levels of the organizations we lead to do the same. As individuals, we must be accountable while holding others accountable. We recognize that our learning communities are at different places along the continuum of anti-racist work. We were impressed by all of the anti-racist efforts in the district we conducted our research in. For example, individual efforts, small group efforts, school building efforts, and district efforts were evident. We held the stories of the leaders in this district, some of whom shared deeply painful experiences of racism, as a critical

acknowledgment of the systemic nature of this problem. Many of our research participants shared that despite all this very hard work, there is more to be done in pursuit of anti-racism. And yet, we come out of this research learning that all of the hard work counts and we must persist; there is power in community and proximity. Action is necessary to be a living embodiment of anti-racism.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocols

Investigator: Dacey

Opening reminders

- This interview is voluntary; you may ask to end the interview at any time.
- All interview questions are optional.
- This interview was recorded. You may request for us to turn off the recording device at any time.
- We are here to listen and to learn; not to judge.
- We will take measures to ensure that all interview responses remain confidential. In addition, we will use pseudonyms in our dissertation to protect the identities of the respondents and the district.

Introduction: Tell us about your role. What are your primary responsibilities in this role? How long have you been in this role? In the district/school? What attracted you to this position? What motivates you to do this work?

System-Level Commitment

1.) This research focuses on educational leaders enacting anti-racist leadership practices. How does your school community engage in discussions about race or racial equity? What sorts of spaces exist for these discussions?

2.) How would you characterize these discussions?

3.) In your role as a school leader, what actions do you take to communicate concepts of racial equity to your staff, faculty, students, families, and community?

4.) One anti-racist practice we are studying is the development of one's positive racial identity; how people understand themselves and others. What types of ongoing, embedded professional development do you provide to support faculty in developing their racial identity?

5.) What are your impressions of the effectiveness of this racial identity work?

6.) Is there any professional development designed specifically to help White faculty to develop their White racial identity (Whiteness, White privilege, White supremacy, anti-racism)? If yes, please elaborate.

7.) What are your impressions of the effectiveness of this White racial identity work?

Attitudes and Beliefs

8.) How, if at all, has this racial identity work been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

9.) Can you tell me a story about when this White racial identity development worked?

10.) Can you tell me a story about when this White racial identity development did not work?

11.) I'm curious about your own personal racial identity. In what ways, if any, have school leaders helped support you in developing your racial identity?

12.) How, if at all, have you been impacted personally and professionally by the COVID-19 pandemic?

13.) Do you have opportunities to reflect on how you might speak about race on behalf of those
who might not be present in the conversation both inside and outside of school?

14.) Given your efforts towards achieving racial equity, what risks do you perceive to be involved in your work with your White and non-White colleagues?

15.) What systems of support would you need to build in order to counter resistance and pushback from White faculty or colleagues?

16.) What types of support from the district would help you accomplish this?

17.) Do you feel that the district supports your racial equity work? Please elaborate.

Closing Thoughts: Thank you very much for your time and insights.

Investigator: Gray

1. This research focuses on Black educational leaders and what sustains them to stay in the field of education. What attracted you to your current role? What motivates you to do this work?

2. How does your school community engage in discussions about race or racial equity? What sorts of spaces exist for these discussions? Is anti-racist practices a priority for your institution? If so, provide examples.

3. Describe your background and identity. What is the context in which you grew up? How, if at all, does your positionality influence your practice?

4. Do you experience any resistance and pushback from white faculty or colleagues as a result of your identity or racial equity work?

5. Please describe how you have been impacted personally and professionally, if at all, by the current pandemic.

6. What systems of support (both formal and informal) exist for you in your current school/role? Outside of your school/role?

7. Why did you decide to become an educator? What was your pathway to leadership? Can you tell me about the barriers or challenges that you faced in your career? How have these influenced your leadership?

8. What advice do you have for other Black educators who would like to advance to leadership?

Investigator: Po

Opening Statement

- *This interview is strictly voluntary. At any time, you may ask to conclude the interview.*
- *All interview questions are optional. Please feel free to not answer a question.*
- *All interview responses will be confidential. Although we plan to share our findings with our district, we will take measures to maintain your confidentiality and use pseudonyms to protect participants' identities.*
- *We are here to listen and learn from you and your experiences. Our position is to examine, not judge, to learn from your expertise.*
- *We plan to record this interview. At any time, you may request for us to turn off the transcription device.*
- *Here is a consent form.*

Part I. Biographical Information

1. What about your life experiences inspired your interest in school leadership? Or How did you choose to become a school leader?

Part II. Leadership Perceptions

2. What makes you a successful leader? What are your levers as a school leader? Perceptions of yourself as an authentic leader at your institution?
3. What do you see as the current needs of your school community: students, families, faculty & staff?

Part III. Reflections on Asian American women in school leadership

4. How do issues of race and gender come up for you as a school leader?
5. What are some challenges and successes that you have faced as a school leader?
6. Describe the equity issues that matter most to you as a school leader.
7. How do you prioritize your decision making? Does crisis, like COVID 19, impact your priority setting?

Part IV. Instructional Leadership

8. In what ways do you lead for teaching and learning?
9. What are your highest priorities for student performance? For your educators? How are you working on them?
10. What are the negotiations that you must navigate with your faculty and staff?

Part V. Closing

11. What advice do you have for other Asian American women who would like to advance to leadership?

Is there anything I haven't asked you that you would like to share with me?
Do you have any questions for me?

Investigator: Smith

Opening reminder:

- This interview is voluntary; you may ask to end the interview at any time.
- All interview questions are optional.
- This interview was recorded. You may request for us to turn off the recording device at any time.
- We are here to listen and to learn; not to judge.
- We will take measures to ensure that all interview responses remain confidential. In addition, we will use pseudonyms in our dissertation to protect the identities of the respondents and the district.

As part of my dissertation, I am interested in how school leaders perceive the emergence of anti-racism in predominantly White spaces, specifically within the context of the last two years. We have the global pandemic we are still navigating and the recent racial reckoning that has entered our learning spaces. I want to hear about what you see happening regarding anti-racism in a mostly White school.

Introduction: Tell us about your role. What are your primary responsibilities in this role? How long have you been in this role? In the district/school?

1. Talk to me a little bit about your experience at your school over the past two years, especially regarding the racial reckoning and global pandemic. How did you and/or your school respond, it at all?

Attitudes and Beliefs

2. Have you implemented or have your teachers experienced professional development around anti-racism, critical consciousness, or culturally responsive pedagogy?
    a. Can you describe this professional development?
        i. How was it received?
        ii. Was there any resistance? How do you respond to faculty who do not engage in this type of professional development?
3. Have you experienced any resistance or pushback from parents regarding anti-racist work?
    a. Describe an example of resistance…
4. Do you know what your faculty, staff, students, and parents think about anti-racism and how it is implemented in your school?
5. What are some of the obstacles you might face in getting teachers and parents on board with anti-racist work?

Policies and Practices

6. How would you describe your teachers' ability to teach with anti-racist approach?
7. How is anti-racist pedagogy or course content received by the students?
8. Tell me about a time where anti-racist work was successful or effective.
9. With a mostly White community, how do you help teachers and students recognize the importance of anti-racism?
10. How is the curriculum reviewed in your school? Where there any changes to the curriculum over the past few years, in light of what has been going on in the world?

System-Level Commitment

11. Can you talk a little bit about the structure of your school, especially in terms of leadership and decision-making?
    a. How are personnel decisions made?
        i. Is there a diversity, equity, and inclusion director?
            1. If not, are there personnel who do this type of work?

2. In what ways are they involved in personnel decisions or the induction/onboarding/formation process for new employees?

12. How would you describe the culture of your staff?
    a. What is the quality of interpersonal relationships between and among teachers and staff?
    b. Are there opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share best practices?
13. How would you describe the culture of your student body?
    a. Are students tracked into academic hierarchies?
    b. What is the degree of competition and social comparison between students?
    c. Do students have the ability to change levels or tracks?
        i. How often do parents intervene regarding academic issues with their child?
        ii. How often do parents intervene regarding disciplinary issues with their child?
        iii. How do you respond to families' requests to move their son/daughter to a different track?
    d. How are students of color supported, both academically and socially emotionally?
    e. How often do you examine the experiences of students of color?
14. What are some obstacles you might face when trying to implement school-wide changes towards becoming a more anti-racist community?

Thank you for sharing your time with me today.

Investigator: Tavares

Opening reminders:

- This interview is voluntary; you may ask to end the interview at any time.
- I will ask for your consent in writing.
- All interview questions are optional.
- This interview will be recorded. You can request I turn off the recording at any time.
- I'm here to listen and to learn; not to judge.
- I will take measures to ensure that all interview responses remain confidential. In addition, I will use pseudonyms in the dissertation to protect the identities of the respondents and the district.
- Can I reach out if I have an additional question?
- At this point, I will start recording

Please sign the consent form I am adding to the chat. You have a copy for your review. Please feel free to ask any questions at any time. Your electronic signature indicates you consent to the interview.

> *As part of my dissertation I am interested in how educators navigate race in their work specifically in leadership (in classrooms, schools, or district level) within the context of the impact of the last two years. We have the global pandemic we are still navigating and the recent racial reckoning that has entered our learning spaces. I want to hear about your experience by better understanding your work and the district's work.*
>
> ***My question:*** *How do Latina/x/o educational leaders make sense of their leadership practice during this moment of racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic?*

Self-identity/Latinidad & Leadership

1. Could you describe your background and how you identify? What languages do you navigate in personally and or professionally?

2. Would you consider your identity (language) as an asset for you as an educator? Are there challenges? Can you describe them?

3. Have you been able to enact initiatives that matter to you? If so, give examples.

4. Are you satisfied with the district's support of your leadership as an educator? If yes, how do they support you and if not, what could they do better?

5. Who do you consider to be a Latina/x/o addressing equity issues head on in the district? How do they show this?

The Global Pandemic

6. How, if at all, has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you personally or professionally? Can you describe the impact on your school or district?

7. What have you learned about the impact of COVID-19 on your students and their communities?

Race/Racism

8. From February through May of 2020 we witnessed the deaths of several Black people (George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery to name a few of the most public). How, if at all, were these events discussed within your school/district?

9. How does the District's anti-racist work align with your leadership goals as an educator?

10. What are some of the potential benefits for increasing the number of Latino administrators or administrators of color in the district?

¡Muchísimas gracias! I appreciate your time and for supporting my leadership.

Themes:
Self-identity/Latinidad & Leadership
Race/Ethnicity/language
How does community respond
How does the individual respond

Follow-up Questions

11. What do people outside of your school/district get wrong about your students/community? What do they get right?
12. How does your district/school talk about race, if at all?
13. What do you recommend as the next steps?
14. What are some of the potential benefits for increasing the number of Latinx administrators or other BIPOC administrators in the district?

Email invitation to interview sent to all participants:
Dear_____,

Hope you are having a good start to the school year. I am one of the doctoral students Dr. _____ may have mentioned who is interested in interviewing you. Please know I'm happy to accommodate your availability and will offer some dates for you to consider below.

I want to share a little bit about the study, the title is: *Anti-Racist Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis* which I am co-authoring with four classmates. We are interviewing a diverse collection of leaders from your district. Additionally, I'm specifically interested in the following question for my section of the dissertation:

How Latina/o/x educational leaders make sense of their leadership practice during this moment of racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic?

I'm very excited to meet you and learn about your work. Please feel free to email, text, or call with any questions at any time.

Options for approximately 60-90 min interview:

Dates & Times listed

If none of these dates or times work for you please share a few options that work for you between _____ and I'm happy to accommodate as needed.

en solidaridad,
Ana

Cell: xxx xxx-xxxx

Sample of follow up email post interview:
To each participant, with specific detail of the work they lead -
Le quiero dar las gracias por su tiempo y generosidad. Verdaderamente fue un increíble honor aprender sobre su trabajo y su dedicación a sus estudiantes. Son tan dichosos de tenerla a usted como campeona de su bienestar.

Espero volver a pláticar con usted y le tome en serio la invitación al _____. ¡Cuente conmigo!

con mucho cariño,
Ana

Appendix B

List of Reviewed Documents

Anti-racism graphic for staff

BIPOC Staff Affinity Groups

Courageous Conversations Class Presentation

Courageous Conversations Lesson Plan

Department of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion website

District Equity Policy

District Statement of Commitment to Racial Equity

District Superintendent's Goals

District Systemic Goals

Guidelines to implement the Equity Policy

Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE) Enrollment Data

Professional Development Plan – specific to one of the two high schools in the District

Report on Diverse Literature

Sample Anti-racist emails from department chair to department members

Staff Response graphic for staff

Appendix C

District Wide Survey

Boston College Consent Form
Lynch School of Education and Human Development
Informed Consent to be in study titled: *Anti-Racist Leadership in Times of Crisis*
Co-Researchers: *Stephen Dacey, Laniesha Gray, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, Ana Tavares, Study Sponsor: Dr. Andrew Miller*

Educator Consent Form

By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in this research study on District School District Trends on Anti-racist Leadership in Times of Crisis and Massachusetts Asian Leaders descriptive survey. You were selected to be in the study because you are a teacher/principal/administrator/district personnel in the District Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. The purpose of the study is to understand how educational leaders respond to this moment of crisis, racial reckoning, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of people in this study is expected to be 80 survey participants, 30 interview participants, 30 meeting observation participants. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your practice by completing a survey. This survey will be sent through the District Public Schools/Boston College Qualtrics platform/email and will be sent to all participants.

We expect the survey to take 10-15 minutes. Although you will not directly benefit from participating in this study, others may benefit because we hope to use our findings to better understand specific leadership behaviors for building and maintaining trusting relationships in schools, practices for supporting healthy school and district climates, and the strategies needed to redress systemic inequities. We don't believe there are physical, psychological or informational risks from participating in this research. Risks or discomforts from this research include discussing issues pertaining to racism. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop at any time.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project. Researchers will minimize potential risks by allowing participants to skip questions or end at any time. To minimize informational risks we will ensure those survey responses are anonymous. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected file. The Institutional Review Board at Boston College and internal Boston College auditors may review the research records. State or

federal laws or court orders may also require that information from your research study records be released. Otherwise, the researchers will not release to others any information that identifies you unless you give your permission, or unless we are legally required to do so. There is no cost to you to be in this research study. There is no compensation for your participation in this study. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from the research data collected as part of the project. No later than June 30, 2022. We will not share our research data with other investigators. Any data maintained as part of this research project will not contain information that could directly identify you. It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, we will delete any prior data collected, connected to your participation. If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with any school district. The researcher may dismiss you from the study at any time for the following reasons: (1) it is in your best interests (e.g. side effects or distress have resulted), (2) you have failed to comply with the study rules.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions About the Research
If you have questions about this research, you may contact:
Stephen Dacey (daceyst@bc.edu) or at [redacted]
Laniesha Gray (grayll@bc.edu) or at [redacted]
Cicy Po (poc@bc.edu) or at [redacted]
Thomas Smith (smithwr@bc.edu) or at [redacted]
Ana Tavares (tavarean@bc.edu) or at [redacted]
Faculty Advisor Dr. Andrew Miller (andrew.miller.6@bc.edu) or at [redacted]

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following: Boston College Office for Research Protections Phone: (617) 552-4778 Email: irb@bc.edu By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.
___ Yes, I consent to participate in this survey.
___ No, I do not consent to participate in this survey.

Enter your name and today's date here.
_____

General School Information and Your Responsibilities

Q2.1. What is the best description of your current position at your school or district?

◯ Full time classroom teacher
◯ Department Chair
◯ Principal
◯ Assistant Principal
◯ Program Director
◯ Counselor/Student Support
◯ District leader
◯ Other (Please specify: _____)

Q2.2. Reflecting on the last 18 months, pick the most appropriate frequency of occurrence for your work time spent on the following activities.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
In classrooms or on instruction					
In meetings					
Student discipline					
Paper work					
Supervising extra curricular activities					

School Performance- Your Perception

Q3.1. To the best of your knowledge, how often does the following issue occur at your current school building or across the district if you are a district leader?

	Frequency of Occurrence				
	Never	**Rarely**	**Occasionally**	**Often**	**Very Often**
Racial tensions	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q3.2. To what extent is each of the following a concern in your current school building or across the district?

	Not a concern	Minor Concern	Moderate Concern	Serious Concern
Family Engagement				
Student access to learning opportunities				
Student achievement towards graduation				
Racial disparity in student academic achievement				

Q3.3. For each of the following student groups, select the response that best indicates your perception of that group's success in passing Massachusetts performance standards last year.

	District & State Performance Standards Passed		
	All or most passed	**Some passed**	**None or few passed**
African American students	○	○	○
Latina/o students	○	○	○
AAPI students	○	○	○
White students	○	○	○
Low-Income students	○	○	○
Special Education students	○	○	○
English Language Learners (ESL students)			

Professional Development

Q4.1. Which of the following types of professional development, related to anti-racist leadership and or classrooms, or culturally responsive pedagogy, have you participated in during the past 12 months? Mark all that apply.

◯ University courses
◯ Workshops, conferences, or training.
◯ Visits to other schools
◯ Individual or collaborative research
◯ Within district professional development
◯ Other

Perceptions

Q5.1. Rate the extent to which race/ethnicity and gender impact your work for equity.

	Not at all	Rarely	Some-what	Often	Large Extent
To what extent has your racial/ethnic background helped you connect with students of color in your work?					
To what extent have your racial/ethnic background created opportunities for you in your work?					
To what extent has your gender created barriers or problems for you in your work?					
To what extent has your gender created barriers or problems for you in your work?					
To what extent has your gender created opportunities for you in your work?					

Q5.2. Rate the extent to which you engage in the following activities for racial equity.

	Not at all	Rarely	Some what	Often	Large Extent
Engaged in my own learning outside of work					
Changing attitudes and beliefs that are obstacles to equity work					

Working for system level change toward equity					
Maintaining or improving high expectations instructions					
Promoting or engaging community & family connections					
Negotiations with colleagues					
Professional development for anti-racism					

Q5.3. Rate the level in which this moment of our nation's racial reckoning affected your work for equity.

- ◯ Obstructed my work for equity greatly
- ◯ Somewhat obstructed my work for equity
- ◯ No impact on my work
- ◯ Somewhat created opportunity for equity work
- ◯ Greatly created opportunity for equity work

Q5.4. Rate the level in which the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work for equity.

- ◯ Obstructed my work for equity greatly
- ◯ Somewhat obstructed my work for equity
- ◯ No impact on my work
- ◯ Somewhat created opportunity for equity work
- ◯ Greatly created opportunity for equity work

Your Background

Q6.1. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Gender non-conforming
- ◯ Cis gender- gender matches that assigned at birth
- ◯ Trans gender- gender differs from that assigned at birth
- ◯ Non Binary-gender identity that is neither female nor male
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q6.2. How do you identify by race/ethnicity?

- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ◯ Latina, Latinx, non-White

- ◯ Latina, Latinx, White
- ◯ Latina, Latinx, Black
- ◯ Latina, Latinx, Multi-race
- ◯ Latina, Latinx, Indigenous
- ◯ Biracial
- ◯ Multracial
- ◯ White
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q6.3. Do you have any comments or questions related to this research?

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Appendix D

National Latino Leaders/Principals Survey

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: The Racial Identity Development of Latino School Principals and its Relation to Their Leadership Practice: Lessons Learned From the Last 15 years

Dear Principal:
I am requesting that you participate in a follow up study that was conducted back in 2004. If you recall, you participated in a study on "The Racial Identity Development of Latino School Principals and its Relation to Their Leadership Practice". Valuable information was provided with the original study. I am interested in learning how your leadership has changed over time and the role that your Latino racial identity has either continued or not continued to play in your leadership practices.

Why should you participate in this survey?
Policymakers and educational leaders could rely on data from this study to inform their decisions concerning K-12 schools. Latina/o school leaders, for far too long, have been one of the least researched groups in educational leadership. Rarely are principals studied over time and your participation could provide insights into leadership changes and development for the field of Educational Leadership. Your participation could make a great contribution to the literature on educational leadership.

Participant Rights
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate and not complete the required survey or interview. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. If you decide not to participate in the study, it will not result in any penalty or loss to you. Survey information was confidential and only the principal investigator will have access to the survey results. The interview will take approximately 1.5 hours and was tape recorded and housed in a secure location and be password protected. Please note that no individual data that links one's name, address, or place of employment was included in this study. Finally, You may skip any question on the survey or during the interview that makes you uncomfortable.

Who is conducting this survey?
Dr. Frank Hernandez, professor at Southern Methodist University is conducting this study.

Questions or Concerns
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact **Dr. Frank Hernandez at [redacted].** If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Human Subjects Research Office, SMU IRB Chair, Austin Baldwin, Ph.D. @ [redacted] and/or researchcompliance@smu.edu.

****
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you via the information provided, and that you have been given the time to read the explanation.

SIGNATURE_____

Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey. We do hope that you decide to take the survey. Please answer the following questions based on your experience as a school principal. All information you provide was kept completely confidential.

After you complete the survey please mail it in the postage paid envelope included in the package.

Instructions

- It is important that this secure and confidential survey be completed by the school PRINCIPAL, not by anyone else.

- If you are unsure about how to answer a question, please give the best answer you can rather than leave it blank.

General School Information

1. Which of the following grades are included at your current school building? (Check all that apply.)

□ Kindergarten
□ 1st grade
□ 2nd grade
□ 3rd grade
□ 4th grade
□ 5th grade
□ 6th grade
□ 7th grade
□ 8th grade
□ 9th grade
□ 10th grade

- □ 11th grade
- □ 12th grade
- □ Ungraded

2. Which of the following best describes your school building? (Select only one.)

- ○ **Regular elementary or secondary**
- ○ **Elementary or secondary with a special program emphasis** (such as a science/math school, performing arts school, talented/gifted school, foreign language immersion school, etc.)
- ○ **Special education** school (primarily serving students with disabilities)
- ○ **Vocational/Technical** school (primarily serving students being trained for occupations)
- ○ **Charter** school (the school is operated by a private organization or school district)
- ○ **Alternative** school (providing alternative or non-traditional education, but not specifically special education, vocational, or other categories listed above)

3. Do you consider your school building to be located in a rural, urban, or suburban area?

- ○ Rural
- ○ Urban
- ○ Suburban

4. Does your school provide before-school or after-school day care programs?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

5. How many students are currently enrolled in your school building? _____

6. Please record the percentage of students at your school building with the following characteristics:

	Percentage
Students of color	
Students on free or reduced-price lunches	
Special education students	
English language learners (ESL)	

7. Please record the number of teachers employed by your school as of the first of January in each of the following categories.

Number	Teacher Categories
	TOTAL Teachers
	Full-time teachers
	Part-time teachers
	Latina/o teachers (including Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, ect.)
	White teachers
	African American/Black teachers
	Asian or Pacific Islander teachers
	Other ethnicity

School Performance

8. For each of the student groups in the table below, please select the one response that best indicates that group's success in passing performance standards last year.

	District & State Performance Standards Passed			
	Passed All	**Passed Most**	**Passed Some**	**Passed No Standards**
White students	○	○	○	○
African American students	○	○	○	○
Latina/o students	○	○	○	○
Low-Income students	○	○	○	○
Special Education students	○	○	○	○
English Language Learners (ESL students)	○	○	○	○

9. To the best of your knowledge, how often do the following types of issues occur at your current school building? (If you are new to this school, then consider your last school.)

	Frequency of Occurrence				
	Never	**Rarely**	**Occasionally**	**Often**	**Very Often**
Bullying	○	○	○	○	○
Physical conflicts among students	○	○	○	○	○
Student disrespect for teachers	○	○	○	○	
Vandalism	○	○	○	○	
Robbery or theft	○	○	○	○	
Possession of weapons	○	○	○	○	
Racial tensions	○	○	○	○	
Gang activities	○				

10. To what extent is each of the following a concern in your current school building?

	Not a concern	**Minor concern**	**Moderate concern**	**Serious concern**
Student tardiness	○	○	○	○
Student absenteeism	○	○	○	○
Student Drop-outs	○	○	○	○
Lack of Parental involvement	○	○	○	○
Students unprepared to learn (lacking basic necessities)	○	○	○	○

Student use of alcohol or illegal drugs	○	○	○	○
Student pregnancy	○	○	○	○

Your Responsibilities

11. During a typical full week, how many total hours do you spend on **all school-related activities** for your current school? (Include hours spent working during the school day, before school, after school, and on weekends.)

_____ Total hours per week of school-related work

12. How many total hours do you spend **interacting with students** during a typical full week at
this school? (Include both formal and informal interactions.)

_____Total hours per week of student interaction

13. Reflecting on your entire last year as principal, approximately what percentage of your work time did you spend on the following activities?

% of Work Time	**Activities**
	In classrooms
	In meetings
	Student discipline
	Paper work
	Supervising extra curricular activities
	Other – please describe:

100%	**TOTAL**

Professional Development

14. Which of the following types of professional development have you participated in during the past 12 months? Mark all that apply.

	Participated?	
	Yes	**No**
a. University course(s)	○	○
b. Workshops, conferences, or training.	○	○
c. Visits to other schools	○	○
d. Individual or collaborative research	○	○
e. Other – please describe:	○	○

15. Before you became a principal, did you participate in a district development program for aspiring school principals?

○ Yes
○ No

Leadership Style and Practice.

16. Which leadership style most closely resembles you practice? Mark all that fit.

○ **Autocratic:** Makes decisions without consulting with others. Clearly identify the goals that will lead the organization to success.

○ **Democratic:** Shared decision-making and facilitates consensus in the group. Asks questions to involve others.

○ **Delegative:** Allows others to make decisions, set priorities, and delegate certain tasks

17. How much did **mentors or role models influence you to choose educational administration work?**

○ Not at all
○ A little
○ Some
○ Quite a bit
○ A great deal

18. How would you rate the influence of **mentors or role models on the development of your leadership skills?**

○ No impact
○ A little
○ Some
○ Quite a bit
○ A great deal

Your Experience and Training

19. What is your current position at your school?

○ Principal
○ Assistant Principal
○ Other (Please specify: _____)

20. Including this school year (count part of a year as 1 year), how many years have you served in each of the following positions? (If none, please enter "0".)

_____ Total number of years as a principal

____ years at this school

_____ Total number of years as an assistant principal

____ years at this school

21. We are interested in your experience in the field of education prior to becoming a principal or assistant principal. Please check the positions listed below that you have held in the past, and record the number of years you held that position.

	Position Held?		**# of years of experience**
	Yes	**No**	

Teacher	○	○	
Curriculum specialist/coordinator	○	○	
Guidance counselor	○	○	
Library/Media specialist	○	○	
Educational/Teaching Assistant	○	○	
Athletic coach/director	○	○	
Other educational work experience: (Please specify:_____)	○	○	

22. We are also interested in your work experience **outside** of the field of education. How many years have you worked full-time at other jobs, outside the field of education?

_____ Years

23. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Bachelor's degree
○ Master's degree
○ Educational specialist or professional diploma (at least 1 year beyond Master's level)
○ Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D.)

24. Which of the following best describes where you received your principal's license/certification?

○ Public university
○ Private university
○ Liberal Arts College
○ On-line university
○ Other (Please specify: _____)

25. How well prepared do you think you were when you became a principal?

○ Very well prepared
○ Well prepared
○ Somewhat prepared
○ A little prepared
○ Not prepared at all

26. Did you begin your post secondary education at a community college?

○ Yes
○ No

27. Are you a member of a **national** professional association of principals? (For example, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, American Association of School Administrators, etc.)

○ Yes
○ No

28. Are you a member of a **state** professional association of principals?

○ Yes
○ No

Short essay questions

29. What are your biggest challenges in your current work as a principal?

30. What are your biggest successes in your current role as a principal?

31. To what extent has your **racial/ethnic background** created barriers or problems for you in your work as a school administrator?

Not at all large extent

1 2 3 4 5

32. To what extent has your **gender** created barriers or problems for you in your work as a school administrator?

Not at all Large extent

1 2 3 4 5

33. To what extent has your **racial/ethnic background** helped you to connect with students of color in your work as a school administrator?

Not at all Large extent

1 2 3 4 5

Your Background

34. What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female

35. This study uses the term "Latina/o." How do you identify your own racial/ethnic background?

○ Latina/o
○ Mexican
○ Hispanic
○ Cuban
○ Puerto Rican
○ Other – please specify: _____

36. What year were you born? _____

37. Where were you born?

○ United States
○ Puerto Rico
○ Mexico
○ Cuba
○ Other – please specify: _____

38. If you were born in the United States, what state were you born in? _____

39. How would you describe your own schooling experiences in general?

○ Very positive
○ Mostly positive
○ Both positive and negative
○ Mostly negative
○ Very negative

40. What are your future professional aspirations?

41. Do you have any comments or questions relating to this research?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Please mail the completed in the postage paid envelope included in the package.

Appendix E

Focus Group Protocols

Investigator: Dacey

Opening reminders

- This interview is voluntary; you may ask to end the interview at any time.
- All interview questions are optional. Feel free to not answer a question.
- This interview was recorded. You may request for us to turn off the recording device at any time.
- We are here to listen and to learn; not to judge.
- We will take measures to ensure that all interview responses remain confidential. In addition, we will use pseudonyms in our dissertation to protect the identities of the respondents and the district.

Introduction: Tell us a little about you. How long have you been a teacher in this school/district?

1.) This research focuses on educational leaders enacting anti-racist leadership practices. Please describe for me how race impacts your conversations with colleagues and/or school leaders.

2.) Depending on the responses to #1, what could be done to change (the atmosphere, the quality, etc) of these discussions?

3.) One anti-racist practice we are studying is the development of one's positive racial identity; how people understand themselves and others. Please tell me how the school supports you in developing your racial identity (e.g. school-sponsored professional development), including your impressions of the effectiveness of this racial identity work?

4.) Please explain to me any opportunities that you have to reflect (whether in thought, writing, or dialogue) on your White racial identity (Whiteness, White privilege, White supremacy, anti-racism)? Please include your impressions of the effectiveness of this reflection.

5.) Please tell me a story about when you engaged in a conversation about race or racial equity with a colleague or school leader. Did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable, equipped or unequipped?

6.) How, if at all, has this racial identity work been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

7.) Please tell me a story about a time when you acted against racial inequity in your school. How did it go? Did you feel supported by school leadership?

8.) What do you believe the school should change in its approach to promoting racial equity?

9.) What actions do you believe that school leadership should enact to support White teachers in the development of their White racial identity?

10.) Any final thoughts? Anything you were hoping I would ask about that I did not?

Closing Thoughts: Thank you very much for your time and insights.

Investigator: Smith

Getting to Know You

- Introduce myself, a little bit about me, and the study we are conducting.
- Start by asking participants to introduce themselves and to share how long they've been working at this school or district and in what capacity.
- Some kind of "break-the-ice" question to help people become more comfortable.

Questions

- If asked about the faculty and staff and their openness to professional development, what comes to mind?
- If asked about parental involvement at your school, what comes to mind?
- If asked about leveling at your school, what comes to mind?
- If asked about the climate of your school, what comes to mind?

- What was the school's response to the recent racial strife across the country, if there was one? Were these issues addressed at all in the classrooms?
- What was it like teaching during the pandemic the past two years?
- Do you have anything you'd like to add, that you feel could help me with my research?

Thank you for sharing your time with me today.

Appendix I

Interview Consent Form

Boston College Consent Form
Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development
Informed Consent to be in study, Anti-racist Leadership in Times of Crisis
Researchers: Stephen Dacey, Laniesha Gray, Cicy Po, Thomas Smith, Ana Tavares
Study Sponsor: Dr. Andrew Miller
Type of consent: Adult Consent Form

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. You were selected to be in the study because you are a teacher/principal/administrator/district personnel in the Newton Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to understand how educational leaders respond to this moment of crisis, racial reckoning and the COVID-19 pandemic.
The total number of people in this study is expected to be 35-50 interview participants.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your practicin an interview. Interviews will occur through Zoom platform and or in-person and include note taking and audio recording to collect data. We expect the interviews to take 45-60 minutes.

How could you benefit from this study?

Although you will not directly benefit from participating in this study, others may benefit because we hope to use our findings to better understand specific leadership behaviors for building and maintaining trusting relationships in schools, practices for supporting healthy school and district climates, and the strategies needed to redress systemic inequities.

What risks might result from being in this study?

We don't believe there are physical, psychological or informational risks from participating in this research. Risks or discomforts from this research include discussing issues pertaining to racism. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop at any time. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.
Researchers will minimize potential risks by allowing participants to skip interview questions or end at any time. To minimize informational risks we will ensure that survey responses are anonymous, and we will not use identifiable information during interviews, focus groups, or observation data gathering.

How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected file.

We will assign to each participant a unique, coded identifier that will be used in place of actual identifiers. We will separately maintain a record that links each participant's coded identifier to his/her/their actual name, but this separate record will not include research data.

During interviews, only the researchers who audio tape recordings will have access to them for the purposes of accurate data collection and coding. The audio recordings will be erased upon the completion of our research, no later than June 30, 2022.

The Institutional Review Board at Boston College and internal Boston College auditors may review the research records. State or federal laws or court orders may also require that information from your research study records be released. Otherwise, the researchers will not release to others any information that identifies you unless you give your permission, or unless we are legally required to do so.

What will happen to the information we collect about you after the study is over?

Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from the research data collected as part of the project. No later than June 30, 2022.

We will not share our research data with other investigators.

Any data maintained as part of this research project will not contain information that could directly identify you.

How will we compensate you for being part of the study?

There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, we will delete any prior data collected, connected to your participation.

If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with the Newton Public Schools.

Getting Dismissed from the Study

The researcher may dismiss you from the study at any time for the following reasons: (1) it is in your best interests (e.g. side effects or distress have resulted), (2) you have failed to comply with the study rules.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about this research, you may contact:

Researcher(s)	Email	Cell Phone
Stephen Dacey	daceyst@bc.edu	[redacted]
Laniesha Gray	grayll@bc.edu	[redacted]
Cicy Po	poc@bc.edu	[redacted]
Thomas Smith	smithwr@bc.edu	[redacted]
Ana Tavares	tavarean@bc.edu	[redacted]
Faculty Advisor		
Dr. Andrew Miller	andrew.miller.6@bc.edu	[redacted]

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

Boston College
Office for Research Protections
Phone: (617) 552-4778
Email: irb@bc.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. I/We will give you a copy of this document for your records. I/We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature Date

Consent to Use Data for Future Research

I agree that my information may be shared with other researchers for future research studies that may be similar to this study or may be completely different. The information shared with other researchers will not include any information that can directly identify me. Researchers will not contact me for additional permission to use this information.

YES_____ NO_____

Consent to be Audio Recorded

I agree to be audio recorded.

YES_____ NO_____
_____
Signature Date

Appendix F