

Black Teachers Matter: Unraveling the Black Teacher Shortage by Exploring the Lived Experiences of Black Educators in the United States K-12 Public Schools System.

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May, 2025

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## **Dedication**

As a child I remember attending a predominantly White school in elementary school. I never forgot that experience because I was teased by some of the White students because I did not look like them. Some of the physical characteristics I was teased about was my full lips and my darker toned skin complexion. My lips were considered too big, and my skin was too dark. I spent a lot of time wanting to change the way I looked because I wanted to fit in with the other students. However, I learned that some of those same physical characteristics that I was teased about as a child became some of my best assets as an adult. If only I had more role models that looked like myself, they could have offered me some type of comfort as a child. To be able to see a reflection of myself in a successful teacher would have given me the encouragement and the confidence that I needed. I needed someone to tell me to embrace my differences and that I was unique. Our differences is what makes us all unique in our own individual ways.

This research paper is dedicated to all the Black teachers who are an inspiration to Black students. Black teachers who love their job working as a teacher or individuals who desire to pursue teaching careers in the United States public school system. Our mere presence makes the difference in the Black student's confidence and ability to be successful within the education system. The Black teacher has struggled to be accepted and appreciated within the United States public school system.

The United States public school system has failed to provide Black teachers with the recognition they deserve. But the work of Black teachers has not gone unnoticed by Black students when they are present. The positive changes that Black teachers can bring in Black students physically and emotionally cannot be ignored. Black teachers have helped change the lives of Black students everywhere and I encourage Black teachers everywhere to continue to be that positive influence that is necessary.

I also dedicate this research paper to every Black student who has experienced issues emotionally and academically. The United States public school system has failed to provide diversification within their teaching staff that fits the needs of all students. Black teachers matter to students of all cultural backgrounds, especially Black students.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my readers that have helped me along the way. Dr. Kerri Fair and Dr. Marshaun Warren. I would not imagine this experience without your support. You both have been extremely helpful throughout this journey, and I am extremely grateful for everything you both have done to help me.

Dr. Yin Lam Lee-Johnson, Director of the Education Program, at Webster University you have been amazing throughout this experience. Your expertise and passion for the program has not gone unnoticed. There is not anyone else I would have wanted to experience this journey with other than you.

Dr. Brynne Schroeder, you came in and took over for Dr. Yin Lam Lee Johnson during her leave of absence. You made sure that we were still given the support and tools needed to complete the program. I am very grateful for your help!

To my friends and family, you all have helped at understanding that this process can be very time consuming and overwhelming at times. You have been very supportive and my motivation for completing this program. I am grateful for your patience and understanding as I complete my doctorate degree at Webster University.

My children have always been my motivation throughout my educational journey. I wanted to be a positive role model in your life. I am thankful for you all and I want to encourage you all to be successful in your own career paths. I wish you the absolute best and I encourage you to reach your full potential. Hopefully, my journey can inspire you to live successful and happy lives.

## Abstract

“Black Teachers Matter” is a counter-storytelling analysis of Black teacher experiences working in a public-school setting. It helps bring awareness of the Black teacher shortage issue in the United States K-12 public school system. It helps address the gap in the Black teacher shortage by allowing Black teachers to tell their stories. It allows Black teachers to have a voice by telling their stories about their experiences working in the United States K-12 public school system.

In many situations at school, Black teachers do not feel like they are included. In this research passage, many Black teachers have expressed concerns with not feeling welcomed by other teachers at school. Black teachers bring the diversification that is needed within the United States public school system. Most have expressed that they have a passion for teaching students of all cultural backgrounds. The Black teacher has struggled to receive recognition for their hard work and dedication.

Many Black men teachers are expected to do extra duties that is not expected of teachers of other cultural backgrounds. Black male teachers have expressed concerns with their expectations for resolving physical altercations at school. Black women have voiced concerns with experiencing certain stereotypes or blatant disrespect when attempting to voice their opinions.

The literature review section consists of a total of 16 literary works that support that the Black teacher shortage is an issue today. Each literature review offers its own unique way of supporting the idea that more Black teachers are needed in United States public schools. They also offer ways to help improve the Black teacher shortage issue.

There was a total of 16 participant interviews conducted for “Black Teachers Matter” research. Each participant is asked a total of 10 interview questions. These interview questions are designed to allow each participant the ability to tell their individual story about their experiences working in United

States public schools. Each individual experience is unique and helps provide a closer look into some of the reasons for the Black teacher shortage today and ways to help improve the issue.

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## **Research Paper**

### **Written Research Report**

#### **Contextualization of the Topic**

The research topic for this study is “Black Teachers Matter: Unraveling the Black Teacher Shortage in the United States by Exploring a Pipeline of the Lived Experiences of Black Educator’s in United States K-12 Public Schools.” This study is important because it allows African American teachers to voice their experiences working in the United States K-12 public school system. If this issue is resolved more African Americans will aspire to become public school teachers, which will help the Black teacher shortage in the United States public school system. Black teachers are very important for the equity of Black student outcomes. Studies show that Black students who have at least one Black teacher during elementary school are more likely to graduate high school and pursue higher education. Only 7% of United States public school teachers are Black and non-Hispanic and 79% are White. There are several barriers for Blacks to enter the teaching profession. This includes lower high school and college graduation rates because of opportunity gaps, and unsupportive working conditions that have caused many Black teachers to leave the profession and consider other career alternatives (Shand et al., 2023).

#### **Counter -Storytelling**

“Black Teacher’s Matter” gives a counter-storytelling analysis of the lives and experiences of Black school teachers in the United States K-12 public school system. Counter storytelling offers the ability to expose, analyze, and resist dominant practices and narratives. When using critical race theory counter storytelling can be a powerful tool for documenting issues of marginalization within society by challenging oppressive practices. Through counter-storytelling certain marginalized voices can tell their stories and be heard (Covarrubias et al., 2022). “Black Teachers Matter” allows Black teachers the

opportunity to tell their stories that have not been told yet. It will be highly impactful by allowing them the opportunity to have a voice about some of their unfair or challenging experiences working as a Black school teacher in the United States public school system. This will be meaningful to our education system by not only bringing awareness to this issue. But, also by helping solve the nationwide teacher shortage that we are experiencing today. Times are changing, we are not living in the same culturally divided world as before. In today's world we must ensure that our teaching workforce is just as diversified as the student population. Black students need more teacher's that look like themselves and they can relate to. Black teachers need to be able to teach in schools that they feel welcomed and be treated equally as everyone else regardless of the cultural background.

Counter-storytelling can be used to show, reflect, and analyze legal principles as they pertain to race and social justice. It seeks to recognize the knowledge of the non-dominant group. It recognizes and analyzes racial subordination within an organization. It's also distinguished from other types of storytelling by its unique and dedicated commitment to the transformation of racial, gender, and class oppression (Martinez, 2020). Critical Race Theory counter stories are considered a grounded research approach with roots in interdisciplinary studies roots in ethnic studies, women studies, sociology, history, legal studies, and humanities (Martinez, 2020).

## **Theoretical Framing**

### **Critical Race Theory**

“Critical Race Theory writing and lecturing is characterized by frequent use of the first person, storytelling, narrative, allegory, interdisciplinary treatment of law, and the unapologetic use of creativity” (Martinez, 2020).

Derrick A. Bell

Critical Race Theory will be used for Black Teacher's Matter theoretical connection. Critical race theory is an academic and legal framework with the idea that racism is embedded into the foundations of our society. Critical race theory argues that society must tend to the issue of race to promote a more equal and just society and that everyone should be treated equally. It examines how racism as a social construct intersects with history, policy, and laws. There has been a lot of backlash and tension about critical race theory. Banning critical race theory would also mean banning teaching anything concerning race. Many fear that banning critical race theory will result in inaccuracies in the teachings of history. Laws that are aimed at limiting the teaching of critical race theory are currently facing constitutionally faced legal challenges (Whitehurst, 2024). There is some controversy that these laws are violating our First and Fourteenth amendment rights (Whitehurst, 2024).

Critical race theory rejects popular understandings about racism such as arguments that confine racism to a few bad apples, or the oppressors. "Black Teachers Matter allows those bad apples to be exposed." Critical race theory recognizes that racism is codified in law, embedded in structures, and woven into public policy. Critical race theory rejects claims of mediocracy or colorblindness. Critical race theory recognizes that it is the systemic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality (Kaerwer, 2023).

Black students have received limited access to education throughout history. Blacks were enslaved for over 246 years and were not given access to basic human rights. In 1896 Plessy vs Ferguson passed, it was ruled by the supreme court that schools can be separate but equal. In 1964 the Civil rights movement began and ultimately led to equal rights for all citizens by the year 1970 (Kaerwer, 2023).

Critical Race Theory origins can be traced back to the 1970s when a group of scholars from Columbia University started to examine current and historical laws. They determined that these laws

seemed to be constructed to only benefit White Americans at the expense of Black Americans. Since the early 1990s Critical Race Theory has been used as a framework in the field of education. Critical Race Theory can be used when Black students experience inequities within United States public schools (Kaerwer, 2023).

Using Critical Race Theory goes great in combination with a counter-storytelling narrative. Critical race theory be a great theoretical approach to use. The combination of critical race theory and counter-storytelling should be a great way to tell the stories of Black teacher experiences working in the United States education system. Through this approach researchers can create a deeper look into the resistance of intercultural communication that people experience within society. Researchers can dive into different forms of racial and gender discrimination (Kaerwer, 2023). The use of critical race theory in “Black Teachers Matter” allows Black teachers to share a deeper understanding of their experiences working in the United States public school system.

## **Literature Review**

There is a total of 16 literary works shared in this digital portfolio. Each one supports the notion that Black teachers' experiences at school may differ from the experiences of teachers of other cultural backgrounds, primarily in comparison to White teachers. These literary works help bring light to the fact that changes need to be made within the United States K-12 education system to create equal treatment for Black teachers.

### **Black Educators Matter**

“Black Educator’s Matter” is a book that focuses on the Black classroom teachers who work directly with students in K-12 educational settings, and the continuous disregard of Black life in education. It talks about Black teacher’s experiences working in an anti-Black society. This book utilizes Black critical examinations and other critical examinations of race to specifically name the experiences, roles, and responsibilities of Black educators, who tend to be the protectors of Black students. Black educators influence Black students and how they navigate K-12 schools amid anti-Black racism. Paying close attention to the Black educator’s perspectives will help schools, districts, and policy makers in their attempt to recruit, retain, and sustain Black educators (Stanley, 2024).

The term “Black education” is the study and practices of the educational histories, perspectives, realities, and futures of Black people. The “Black educator” usually supports the education of Black youth in the education system. For several years it has been continuously suggested that diversity in educators is necessary for improving the education for minority students. Since the 1954 *Brown vs. Wade*, the United States public schools have struggled to recruit and retain Black educator’s (Stanley, 2024). Black classroom teachers only represent 7% of today’s workforce and leave the field at much higher rates than their other colleagues from other cultural backgrounds (Stanley, 2024).

This book argues that the absence of black educators is because of their historical and contemporary experiences in schools. Black educators are negatively affected by neoliberal style policies such as “No Child Left Behind” and “Teach for America” have resulted in increases in teacher’s standards such as shifts in certification standards and culturally biased exams. Recruitment efforts are important in education. To help the lack of diversity in education many leaders have shifted their focus to recruitment strategies that target Black educators (Stanley, 2024).

Racism is so embedded in educational structures that many see the racist policies or actions as normal. Rather than trying to ignore the fact that racism exists in education in which people attempt to avoid the topic of race or race conscious narrative. However, the issue must be faced, and until we give racism a name before it can be changed. In 1994 Critical Race Theory supported the notion that racism is likely permanent, and periods of progress are usually followed with backlash and social force that preserves white dominance. Critical Race Theory is an analytical framework that is an insider’s view that helps illuminate legal and social inequities in the education system. It has been used to support rights for people of color. Critical Race Theory educators draws relevance from the idea that racism promotes the value that storytelling and counter-storytelling offers the oppressed to tell their stories and reclaim their narrative from the dominant perspective. Counternarratives through autoethnography is a very powerful tool in leading with equity (Stanley, 2024).

### **Black Teachers Retention and Transfer Patterns in North Carolina**

The student population has grown increasingly diverse; However, it has been a long-term issue diversifying the teaching workforce in the United States public school system. High need schools have difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. Teachers generally have a preference of low need schools.

Black teachers are 2 to 3 times more likely than white teachers to work in the high needs school. Black teachers are also more likely to leave their careers over White teachers (Sun, 2018).

The issue of having a more diversified teaching workforce is an urgent and pressing issue. When comparing Black and White teachers with similar educational backgrounds, Black teachers were more likely to leave their career or transfer to schools with larger proportions of Black students than their White colleagues (Sun, 2018). Black teachers are also more likely to be transferred to schools with more difficult working conditions than White teachers, When Black and White teachers are compared with stayers, movers, or leavers a higher percent of Black teachers had a master's degree of higher and more years of experience (Sun, 2018),

University of Washington

Despite public interest and government attempts to diversify the teaching workforce in U.S. public schools, people's knowledge about the retention and transfer patterns of Black teachers lacks specificity and clarity. This study finds that Black teachers' annual retention rates are about 4 percentage points lower than that of White teachers in North Carolina elementary and secondary schools from 2004 to 2015. This retention gap between Black and White teachers can largely be explained by Black teachers' experience and education and the challenging school and community contexts in which these teachers have worked. Compared with White teachers who had similar professional attributes and worked in similar school settings, Black teachers are more likely to stay in schools serving larger proportions of Black students and to move to a school that served a higher number of Black students. The marginal probability of Black teachers' retention received an additional boost with an increase in teachers' observational ratings and math value-added scores. Stronger school leadership and higher-

quality professional development predicts a higher retention rate of more effective Black teachers (Sun, 2018).

### **Building Trust and Resilience among Black Male High School Students**

This book discusses the positive impact it had on a school of Black male students when they had teacher role models that looked like themselves. They demonstrated social, emotional, and academic success at secondary and post-secondary level (Rhoden, 2019). In this book Rhoden identifies the key factors that help Black male students navigate high school (Rhoden, 2019). This literature discusses the importance of family background, family capital, concerted cultivation, and the influence of school culture on students. This book supports the importance of African American male role models by discussing how family background plays a huge role on positive academic outcomes of students because the exposure that these children experience is a testament to their resilience and ability to adapt to different cultural contexts (Rhoden, 2019). Many students have reflected on their experiences at Du Bois Charter.

“I was almost about to give up and fall into the same things that a lot of other people, other people of my statistics fell into... Because everyone was against me. They were saying, oh you think you’re so smart, you’re better than everyone.” I constantly I’m thinking I’m not the smartest kid in class, even though my grades were quite good” (Rhoden, 2019, p. 48).

Tyrone

“It was like a war zone. The kid who weren’t going to school, you had to worry about them standing on the corner, making little smart comments, we even got into fights or whatever every week or three days out the week. It was challenging... In the end, it was worth it because, like I said, I would

rather go to Du Bois than go to a public school and have to travel to school and then be in school with the people I have to get away from” (Rhoden, 2019, p. 48).

Talib

“Even when something would happen- for instance, when someone would come and harass one of the students-people had their back. For instance one of the kids was jumped right in front of the school, and I had to shoo away the people trying to fight him. And Mr. Simmons and Mr. Smith and others on the staff at Du Bois were so good about it. They would help the kid out. They would also make sure that there were action taken and not just like, oh, it’s just boys being boys” (Rhoden, 2019, p. 47).

Tyrone

Mentorship

Minorities are less likely to have a successful family background based on college education. Because of this minorities are more likely to speak to an advisor or counselor for education advice (Jaschik, 2021). Minorities are more likely to struggle with their grades, test scores, and self-esteem issues due to lack of diversity in the education system (Long, 2015).

*Building Trust and Resilience Among Black Male High School Students* also discusses some of the experiences of the students with academic mentors at the school. Mr. Simmons was one of the African American male mentors at Du Bois Charter. He was praised by many of the African American student participants for being an influential person at the school (Rhoden, 2019).

“One day I disrespected Mr. Simmons, believe it or not. And it’s like, bring your mom up the next day. My mom came up and she’s like, please do not start this again. and I was-like, Mom he was disrespecting me, and I don’t like the way he talked to me. And she’s like, you’re going to have to deal with it. I believe she talked to Mr. Simmons saying I came a long way. Which I did because I got sent away a couple of times when I was younger, so it was like I came a long way, and I’m ready for a new

beginning, and he gave me another chance. So, after that, me and Mr. Simmons have been very like good. He's been like a mentor to me throughout high school. I think for him to give me a second chance was him seeing something in me. After him giving me a second chance, I was just like |let that| be my P's and Q's (Rhoden, 2019, p. 57).

Antoine

### **DEI Now More Than Ever**

“Diversity is an outcome. Equity is the path to get there. Inclusion ensures we travel the path together.” Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a big topic today. With Trump in his second term of presidency the United States risk losing the fairness that DEI brings when it is needed the most. Diversity represents the varied identities and differences that people have. These differences include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, and veteran status. Equity represents the allocation of resources and opportunities and the ability to eliminate barriers of equality. There are few people such as Blacks and other marginalized communities in leadership positions that share a unique responsibility in this effort to separate people (Ishuka, 2025).

### **Grow Your Own Programs**

New Careers for the Poor is a program designed to provide career ladders for people living in economically poor communities, which are usually majority Black communities. This program's initiative is providing opportunities to address inequities through a federally funded program. Unfortunately, this program has faced several challenges. Instead of creating a new professional class for participants it created a semiprofessional class with limited mobility instead. The legacy of these efforts is still in career ladder programs in some of the unions of major urban education systems (Gist, 2022).

The National Teacher Corps is an attempt to create a community teacher development initiative by transforming teacher education. It's a teacher education intervention that recruits teachers in urban communities for placement, and preparation to work in community schools effectively. This program received a lot of controversy at the federal level from other teacher education programs. Due to the ongoing debate the term "National" was removed from the title restricting federal oversight and limiting its ability to reform teacher education. Its legacy has created the pathway for other teacher development programs such as Teach for America (Gist, 2022).

The Pathway to Teachers Program is a program launched by DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund in efforts to recruit primarily Black paraprofessionals, emergency certified teachers, and Peace Corps volunteers. Its focus was to recruit a new pool of teachers that would not typically enroll in educator preparedness programs. This program exceeds its recruitment goal of 2,200 teachers by 18%, 75% of participants finished the program, and 81% of the teachers stayed for at least a minimum of 3 years. Despite the success of this program these types of programs are still under researched (Gist, 2022).

### **Ruby Bridges**

Ruby Bridges has been an inspiration to Black people since the civil rights era. She was the first Black person to segregate to a Black school in the South in the 1960s. She was escorted to school by Marshalls every day because of the threats and insults of an angry crowd of White people. She had to be taught in a vacant classroom alone (EB Editor, 2024).

Today Ruby Bridges is a world activist and leader. She will be remembered for her bravery during the civil rights movement. She was one of the youngest Black people to integrate into schools in

the south. She has spoken publicly about her experiences all around the country. She has also established the Ruby Bridges foundation and published her memoir called “Through My Eyes in 1999 and her children’s book “Ruby Bridges Goes to School” in 2009 (EB Editor, 2004).

### **Sach’s and Teach for America Team Up**

The number of Black educators has declined since schools were desegregated. The data confirms that Black representation matters to Black students. According to John Hopkins research studies having one black teacher from grades 3-5 increases low-income Black students’ interest in college by 29% and lowers their dropout rate by 39% (Investment Weekly News, 2024).

Sachs Foundation has supported Blacks from Colorado since 1931 and Teach for America is a national organization that expands educational opportunities for students by recruiting and training educators. These organizations have teamed up in efforts to address the Black teacher shortage in Colorado. They are attempting to build a community of Black educators in Colorado. Sachs Foundation is providing financial support for Black educators and Teach for America Colorado is recruiting and training Black teachers in Colorado (Investment Weekly News, 2024).

Sachs is contributing \$165,000 for the year 2024 and expects to eventually reach over \$350,000 annually. Sachs has announced that it plans to continue to support Black Teach for America educators. The President of Sachs Foundation has made several comments about their efforts (Investment Weekly News, 2024).

"Teach For America is a well-known and widely respected national organization, so we're thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the TFA Colorado team. It's a natural fit because we share the same values, and our capabilities are complementary. The Sachs Foundation has funds we can use to

meet this challenge, and TFA has the critical teacher recruiting and training expertise to make it work. We're hoping to expand the program eventually (Investment Weekly News, 2024)."

Dr. Prateek Dutta from Teach for America has stated. "We've been committed to building a pipeline of diverse teachers for Colorado from the beginning, Black teachers have to overcome so many barriers, and this partnership is the perfect step in the right direction because now we have the resources to attract and retain Black educators by addressing the two major challenges they face: lack of funding and isolation. With Sachs Foundation, we can make a huge difference for Black teachers and students in Colorado schools (Investment Weekly News, 2024)."

### **Schools Can Still Teach Black History-Very Carefully**

In January, which is also right before Black History Month President Donald Trump signed an executive order to cut off all federal funds for K-12 schools saying indoctrinate kids based on discriminatory equity ideology. Many Black teachers took to social media to express their frustration with the situation. Many teachers expressed fears about teaching Black history and expressed concerns that their jobs were at risks if they say the wrong thing or teach the wrong subject in class. Education experts expressed that teachers should not worry but instead use more innovative strategies to teach Black history in school (Schools Can Teach Black History-Very Carefully, 2025).

### **Small but Mighty**

There is documented evidence on how Black teachers enhance the educational experience of Black students. Black teachers tend to leave the profession at much higher rates than whites and are more likely to leave due to work conditions. Between 2014-2020 Allegheny County, PA found that Black teachers left their positions at much higher rates than White teachers. They also noticed a decline

in the number of Black teachers over the past 20 years and decided to conduct a study (Parks et al., 2023).

The participant information demonstrated that Black teachers are uniquely positioned to support and educate Black students. They also expressed genuine interest in their contribution to the Black students learning. Most believed they were able to reach the Black students in a way that no other teacher could. Nearly all of them agreed that their Black identity influences their role as a teacher in the classroom (Parks et al., 2023).

### **Teaching Black History Now**

There is currently a nationwide movement in attempt to stop the teachings of topics involving race in schools. Eighteen states have banned the teaching of Critical Race Theory in schools. The academic framework in schools limit the discussion of topics of race at school. Some states have denied the inclusion of an African American Studies course to be included in the curriculum. Despite these challenges many Black people are attempting to find innovative ways to try to keep Black History alive. According to a library advocate and blogger Jean Darnell teachers can incorporate black voices and stories into their lesson plans. Jean Darnell says, “Giving voice to the voiceless is what a Black History program should center upon, adding that representation in class project displays and morning announcements is a small but still helpful way to tell stories (Joseph,2025).”

### **Teaching Homeplace: How Teachers can Cultivate Black Joy**

The student body population has grown to be more culturally diverse, and the teaching force is disproportionately white. Black joy is the notion that White supremacy does not dictate Black student lives. Students tend to be more validated and capable of learning when the classroom and environment are culturally responsive. While many barriers still exist for black student’s Black joy can be created through curriculum and a positive environment.

The school practices that are currently in place now were not created for Black people. Schools need to reconstruct some of these practices for Blacks. For this to be successful they must have a thorough understanding of the Black culture (Lawson, 2024).

### **Teaching While Black**

Historically, education institutions in the U.S. have incubated systematic racism and social oppression towards Black people. Although many school districts have increased their efforts to recruit Black teachers. They fail to retain Black teachers. Many have still demonstrated indifference among their black teachers. Many school buildings can be triggers for negative experiences that Black educators have experienced as a child. Black teachers are forced to relive the pain of their own negative experiences at school. The best recruitment strategy would also have to be strong retention strategy as well (El-Mekki, 2020).

Black educators are more likely to work in difficult working conditions. They are usually socially isolated and face lack of trust and support from their colleagues. They tend to face doubt when it comes to their intellectual abilities (El-Mekki, 2020).

When black students have one Black teacher by third grade, they are 13% more likely to enroll in college. With two black teachers by third grade, they are 23% more likely to enroll in college. In the school year 2017-2018 only 7% of all public-school educators nationwide were Black. More Black educators are becoming aware that too many white teachers set lower expectations for black and brown children (El-Mekki, 2020).

### **U.S. Teachers Grapple with a Growing Housing Crisis**

This article focuses on a Black English teacher in Los Angeles, CA who is having a hard time making enough money to pay her bills named Gina Gray. Even with a second job delivering groceries for Instacart she still has financial issues. When discussing these issues, she explains...

"A new teacher with a starting salary in [Los Angeles unified school district] can't afford rent," Gray says. "That's just the facts of it. When you come in, to know that you can't afford to live on your own, that's a huge reason why you would choose another career. We're not even talking about home ownership. We're just talking about comfortable rental accommodation (Guardian News and Media, 2023)."

"The pandemic shined a light on the underfunding of the education system overall. It highlighted the impacts on our families and our communities. And now, as we move beyond that, we're seeing investment has to be made in all those services," Gray says. "Housing impacts our students, our families, and our communities and our teachers. It's a great thing when teachers live in the communities that they serve. But we don't see a lot of that (Guardian News and Media, 2023)."

Because of the wage penalty, teachers cannot afford to live in the same communities as most of their students. According to the Research of Economic Policy Institute public school teacher's nationally make 24% less per week than similar college graduates in different field of study. The president of United Teachers Los Angeles states the following in response to the teachers' pay (Guardian News and Media, 2023).

"Educators are educating astronauts, physicists, doctors, lawyers, construction workers, plumbers, electricians. However, educators who have two and three and four degrees are not

making enough or more than all of the professions that I brought forward (Guardian News and Media, 2023)."

In Los Angeles, CA the average salary for a beginner teacher is only \$49,000. The average apartment in California ranges between \$2247 and \$3826 meaning at least half of their salary would go towards rent alone. In December 2023 United Teachers Los Angeles has now proposed a 20% raise for teacher's salaries. Districts have also attempted to ease the housing burden on teachers in California. October 2023 Governor Gavin Newsome signed a bill that provided district housing specifically for teachers and district employees (Guardian News and Media, 2023).

### **We'll Find a Way**

Many Trump supporters believe that the process of singling out groups for month celebrations such as Black History Month can be divisive. President Donald Trump recently signed an executive order that bans Diversity Equity and Inclusion initiatives across federal agencies. Zebulan Meletski, a professor of African Studies at Stoney University believes that Black History month is too ingrained to cancel, and he believes that despite the executive order that you cannot cancel the patents of Black inventor's inventions. A group called Teaching for Change has agreed to free resources that include Black History lessons to teachers (Barfield-Berry, 2025).

### **White Teachers Black Students**

This book discusses how a very interesting email was sent to one of the school administrators after conducting a session called "Reaching Black Students." Apparently, they had been having issues reaching or understanding a lot of the Black students at their school. In desperate attempt for help the email reads as follows...

Dear Dr. Hines,

My name is Dr. Bethany Henson, and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education of Liberty School District. I attended your “Reaching Black Students” session and was duly impressed with what you had to say. I am writing to see if you are available to offer services to my school district. Our elementary schools are majority White teacher staffed, with a 23% African American, 76% White, and 87% poor population. We are having a variety of issues with our African American student (academics, discipline, etc). So much so that the main thing that keeps coming up in our meetings is “What do we do with our Black kids (Mack, 2017)?”

Sincerely,

BH

Black students represent 17% of student population in American Public schools. Statistics show Black students continued underachievement in the education system. It also shows that Black students are least likely to reach grade level proficiency on standardized test measures and least likely to become proficient readers by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Black students are also 3 times more likely to be held back a grade level or suspended from school than Whites students (Mack, 2017).

This book states that it is specifically targeting White teachers. The goal is to offer evidence about White teachers approaches towards their Black students. Also, to result in higher Black student achievement in schools. It states what White teachers must realize that Black children responds to authority based the “person in the position” not the “position of the person (Mack, 2017).”

### **Worn & Weary: Black Teachers Stories**

The United States continues to face diversity issues with the teaching workforce. In Philadelphia, PA has noticed a decline in the number of Black teachers in the past couple of decades. They had 1200 few Black teachers than before. Worn and Weary is a study conducted in Philadelphia in attempt to gain

a better understanding of why Black teachers were leaving the School District of Philadelphia. The teachers were asked to talk about the experiences teaching.

The Black teacher's participants indicated issues with insufficient resources, inadequate pay, school policies, school leadership, and racialized work environments was mentioned continuously. They also expressed feeling unappreciated and lacked the needed support from school leadership (Cabral et al., 2022).

This section includes some of the responses from Black teachers explaining some of the issues they experienced. Many issues are relevant to the Black teacher shortage because they help bring awareness to some of the reasons for the inability to retain Black teachers.

One of the participants responded how racism has affected the way they are treated...

“Just the level of racism, blatant to passive, just the different things that are done to, I guess, to break you down. I mean, just being in a school system each day and to see the things that are placed on African American teachers, we get the hardest students to deal with, with no supports. And then also even if you are qualified to be in leadership positions or be in positions where you can offer mentorship or some assistance to teachers who are new to the school District, that's overlooked because of you being African American (Cabral et al., 2022).”

Another participant shared how they need more support from leadership...

“There's got to be much more built into the school year, into each week, that provides teachers with the supports that they need. Because, like I said, I think it's taxing on a lot of Black educators', mental health, to have to act as a parent or a relative to these kids at school, and then go home and have to take care of their own families (Cabral et al., 2022).”

Another teacher reported feeling unappreciated, undervalued, and disrespected...

“You’re just doing all the things that you can for the students, but it just feels like it’s just not being appreciated. Again, teachers are replaceable. When you say you’re leaving, it’s like, ‘All right. You’re leaving,’ and then that’s it. They’ll just find someone else to replace you and that’s it. Here at school, my principal has told me that I’m valued. What I do is appreciated. That I’m a valuable member, but this is my third school. So those seven years without hearing that, and some people don’t even make it seven years (Cabral et al., 2022). “

Several participants reported experiences of racism at school...

“It would be because of the toxic environment, the way you're made to feel. And just like you don't matter in the eyes of the School District of Philadelphia. In the eyes of the Caucasian administration, they really could care less about you (Cabral et al., 2022).”

“So racism plays a part in everything. When one of my grade partners was White. She got, got away with saying things that, or she had more allowances afforded to her, but I didn't (Cabral et al., 2022).”

“Incompetence of the leadership...there's really no leadership, and lack of care, lack of understanding. When the White teachers complain, it's remedied. When the Black teachers complain, we're just being worrisome, or we're just complaining (Cabral et al., 2022).”

“Where I see racism is with the district and the lack of resources that my school has.’ I'm living it,’ I'm in it every day. I request things all the time and don't get them. You know what I mean? Like for [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment exams], we had to prep them. Well, there wasn't enough books for all the kids. So, what I'm supposed to do, you know what I mean? Now I have to go online,

find my own resources and things like that. So yeah, the district is doing a disservice to where I'm at, basically, because it's majority African American students from North Philly, you know what I mean? They can't be successful, so we don't have to put too much money in there. We'll put our money elsewhere (Cabral et al., 2022).”

“I've been spending a lot of my own money, which it already puts me at a disadvantage because, again, I have student loan payments I have to pay for. I have to take care of my family. I have to pay rent, so I feel like that's a... I think as a Black teacher, because we are financially... when you look at society, what we make is different proportionally than some of my counterparts. They're able to afford resources for their classroom because they're either making more money or they're just able to. Where me as a Black teacher, I'm trying make ends meet, and having to purchase things to ideally make my education experience for my students better. It's like we're taken advantage of in a way that we're going to feel sorry, or we're going to want to care for the children and we're going to want to purchase things, but that's not really realistic because people have different experiences with their finances and systemically, Black women aren't always where we need to be financially to be able to do that. That's something that I learned this year that as a new teacher, you spend a lot of your own money and that's not helpful (Cabral et al., 2022).”

Some participants described issues with inadequate staffing and supplies...

“Today I was the counselor, today I was the nurse...today I was the gym teacher...today I was the peer tutor between the child and the parent. There are so many things that a teacher does that is overlooked by society that it'll take forever. Just even the fact that the expectations of a parent on a teacher, like a parent think that a teacher is supposed to provide materials for the children and provide

all these things, but we don't necessarily get it provided for us. We go out and spend our own money (Cabral et al., 2022). “

“You must beg for supplies. I was writing on a chalkboard, didn't even have a whiteboard. We had to Xerox materials, photocopy materials, so that our kids could have enough... you get used to every year in the summer going to try to find out, who's got the better sales? Target, Walmart? Who's got the better sales on school supplies because you find that you have to buy them. And not only that, school supplies for the classroom, but we had to buy supplies for the students because they come to school the first week of school, loaded book bag. Then after that, no supplies whatsoever. And so, we have to furnish those supplies in order for them to be able to do their work (Cabral et al., 2022).”

All sources listed are relevant to “Black Teachers Matter” research because they offer a closer look into the issues that have led to the Black teacher shortage today. Each offers its own unique way of explaining some of the marginalized issues within educational institutions today. If we can focus on eliminating some of these issues it would help retain Black teachers and attract more Black people to pursue teaching careers.

“Black Educators Matter” focuses on the disregard for Black lives in the education system. “Black Teachers Retention and Transfer Patterns” focuses on the issues of diversification within the teaching workforce. “Building Trust and Resilience” focuses on the positive impact that Black teachers have on Black students. “DEI Now More Than Ever” focuses on the importance of having DEI in education for marginalized communities. “Grow Your Own Programs” focuses on the importance of Black people to start and grow their own programs. “Sach’s and Teach for America Team Up” focuses on the reason for the inability to hire and retain Black teachers and ways to improve the issue. “Schools Can Still Teach Black History” focuses on the school’s inability to teach Black history in schools.

“Small But Mighty” focuses on evidence that having Black teachers enhance the experiences of Black students. “Teaching Black History Now” focuses on the attempt to stop the teachings of Black History in schools. “Teaching Homeplace. How Teachers Cultivate Joy” focuses on the notion that White Supremacy does not dictate Black student lives. “Teaching While Black” focuses on the history of systematic racism and social oppression towards Black people in the United States education system. “U.S. Teachers Grapple with a Growing Teacher Housing Crisis” focuses on the housing burden of teachers. Demonstrating a financial need for teachers to afford housing. “We’ll Find a Way” focuses on the recent attempts to ban DEI in schools. “White Teacher’s Black Students” focuses on White teachers inability to reach Black students and how it has affected Black students academically. “Work and Weary Black Teachers Stories” focuses on some of the Black teacher experiences that have led to the inability to retain Black teachers in the education system.

### **Statement of Problem**

Only 7% of teachers in the United States are Black in public education (El-Mekki, 2020). Only 2% of teachers in the United States public education system are Black males (Hall, 2025). Black students are more likely to go to college when they have had a Black teacher (El-Mekki, 2020). There is a gap in the amount of research of the Black teacher shortage in the United States public school system.

At a time of growing teacher shortages, Black teachers are leaving the profession in excessive numbers (Stovall & Sullivan, 2022). Black students or teachers have not received equality within the United States education system. There is a need for additional investment in educators and prioritization of the youth in the public school system. Teachers have a life-long significant impact on students. Many students have reported feeling more cared for, showed more interest in schoolwork, and were more confident in their teacher's ability to communicate with them when they have teachers that look like

themselves (Boisrond, 2017). Without enough qualified educators in the classroom, students cannot receive the education that they deserve. (Legislators Introduce Plan to Address Teacher Shortage, 2023).

In February 2025 President Donald Trump's administration gave America's schools a two-week deadline to remove Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs in schools. They have also given an ultimatum to the Education Department to stop using racial preferences in relation to the admission, financial aid, or hiring process for students. They have been given 14 days to eliminate any practice that treats students or workers differently because of their race (Trump administration gives schools a deadline to end DEI programs or risk losing federal money, 2025).

Brown vs Board of Education of 1954 ruled that separating children in public schools because of race was unconstitutional. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme court found that segregation has a detrimental effect on learning and personality. The conclusion was that separate but equal had no place in American democracy (Journal of Southern History, 1980).

Brown vs. Board of Education of 1954 gave Black people the hope that things would change. But it's important for us to know that so much was lost in the process. Some that are almost impossible to be given back go black people. Black people were promised a quality education, but it has not yet been received (Patton, 2024).

The popular narrative is that Brown v. Board was the catalyst for the entire civil rights movement, but that's an oversimplification. The Supreme Court didn't just wake up one day in 1954 and decide to desegregate schools. There was a massive grassroots effort that led to that decision, including 2 decades of legal action (Patton, 2024).

In attempt to handle the teacher shortages today schools have increased class sizes and have cancelled some classes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). Teachers and staff are being forced to cover

unsupervised classrooms during their breaks and fill any gaps along with their regular duties. Some states are allowing veterans and college students to come in and instruct their students. Some schools have reduced to a four-day school week, or remote learning (Cox, 2023). These issues undermine student learning and should be a national educational priority (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023).

According to a survey of teachers in January 2022, 90% of teacher's experienced feeling burned out, 70% has covered for other colleagues or taken on extra duties in response to staff shortages in schools, and 55% of teachers plan to leave education sooner than originally planned. According to a 2023 Learning Policy Institute Analysis report found that more than 300,000 vacancies open job vacancies or positions substituted by uncertified teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023).

The percentage of black teachers has not surpassed 5 percent in the past 5 decades. It's important for schools to have qualified students who are engaged, especially for students that deal with systemic barriers. Qualified teachers are the most important school related predictor that can positively impact student achievement. Educators who share similar cultural backgrounds as their students tend to have higher expectations for them than teachers of other cultural backgrounds (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019).

By resolving the Black teacher shortage problem, it benefits everyone. "Black Teachers Matter" research aim is to not only increase the number of Black teachers in the United States public school system. But to also benefit the Black student experience by helping them emotionally, and academically achieve their goals. It also benefits other cultures by offering a more diversified teaching workforce it makes it easier teachers and students to work with people of all cultures.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the physical and emotional challenges of the Black teacher shortage?
2. What are the personal lived experiences of Black teachers in K-12 public schools and how might these experiences contribute to the Black teacher shortage in the United States?

3. What contributing factors help a Black teacher or potential applicant decide rather or not to accept, remain, or decline a professional career as a teacher in United States K-12 public schools?
4. What changes need to be made within the United States public school system to help retain or encourage more Black teachers?

## **Methodology**

Qualitative methods refer to a variety of research techniques and procedures associated with the goal of trying to understand the complexities of the social world in which we live, and how we go about thinking, acting, and making meaning in our lives. These research practices emphasize getting close to participants and trying to understand how they view the world, including, among others, participant observation, interviews, life history, and focus groups (Ellis & Ellington., 2001).

Solorzano and Yosso's Counter-storytelling is a powerful analysis when telling stories of people who are often silenced. By bringing attention to the experiences and histories of the oppressed, counter stories help strengthen traditions of social, political, cultural survival, and resistance. Counter-storytelling authors are asking for a re-thinking or re-storying process of certain historical narratives with the aim of restructuring certain current or historical issues in schooling (Miles, 2019). Through counter-storytelling Black teachers will now have a voice to speak about their experiences and challenges of working as a K-12 public school teacher.

Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach which is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of interpretive material practices that help make the world more visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations which may include field notes, interviews, conversations photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative researchers

attempt to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people may bring to them (Creswell & Poth 2018).

Qualitative research is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive, narrative, and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest (Mills & Gay, 2019). Ontology deals with the nature of reality and what is reality (Bibi, 2022). It studies existence, reality, and being by answering questions such as “what exists” or “what is the nature of that existence (Bibi, 2022)?” The ontology of qualitative research assumes that people are anticipatory meaning making beings who constructs their own meanings of situations. Qualitative researchers tend to make sense of the world through those interpretations. The participants use meanings that are culture and context bound. Realities tend to be multiple, constructed, or holistic. The uniqueness of the parties involved have meaning conferred upon them and are interactive, and inseparable (Cohen et al., 2018).

Qualitative research regards people as anticipatory meaning making beings who makes their own meanings of situations and makes sense of the world and act in it through their interpretations. Behavior and data are socially situated, context related, context dependent, and context rich. To fully understand a situation researchers should understand the context both specifically, and holistically (Cohen et al., 2018). For example, in Black Teachers Matter DDP I plan to interview participants so they can tell their experiences working in the education system. This means the participants can make their own interpretations of their experiences.

Epistemology is defined as “the study of knowledge.” It is described as a branch of philosophy that describes a relationship between an investigator and their version of reality. Epistemology answers the question “What is the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched?” Epistemology in qualitative research exists when behavior and data are socially situated, context related, context dependent, and context rich. Research looks at relationships of elements in a whole system. To

fully understand a situation a researcher must understand the context specifically and holistically. A researcher should be able to understand and explain the differing interpretations of a situation (Cohen, et al., 2018). In attempt to help this understanding a researcher should have very thought-out interview questions that are relevant to their study.

“Black Teachers Matter” uses a qualitative approach with a counter-storytelling study design. The participant selection target audience is Black educators who are now teachers or have previously worked as a teacher in the past. All participants were recruited by recruitment letter shared via social media, or in person. The participant interviews were conducted in an online setting via zoom.

The data collection consists of 10 interview questions. These questions are relevant to “Black Teachers Matter” research. These questions help us to have a better understanding of the black teacher shortage issue and gives us a better idea how it can be resolved. After the data was collected, it was analyzed using Nvivo software. Nvivo software is a software program that is used for qualitative, and mixed methods research. Nvivo is typically used by researchers to analyze audio, video, and text files (Vitor et al., 2024).

### **Interview Questions**

1. Have you experienced any issues with racism while working at school, if so, describe an experience?
2. Describe how you are treated at school in comparison to teachers of other cultures?
3. Do you think Black students need Black teachers for role models, if so, describe the impact that it has on the students that you’ve witnessed?
4. Do you feel like you and your opinions are valued by school leaders, if not describe why?
5. Do you feel that you are provided adequate tools or supplies to do your job, if not please explain?

6. Are you satisfied with your pay rate and benefits, if not please explain what changes should be made?
7. Do you think there's a need for more Black school teachers, if so, please explain why?
8. Explain a time when you felt you were treated unfairly or witnessed another Black teacher being treated unfairly while working at school?
9. Have you experienced any trauma while working at school, that may potentially lead to you wanting to resign now or in the future?
10. Anything else you would like to add that relates to this research topic that you feel would be relevant or important?

## **Data Findings**

### **Interview Transcriptions of audio recordings**

#### Research Participants

P1- Black male middle school physical education and connections teacher

P2- Black female middle school principal

P3- Black female elementary and middle school music teacher

P4- Black female middle school language arts teacher

P5- Black female elementary gym teacher

P6- Black male former pre-algebra teacher and basketball coach

P7- Black female high school science teacher

P8- Black female Kindergarten school teacher

P9- Black male high school film teacher

P10- Black female 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher

P11- Black female elementary school special needs teacher

P12- Black male ex K-5 math teacher and discipline coach

P13- Black female ex middle school teacher paraprofessional

P14- Black male 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Teacher

P15- Black female elementary school principal

P16 Male K-12 ex substitute teacher

#### Participant Response

Can you please give us an idea about why you decided to participate in this research study?

P4

“Well, I decided because the topic obviously spoke to me being a black um teacher and um you know, like, um in my experiences, um because I this is my 10h year of teaching, so I've taught in one school where it's predominantly black, Hispanic, um and I just came from the school where it was largely um largely white. um I mean, there was mixture, at least in the student body, but the the staff, at least, um yeah, there were a few black faces, so, I guess, like, I could speak to both of those experiences for this, uh, study.”

P7

“I've decided to participate in this interview mainly because it comes at a great time here in Kansas, um we just celebrated the 70-year anniversary of the Brown versus Board of Education um, in which desegregation in school's um occurred and we just had that big celebration. um, and we had a guest speaker at the event, when she was speaking at the event, of course, she's written a book about her experience being the first student to integrate into um public schools after the ruling. And he was sharing her experience and she also wrote a book, which, of course, her book is a band book. And so I thought this was perfect timing um to be asked to talk about this teacher's shortage, especially at this time because I'm learning that it's systematic. It occurs around the same time as the decision to integrate

schools. And so I really wanted to um kind of give my perspective, um through that wind. She wrote a book as well, um first day of school. um scholastic was the publisher, but that book is, um as you know, in education, we've been fighting for the last um three to five years, about book bans. um what's acceptable for students to read and not read and believe it or not, the lived experiences of blacks during at time. Those books are banned, and it's amazing of the controlling the narrative of what is taught in the curriculum um and the things that are taught aren't the truth. And that's the part that is very disheartening. If you want to ban books, then let's let's do a complete sweep. Let's get rid of all the books. and let's start let's start over with looking at books that tell the truth about the true history of our country as well as the events that occurred. And and um desegregating our schools is one of those massive events at the time of integrating the schools. That's the same time that that pipeline of black educators, there was many black educators teachers, principals, superintendents. That is not the case now systematically over the last 70 years, you see how those members of teachers and principals and even superintendents were either, um demoted, fired, uh, and I recently read a book called, um Jim Crow's Pink slip. um I read you in your research to read. It's the untold stories of principles and um teachers in leadership. And it talks about um how the changes that occurred within, you know, just over the last hundred years. um in that pipe.”

P10

“Um A lot of times as black educators are voices aren't heard as less times as educators as a whole, our voices aren't heard. So when there's an opportunity to speak, why not speaking up.”

P14

“Mainly I decided to be a part of it is because I wanna be helpful to the cause and bring awareness to the current state of education. As an educator today it's highly afforded um my voice is heard, but also uh

knowing that I represent a distinguish voice um that may not always have uh a way to be able to transcend or be exposed to majority of the population.

Have you experienced any issues with racism while working at school, if so describe an experience?"

P1

"So, when I first started like the first couple years, um, I had some issues with not necessarily the way people treated me, but some of the reactions I got from students, like I said, I was a Behavior Interventionists at that point in time, um the only other black men that were in our building were custodians. the custodians. So, a lot of the kids seen me and wanted to know about me, wanted to talk to me. uh, things like that, and so we were in a meeting about a kid in this plan and one of the uh one of the uh counselors that brought up about they brought up like somebody that kid could speak to or someone who could talk to the kid. And she kind of brought it up in a way in a manner that made me kind of feel a certain way. She was like, well, the kid seemed to like talking to Fletcher. Maybe he can do it, you know. but not in understanding why the kids necessarily wanted to talk to me or felt safe talking to me. And it was more so because I looked like them. I' their language, I look like, and I came from where they came from, uh, these are discussions that we had and a lot of them parents I actually ended up knowing or being around the city, you know, Kansas City is not very big, but you know, somehow everybody kind of knows everybody. And uh, you know, that that that kind of we we kind of addressed that. uh in the next meeting and not a big it wasn't a big meeting when we addressed it. It was more of a personal level when I went and talked to it like, hey, when you said that, this is how it felt. and it felt like it was kind of a jab because the kids weren't wanting to talk to you as a counselor, they wanted to talk to me as the interventionists. and I just, you know, I explained to her why and why that made the kind of made me step back and look at something because we should be on the same team. eventually no

longer working here. I know, with that I understanding going on more of a person. Like let's address it so we can move past and work because I'm here for the kids”

P2

“It was about lady back between 2006 and 2008. when I was in the administrator at a uh school that was annexed to um Kansas City public schools. and in that annex was about 10 different schools. And so I was one at the high school and it was called the annex because, uh Highway 435 kind of separating the uh the district. We get those those schools that was passed 435 was part of KCPS and it was a long a longstanding uh debate of why those rules were part of Kansas Kansas City public schools. And so, uh, in 2018 that particular annex had decided that they were going to go back to the dust district that they were supposed to be in. and so they they passed the law. And so that uh that year was very stressful because everybody was wanting to know, okay, uh, where are you going? Because these schools are no longer we' gonna be part of KCPS and uh, it was it was um stressful. And the ones that wanted to stay in at that school, uh was mostly white, and come to find out mostly white teachers were hired for that district and everybody else had to go to a school and Kansas City public schools. And so we were asked to pack the ball our things and um and one of the movers from KCPS would come and take our thieves from that building to go back into Kansas City public schools. and all of that had to be done by uh June 30th, um 2008 it did not happen when July 1st came and we tried to grab our things that particular district said if you come on our property, we are going to arrest you. So you could not get our things out of that school. We had brand new equipment, brand new banned equipment, library books, everything. We could not set a foot in that building. Wow. white people and everybody else had to go back to Hou and hopes. So what was there reason why they wouldn't didn't was the new fiscal year. And so they gained property of all the schools and everything in it. Oh my God. That is horrible. You know how voting for and then they put in another policy that's how they were able to pass it. And I guess I could

send the district, but I don't know, um I'm able to send the district. Oh no, yeah, but we'll probably not. You say that, so. I mean, if you if it does slip out and you say it, I could just go in and edit it anyway. So. Yeah. that's when I definitely learned that the policies that I passed always have other things inside of that policy. So it's really good to read the whole thing through because people was voting on one thing, but other things happened, and that's how they were able to get those schools back to their district. And how it was about 7 to eight schools they drop back. We lost it. We lost the high school middle school and about four elementaries.”

P6

“Okay, so I was an honors algebra teacher, right? So algebra in eighth grade, well, eighth grade, uh standard was just to take pre- algebra before they get to high school again, ninth grade they would take algebra one, geometry, algebra two, and probably a precal or if they was gifted, they'd probably take trig. That was the setup for public school. So the kids that took algebra one for me was they was honor kids, right? The problem was is that a lot of parents when they first hear about me being the coach one is teaching the honors class, they thought it was going to interfere with the ability of me teaching their kids what they need to know, of algebra one. It was never a problem with the honor kids because guess what, they're honored and gifted. We do a lot of stuff in class. It wasn't a lot of homework. We would do our work in class, pass it around, hey, which ones we everybody kind of missed, raise hand we do it again. A lot of that method helped me when I was a kid, I was a method I would use. When I taught I had I had every year I had every one of my kids always passed the national proficiency a pre-algebra and algebra one and math eight. and math eight. that's the basic chore is math 8. um I get rid of I was getting ridiculed for a long time because they wasn't thinking that their kids was ready because of the big jump from algebra one to algebra 2. Listen, everybody struggled in algebra two. I don't know nobody that said algebra just so easy. You know, I got friends this aerospace, and that was like the one of the

toughest things was to get through algebra 2 and trigonometry. So me trying to explain that to a parent, you know, these are the difficult things that we've come from. It's the algebra 2 teacher's job to get them through algebra two. I get them through algebra one. So I had another teacher, you know, teachers always teach in pairs, right? So for the green core, for the honored kids or whatever, um that teacher was white. no matter what, she struggled a lot of times. She had to do a lot of teacher, um workshops in the summertime because she was having problems with getting kids to pass the proficient. But yeah, parents want to their kids in her class. and I was telling her like, listen, you have very good like it would be like for me trying to have to plead my case to have honor kids in my class because they everybody wanted to be in her class, but she wasn't passing kids. So, you know, I just always thought it was a race thing and you know, it was always a race thing. Everybody else was white. nobody make a big deal of me. I didn't make a big deal, because after a while, you know, after a while, having a smaller classes I was able to help kids a lot better than having just a large class where she had and she had a problem in in kids to pass. She end up quitting because she couldn't get kids passed. So you think they questioned your ability to teach their kids based off your skin color? Absolutely. And then being knowing where I'm from raise another bread flag, because I'm from the inner city of Oklahoma City, right? I graduated from a school for color people. It's all black. Right? But because of the poverty there, you know, it's looked upon because I'm in the suburbs where my university where I graduated from once and uh that's where I started my career. I started going to school at LU. I'm in Norman, that's where I started substitute teaching and doing my thing there and just, you know, that's how that that kind of transpired, you know, and I always had that problem, though. I'm like, listen. yeah, I'll I' always be prolific and understanding what I need to do for kids to get kids to pass, you know, that' always been like a fun thing about it saying, hey, I can get you to be next step, you know, as a teacher and parents didn't need to see it that way. Parents ain't really see it that way. They usually like kids folks like, I need to be there. Or I was my

whole thing was this. I was just doing my job, no matter if I had 15 kids, take one year, I might have had like 42 kids. I'm gonna get those kids to pass. Don't look at me and be like, hey, this is a black they was looking at me like, hey, this is a black teacher. I don't think he's smarter than his white, this white lady, you know what I'm saying, but we don't care what it looked like, we want our kids and theirs someone some of their parents grew up where they didn't see black people. They had never seen black before. They seen Native Americans because they have little rock right up the street, which is a reservation, but when it comes to having an African-American and a male at that working in the school district because when I started, It was only four black teachers. It was only four black teachers when I started. It was one male, three women, and I was the fifth, right? And that was in the whole school district. Couple of them worked in middle school, one I worked in high school, one I worked the elementary school. and it was crazy to me, you know, like it was crazy. So being that had the sue that made, like you have to like establish yourself as a teacher, and it was weird because people would be like, no. this lady didn't fail every kid in all my kids went through the school and she failed all my kids. But you want your last kid to go with her. Instead of me because I'm an African American male. That's how I was when I started, but it wasn't like that very long. I can't put the scores into perspective because the bar for my kids were already higher because they were honor kids. The problem is some of the kids that needed to be in my class were not in my class. Which was passed down because middle school 6<sup>th</sup> grade honors passes down everything to get them prepared for 7<sup>th</sup> grade honors. 7<sup>th</sup> grade gets them prepared for 8<sup>th</sup> graded honors. If your kid gets through 7<sup>th</sup> grade honors and transfer to a regular class it's doing disservice for them and they normally wouldn't have the test scores they needed to pass. In high school they wouldn't have honors anymore, they'd have to take a general education class. That was the thing some people didn't want their child to pass through the honors just because I was Black. At first that was the issue. My test scores when I first started was outstanding. I wanted to do good my first year and we had pizza

parties it was just fun. But I couldn't get the kids that I needed to become a blue-ribbon teacher. It's funny because soon as my basketball team started winning then they we're okay with their kids being in my class."

P8

"Um Yeah, there was a time where we noticed um a lot of the uh black teachers had noticed kind of um we don't want to say favoritism, but that's what it was when it came to an individual teacher. uh she was a Caucasian. She was sure late. She always had an excuse, always saying it was her daughter or she had a car issue and um the rest of the African-American teachers never had that much grace. um and really noticed that with a lot of the non-black teachers, um a lot of grace was given to them more than us. um we had to basically let it be known, even if we had a flat tire, uh we had to basically even honestly, like send a picture like this is what really going on. And uh when it was dressed, um we all kind of got together. And for myself I was as spokesperson, which at least to this day I honestly say I'm never doing it again, but I was the spokesperson. And we talked and we met with our principal about it and then and for the rest of that year, she kind of made me an example and then she ended up letting me go saying it wasn't enough funding for that year, which was not true and she hired someone with less credentials than next year after. I was going to go through HR soon, but I realized that it was as better for me just to move on. And um basically what we had discussed in the meeting and it looked like I said, it was just the African-American teachers, you know, just the indifferences and discrepancies we saw and we were giving her the examples of the same. And our principle was Caucasian and basically, you know, she basically was just like, well, given a lot of excuses, that's not necessarily extreme and that's not necessarily true. And at the end of the day for retaliation. She kind of made, like I said, that she made me an example um by letting me go um saying it wasn't a title funding for me to work for next year and that wasn't necessarily true. It was a Latina teacher. Okay. And I only found out because my former

friend which were still good friends to this day, basically reached out to me and was like, hey, just letting you know, you know, she's Latina, um, but she passes, you know, for Caucasian basically. And um that she had less credentials in me and she actually had to show her how to do a lot of things that, you know, we learned in school, like she just wasn't really ready for the position, but she hired it anyway. Um, but then I found out down the road that the school was about to hit closure and all this stuff. They were about to shut it down anywhere for lack of funds and all it's just like, ugh, you know, sometimes I'll do thinking about I should I should have done it. You know, so that prince is looking and learn a lesson, you know, uh, but yeah, it was it really did bother and me because my my my plan was at that school I I wanted to retire from there. I enjoyed my time here.”

P9

“Um So one of the first projects that I uh did at high school, uh, this was back in 201 2012 um I so I would so I worked for the Alliance theater and, uh we would go into, you know, public schools all over Atlanta, and so one of the schools I was in, uh, was and uh we would start with a uh some sort of text and the kids would uh, you know, go see a go see a play at the Alliance and then we would uh review the things of that text. in class and then through uh engaging with the things with that text, they would create their own original play. uh, in the course of, you know, 10 sessions. so, um I was at and uh, you know, the kids, this was during, uh, trade, uh, killing. and, um this was like right when it happened, like, uh, it was it happened in February, but, you know, the world really didn't find out about it was like a month later. And so, um uh, but I found out about it like the week that it happened, and so I presented to my kids as like, hey, you know, what as hey, this is what's happening right now, what do you guys think, you know, I was like, you know, how do you guys think this story is gonna unfold essentially? You know what I'm saying? Um and, you know, I presenting them a lot of different stuff, and there was like we wanted to do this story. I really, really passionate about it. And um and so they you

know, we developed a story, we started working on and all that, they were like, you know, really and this was like during the time like, you know, Zimmerman was still out there, he wasn't even like being arrested and it was like calls trying to get him arrested, right? and so it was like, you know, producing it or whatever, and the parent, you know, found out about it, it was about to, you know, perform this and they like spoke out against it and basically got it shut down because they didn't want, you know, they didn't they didn't want uh, they didn't want us to, you know, essentially talk, talk, talk through this. Um, you know, a months later, of course, we all, you know, know the outcome, all that different was he was arrested, but then he was like, go, um uh, and then he was, you know, it was he was tried, but then, you know, he was found innocent and all that stuff. um and so, um in all that select by lots of matters movements and not that stuff. And so, uh yeah, I mean, it was just I, you know, for me, it was like um it wasn't too like shocking or anything like that, cause that was where we was living it, you know what I'm saying? I mean it's still kind of a wob living at where people don't really want to face, like, reality, you know, um even when it's presented right in front of you, you know what I'm saying, just the facts it's the plain facts, or just a plane like, hey, let's just deal with this in a productive way as a society. let's try to, you know, do right by this this moment of this situation. and, you know, people are, you know, and a lot of white folks seem to be um you know, fearful, just or just like, we're just like, you know, without any sort of real courage to, like, do the right thing, um and so, um, not off, of course, you know what I'm saying, but it's uh, that come to pushback tends to be from to uh, you know, to um to do what's right, um, so so yeah, that was my like um I was one one experience. Oh, it was apparent of one of the kids. was like, oh, this is doing? I can't do that. And so they started speaking out, and eventually they had to shut down. How did she get it shut down, though? I hope she you know what I'm saying, but eventually what happened was, you know, the director, because I would go in and I would work with uh another uh teacher that was actually in that school, and, you know, we were codirect whatever new thing that the

kids were coming up with. And so, you know, she basically came to me and was like, hey, this is what's happening? the parents are like, you know, they don't have this to happen, and so now we have to do something different. Um, you know, and so, I mean, that's that's essentially what how how I would down. um I mean, I don't know who the parent was, I don't know how much who they had, you know what I'm saying, but clearly they had enough to to to make, like, you know, leadership say, hey, we can't do this. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, yeah, I absolutely understand me, you know, Trevon more than that was a really big deal back then, and it's still a big deal today. So, you know, that is probably made you feel really let down to not be able to you know, do that with your class. I think more than anything, it was just like it was just like you know obvious is what it is, you know what I'm saying? I think I could remember how old I was around that time. see 2012, it was like 25, probably, something like that. um yeah, yeah, I was 25 around the time. And so you know, I mean, really the part that was like I mean, cause it was so much happening natally, that was like a shock to me as well. you know, all these kids dying, I I felt like I could be next. I I rec I remember very vividly saying to myself around it sounds like the only difference between me and Travel was time and proximity, you know what I'm saying? Yeah. There's you know, I look just like the kid like it was not it wasn't much difference as far and so it just it it felt like, oh, while we're living in a very, very dangerous place that, you know, it still is just as dangerous as it was in the 50s or 60s or or 1920s or whatever, um, not exactly the same kind of danger, but still, like, I mean, I think the I think I think really is like what what makes it so dangerous is like the people with the most amount of power are like, the most mediocre and then they know, like, very little about their own history and and and and the kind of power that they yield and, you know what I'm saying? And so it's like, it's that's really, really scary to live on that kind of auspices, you know what I'm saying? I live up there's like people with that much power and that little, like acknowledgement of how dangerous they could be when they get stuff wrong, you know what I'm saying?"

P10

“Work in a school that has a lot of minorities in it. Sometimes you see when, um our white educators, don’t necessarily understand a relief. to our black students. So when or Hispanic students, so when something issue arises, it's a um I'm right, you're wrong, I'm being I'm little so you I have to come in and I kind of you have to figure out a balance of still supporting that teacher or not making them feel like they're wrong, but also giving that child within me. and it's kind of that fine line of this is this isn't the way to handle this or this is excessive. without um tarnishing the respect that child has for them or, um, the respect they should have for them and still showing the child that that's that they matter in their needs matter. okay, so a student got in trouble in their class, they asked him to do something, they didn't do it. So it's like, okay, I'm sending you out because you were sitting the wrong direction. Um, sending you out because you crumbled up a piece of paper. Like this is you're making this a bigger deal than it needs to be, but when it's oh, I student, you don't you don't do any of these things. You give them extra chances, and you try to talk to them and oh, well, I know they're having a really hard time at home, but you you don't do that for our other students or, um, you don't know, um, I granted, I understand you knew, you ha you you need to learn the students' names of everyone in the building and, um, you don't know my students' names, but you can call out in there with their discipline should be your should not be or how they were being disrespectful and stuff like that, but it's like what a white student does this and it's you know their name. If they need to talk, then come straight to me, then come to me, but you don't have the same patience or grace for someone else.”

P11

“At my district I transferred from which I worked there two years. I would be still in this district. I um because of the pay but pay is not always important so I worked at this district. I went and I was asked to work in the middle school section. They transferred me from elementary section, which is awesome. to

over to the middle school because two middle school male teachers they walked out. They just could not take it so they put me over there because of my experience and because I was an older teacher well in this classroom of different cultures, they did everything they could to make me leave and I still fear as long as I could so I kept calling uh radio. I contacted my vice principal. He came up several times that morning before 10 o'clock uh just give you an example what happened. The students that had they threw milk on the floor. The students had all their homework on the floor. The students stowed another person's another person's purse they hit that the students refused to turn their personal belongings like their cell phones and different digits of calculator. They they refuse to do all of that. So those were the reasons why I kept paging my vice principal. the students wanted to go outside that particular day around 1 o'clock and I was informed by several students who did not give me any problem. That a particular morning. They stated that it was going to be a big fight of course, I took that in consideration and I failed I didn't I changed my plans. I said we would not be going outside so the students decided to play basketball in the hallway and in the classroom throwing a basketball over my head in the hallway we went to the restroom. They were still throwing this basketball. They took a big oh a cup probably about 12 inches long and they filled it up with water and keep in mind there was like 28 students in this in this class so I'm trying to wash the back, the middle and the front and making sure all students are safe and all students are obeying the rules. Of course, the water was pouring all the way down the hall. They thought they were going to make me fall, but instead they made their friends fall so we found out so that was another reason why I paged my vice principal and then this was the last straw. I was sitting down in the back and my vice principal came in. He came in because I paged uh, it was like a very I paged him on my cell phone. I told him he didn't get upstairs immediately. All the students are looking and the involved that they were going to hit me in the head with they were sitting on the floor, sitting behind them this wall where they wasn't supposed to sit. They was with girls and boys and then the ball

with it bounced off the deck and then it went in front of me. So they they said that they wanted to hit me in the head. Now, this is a it was a Hispanic boy who wanted to hit me. So when I saw that happen, I felt that my life was in danger. My boss was not up there yet, so when he got there, another teacher walked in and two want teachers walked in and stated that you all were out of control. This lady is trying to tell you what to do. You are disobeying her. And so to make a long story short, I walked out of the of the classroom. My principal was walking around the corner. I gave him my um my badge and my keys. I told him that this is ridiculous. And I walked downstairs to the office and I gave a sheet of paper of a student who followed my directions which were about seven or eight. The rest of the students just played along with the game, laughing and everything, and I told the secretary to tell the principal that I will um I would be leaving that day until something else is done. I went to the ball part of directors of the school board of this particular district. They took my uh statement, they took my statement and I told them I will not walk back in that classroom or that school until stuff and it's done. The principal of this particular school never contacted me. The principal of this school never called me. The principal of this school took the students who I that I wrote down who did the ball. I didn't know all their names, but I described them. She took them in a meeting in her office and they told her that I was on my cell phone the entire time I was in that classroom. After that I was off for about two weeks and because I needed a job, I returned back to that classroom before I went in that classroom I had to sit down with the vice principal and the vice principal stated uh some of the things that the principals said that I was told that the children said this and I looked at him and said, you really believe what you're saying you saw me paid you this many times you saw me text you from my personal phone. You saw me when I my phone was not out and it has never been out for the whole year that I've worked at this school so you are believing the children so he apologized and then I end up leaving that particular school because uh students said they was going to bring in guns. There would be three or four or five fights outside of the

time. The uh camera is on us in us is three ladies who could not stop the fight, so the cameras on a re page and on our uh walkies no one runs to our rescue, so it was a big turnover because safety behavior academics because no one wanted to learn maybe no one wanted to learn in the classroom. No one wanted to learn. It was always friction. It was always tension. It was this group going off on this group. It was changing the chairs around So, yes, I was very upset because this lady was not an African American. She was a Hispanic, she believed the Hispanic children, she believed that because they were going there for years I was a new African-American black teacher they did my background check that didn't find anything wrong with me in the last 10 plus years. They saw my performance. I was there on time in early. I left sometime late because of the buses, but um I left at school and I was very hurt and nothing else was he has been done. Nothing was done from the higher administrator office, I say. I emailed them when I went back to that school the second year, I was told to set up a meeting and I asked them could they come in and just unannounced and just watch how the middle school were acting. I never got a call back. I never got an email back. I called voicemails were left and it is very frustrating and frustrating is just just an easy word to say. It is very dangerous in the school districts in many school districts um and I was very upset how the principal never acknowledged me and when I walked back in that school after two weeks, she she saw me and she was walking with another teacher. She never said how long? She never said anything. Sometimes she spoke, sometimes she didn't, so that's that showed me right then that I was not in the right school. I was not in the right school if you're gonna take the the children side.”

P12

“I was asked to come and sit in on a panel for hiring teachers. Even though there were Black people that applied for the position none of them were hired. It didn't matter if they had the qualifications um they just they don't look in that direction. so it's like you know oh she was really nice but yeah she was really

nice but she only worked at a daycare you know the minority you know man woman you know has been a teacher for two years and that person will get over because they don't mean a certain look if you've been so I definitely experienced that in emotional panel for a job or other other teachers. How many just just guessing out the top of your head? At that present time it was and full I wasn't there; it would have been only one one black person on the panel. It was all races of the interviewees, but they were it seemed like they were looking they knew what they were looking for, but but they just had to open up the search but they knew they knew what they were looking for and on top of that they weren't looking for males either. They were looking for specifically white females. I was told before the interview not to ask too many questions of any of them except for the white females so I was told that before they interviews started. because that's, you know, that's what they were. Yeah. I was like, oh wow, okay. So I made an point too prolonged everybody else's interviews and not ask any questions for them not to punish them in a way, but just seeing the reactions of the other panel.”

P13

“Okay, so, uh again starting out as par professional, um I had worked with children with learning disabilities, uh in disabilities period. So one of the instructors teachers there had asked the children to write about what it was like to be black and living in that area. And I I was very offended by that. um I did let her know that and that if I was teaching her children her four little girls in of the county where they live, uh she definitely would not appreciate that. So I don't I don't know understand why she would bring that to uh in the inner city school for those kids because they' their some of them will not appreciate that either. And I did let her know that that's why she was having some of the issues she was having um she had had a check I don't know if it was blood or not, but a check mark on her car and just because of my ethnicity, she assumed that I could let her know why that was happening. I'm like, no, I don't because I don't normally deal with those things either, but uh you should definitely watch the

things that you are uh asking the children to do and we had to also do uh home visits and I had told her, you know, that's one one good way to get yourself into a lot of trouble when you're uh introducing or asking them to do those type of things and then you think it's okay to go to their house and at a certain way and I definitely would not suggest that. Yeah. Do you think she was able to like listen to you and make changes based on what you were suggesting? Like, what was the outcome of that? One of the outcomes was I definitely said, oh, I I know, I couldn't go back to school, get a degree and show you the difference. Um She eventually left teaching. I know she ended up being a librarian and what I when I was there, what I had also learned after getting my degree, uh and then the loans were made, uh then it changed the navian and now I think it's um mo Moara. So if if teaching and you're in the inner inner city school or chapter one school and you stay there four years or every year you get 25% of your student loan paid for. So she was basically there to get her student loan taking care of. So I knew that um she had since retired and she um it had ended up leaving teaching and went on to be a librarian.”

P15

“There were times like in some instances where I was in charge of the ELA where I would get second that so the teachers would disagree with the stance I took on the call I made on a particular item that was gonna be on the test, and they would go to the actual official to question my decision, and the Dese official would turn to me and say, what did you tell them? And so I tell them, and then the Dese official would turn back to them and said, well, there it is, and they would walk off. And so that but that's and and even though, you know, you feel a little bit of let's see, I try to tell you, but you it's still the fact that why do we even have to do that? Why did you why did you feel that you had to go to somebody else? Because I also watched them with the science person and the math person, and they pe teachers were not doing them that way, but they didn't also they didn't look like me. I would say looking at that even just as far as how fast people move up in the educational system, even if you look at the greater Kansas City

area, there are very few black female superintendents. We have Raytown, Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri and center. And I think that's probably maybe there may be one more, but there are very few, and there's very few as far as the state of Missouri of female black female superintendents. And so and that's kind of what I said the black males what actually move up faster than black females.”

P15

“For some students they were being challenged academically that they had felt like, they had own lives, rough family, you know, there were things going on. And so what I explained to them is that has nothing to do with their ability to learn. I said, I'm all about giving grace what these kids can are capable of so much more than what you're expecting from them. And so just I said, if if it's not all right for this and I won't name the students, but I was basically pointing out that if it's not all right for these students to turn in this kind of mediocre work, why are you accepting it from this student? I'm telling you this student can do much better. They're capable and they can do much better work than what they just turned into you. And so just um just that other point of trying to make sure that that that whole thing doesn't get perpetuated, even starting as young as a child, looking at how we view black children as compared to their counterpoints and in terms of what they're able to do.”

Have you had any experiences where you felt like you were treated differently? If so, describe a time where you felt like you were treated unfairly in comparison to teachers of other cultural backgrounds.

P2

“I was a vice principal and uh supervised about 10 teachers and like 300 students, because at that time we were in communities and I supervised the human, um resource community, um, and so that's when they had like Turk certain like not colleges, but certain areas that you were able to major in and so um it was a lot of Caucasian teachers and I was the only um black well, they had a black principal, but I was the uh black vice principal over that woman over that community. So um I was sometimes referenced as

the um angry or angry black woman and and that wouldn't be the case because I was either direct or how I believe, I would be referenced as that. or, um there would just uh make comments to me or try to challenge what I said to them, but if a white male said something, who was uh the vice principal of another uh community he could say anything do anything and not get any repercussions. I will never forget that this particular teacher did not do with that one white man said, about straighten up his room. I was that administrator went into his room, dumped everything in the trash. I couldn't have done anything like that. Most of the comments were behind my back. It could be said indirectly. You know, somebody says can be done, indirectly, they make a comment. you say, I was racial. But I think back as a teacher, um I was a teacher for six years um and I never experienced anything like that was racial. However, in my when I went back to teach that one year at a middle school, I had uh there was a Latino student who used to tell his mother things about me that wasn't true. and uh he would tell his mom that I always yell at him and was direct, but it wasn't the case. It was just me really setting expectations of being clear. Um, but I believe that parent only came in because of, uh that I was I was black.”

P3

“I would say probably I probably treated differently more so when I first started teaching.. Um, because everybody kind of thinks you don't know absolutely anything, and you have a lot of people in your ear in your face trying to tell you what to do how to do, and not really letting you, have your own all the error, that's how you learn eventually. And it it was it was definitely an overwhelming in the beginning. because especially, I graduated college during COVID, so I didn't really get to finish my last summer year of college was like so much March 8, you know, everything shut down. So that was my last semester, so I didn't really get to finish, like, my teaching internship to really get a full grad of teaching.. So going even when I started in August of that year, my first few months of teaching, but really I first year, it was virtual. So teaching music virtually wrote zero out of 10, I would not recommend. um and

even n style a lot of people were trying to email and tell me what to do, like, you shouldn't do this, and I'm like, none of us is really talk virtually, so what it's just figure out what we is.. But now I'll say now I got a few years on. It's definitely I think they respect me more and they do ask for my input now more So I feel a bit more to make sure in my teaching careers, but it's just interesting to see how they will bitterly like, surround yous when we first get there and try to see you, everything, and I think it's helpful to, you know, when it help people who just start, but just give them a mentor and kind of let them and do what they do. not many people trying to sell them what to do how they do that. No, don't listen to her and do. So yeah. that most of that is me.”

P7

“Um, for me, treated differently, um, I think I I' at an age now where I'm looked at as kind of like, um, a mom in in the building, uh, education, traditionally, or it has what I'm seeing, you know, now uh there they're teachers coming into the field or a lot younger, and so I I see the difference between the new graduate, the 22, 23 year old, and then you have your seasoner veteran teachers that are, you know, 50s and 60s. and so um, what I've experienced has would be age, um discrimination, even though myself and a white coworker could be the same age for whatever for whatever reason um it would appear that the the white person would be considered to have more knowledge or to be seen as more of the expert um I should say versus, um myself who's, you know, same age, even more experienced, having more made even more, um and what I've found um to have, um, more uh educational background and more skills and more uh getting, um, but because I'm black, uh, maybe my experience aren't as uh valuable or uh meaningful or impactful or can be um as impactful as someone who is white who looks like me. um and that I um that that could be disheartening.”

P9

“Yeah, um you know, was that um, I mean, it's it's just it's just a daily constant thing. So it's not like, it's ever a time where it's not happening. you know, it's it's more like I'm more surprised when it doesn't happen, kind of thing, because it's more like that, like that's how that's how often it happens it's you know, it's like tiny cuts, you know, because a lot of times it's like you know, it's a lot of passive stuff. It's not always like something really over or anything like that, you know what I'm saying? It's a lot of like little small stuff like, um you know, people like, for instance, like, um just like white teachers just feeling just generally afraid. You know what I'm saying? If you of you're just your presence, right? just having just like that general anxiety, um that they're projecting based upon just you being in the room, you know what I'm saying? And and it's like that that kind of thing is hard to even, you know, you know what I'm saying? like, it's like, it's just like this everyday thing. Absolutely. Um, so, um yeah, man.'s yeah, it's all but I guess more specifically, there was um a moment at my old school in the tapestry, where, you know, I'm you know, Os Si and theater a film there and, you know, I was taught at, like the the largest regional the in the Southeast. I, you know, my my resume is pretty good and all that. And um and they they hire like an English teacher that was just interested in doing some drama stuff. and I was like, okay,oh, come on over. And um you know, she has no background in it or whatever, right? Um, she did like she's member so stuff she did in high school and I was like, oh, we could do this here. I'm sitting here trying to tell her like, hey, and this was a kid, this was this was this is a school, kids are all inspector, I was just keys in background. Um, and I was there for a couple of years and I, you know, I kind of figured out what they could do really well, other things that weren't so break them because they were in and out of hospital. and so, you know what I'm saying? It's like, you gotta have a certain amount of kids. They are present at rehearsal, but it' to work out. and, you know, when you have so many kids that are in in the hospital, in and out of whatever that's going on with them, that's, you know what I'm saying? It's just not guaranteed. So, I you know, I figured out a lot of other things that we could do. um,

but I just felt like, you know, um, like the administration at the time was very, very white. Administration law was always very, very white. And um and the board tends to be, you know, very, very white and um and so, um it just felt like it was just like what it shoot things that I was saying coming from a place of expertise, um you know, just cause, you know, someone looked more like them was was saying you could say, um, you know, more so in their language per se. um and and and and therefore I was just like being ignored. And um and so uh yeah, I mean, those things sort of I mean, it's it's like it's just like another thing that kind of feels like it comes with territory and just being in America. uh it's uh it's just like this constant thing, you know.”

P10

“I feel like you're under a microscope, um, good. I mean, it doesn't matter as a can be a good thing and a bad thing. But the problem with that is that you're I'm under a microscope without the support. so you're quick to tell me what I'm doing wrong or to like you're trying to catch me slipping up. and um, my team teacher, we she's this is in our first year teaching, but this is our first year in the district. She's taught for five years and this is her first year in the district. We both are black teachers. um and so it's like it feels like you're kind of going out of your way to see if we are if we're dotting our eyes and crossing our teeth. like if we're not on our pe's and cues, you can catch us slipping at any moment and it's like there's a whole situation behind you. um our kids are more looked at and you're quick to discipline a kid without talking to us. Like if I'm trying to keep with you like, we're emotional regulators here. And I'm we're trying to keep a kid from growing up and making this a bigger deal, but you're picking the fact that they have, let them calm down and I will address that it's not that I didn't notice it, it's not that I'm just letting them do whatever, but if you go and take it just like if you were angry and someone come and snatch the hood off your head, you're going to go off. They may be t 10. But if you snatch a kid off their head and they're already angry. They're gonna go off and then they get in trouble for it. So it's a thing of like you I

don't see and it's not that it couldn't be happening but I don't see you doing that too. to your um to the other teachers in the building to our white counterparts. You don't do that. You seem to go and make um more friendly conversations with them, but you will question me down why something isn't done yet. But she'll offer them support to get been done, but she'll just widely done, you should have this done. There's no excuse. Hm. So it's kind of it's not really, um it's kind of one sided. So even, um with me being new in my teammate being new, there's things we don't understand or don't know, or we didn't realize we were doing wrong. We were doing we thought we were doing it correctly and you're bringing in people from district office to come in correct us. But the only reason we know they're coming is because they reach out, but as, um, Amin, it should have come from you. Like, it should have it feels like we're being more reprimanded than um, you're offering it as a support, because anytime someone comes from district, it's a problem. So for someone to come for district just to tell us oh, we're not doing this right, and then you throw us under the bus as far as like you're trying to to save face because you don't know it doesn't feel it doesn't feel good. Yeah. So it feels like they're just trying to I don't know, like trying to set you up for failure almost. It sounds like. Somebody gotta be the fall god that we're not wanna be. So, can you give us a better idea of what that looks like, because you said you're they're trying to make sure you're dotting your eyes and crossing your teeth, right? So like it's are they coming by and watching you or coming and sitting in your class, making sure you're doing everything okay or maybe like unfairly writing you up or things. I mean, like whether that look like so there has has been times which you're gonna have people come and do observations. You're gonna have where they'll just come and pop in and pop by. It doesn't bother me. Come in. I'm joined. Help me, help these kids. um so it doesn't really bother me. The things that bother is that, um okay, you come in and you're doing an observation when say a kid is playing with something, you are being more of a disruption to correct the fact that they are playing with something or they have their head down or you're circling the desks real

close kind of like it feels like a shark shark a circling their prey. It's like you're not really you're not being a help. You're not observing to say, okay, she's doing what she needs to do. It doesn't become just about me at this point or are they engaged in my doing what they need? It's like you're trying to find something to say. um in the cafeteria, it's like I drop off my kids and they we have five minutes shut down the first five minutes because it's he, I mean, we all do it as humans, we look we get around our friends we want to talk. We every time we talk, so leave we'll talk and they won't eat and then I'm coming to get them 25 minutes later and I'm trying to shove food down that road. I don't know about you, but I don't have time to be given anybody the timely shoving my fingers behind anybody's throat or rushing them to the hospital and telling your parents I'll meet them there. I ain't get confident, so you're gonna eat the first five minutes and after that that show fall. But she um they will circle really close. It's not even like a distance back. It circle the table. One wrong move and you're going you're getting kicked out, like it's no grace, nothing but yet if somebody else would have love white kids say something, you'll just go and break them or ignore it. want it be the black people who many kids. or you'll point them out um like this one right here is there being disrespectful. What's their name? Yeah. I don't know. I just know what't there in your class. I can point them out if I need to. Like, that's not I know it starts with a B, okay? Thank you. I know you're talking about, but it's what's their name. You can tell me how disrespectful they were to you. you corrected them in front of a whole group of kids, but you cannot tell me their name. Yeah. That's a problem for me. Especially where it's like these kids, like I've been with him for the last four years. It doesn't even matter, because I could meet one and it's like once I meet you, you go like you're my babies. You I' may not have known you before this. You first I mean, this is my baby and I'm going to protect you. I'm going to protect you at the end of the day, like, I have your back, no matter what. I don't care who you are in this building, what's your position is to whether it's a

custodian or you're the president. I don't wanna make sure you're okay, so I have a problem when you're just like you're trying to find a reason.”

P11

“Being the only two black teachers at that school yes I was treated differently at a school that I had started in 2000 uh I left this particular district and and I went over. I left Kansas, Missouri school district and went over to the right town school district. And when I went home to the Ray Town school district back in 2018, um because of my color, the principal loved me, who was Caucasian, but there were a lot of Caucasian teachers and they could be in the middle school, uh again, they put me in middle school after a teacher was pregnant, so she and I worked together at the school. Everybody at my school we had loved for each other. It was African-American leaders, but when that school closed, we all found our separate ways, and so I felt I felt that when I was going back looking for employment, that's how I saw some of my friends who I had worked with earlier. But at this particular school, I worked down as a title one. So I had teachers bring their students down to help students get back on track with their academics like reading and writing skills. So I would work with several groups uh every day for about 20 minutes. But the children was not the problem. The problem was none of the teachers in the classroom spoke. so, of course, I I' not kind of person. So I was speak to them. Some would speak back, some wouldn't. And so when I got transferred up to the sixth grade classroom around February because this teacher who I know for years, who taught one of my girls, she went on maternity leave for about eight weeks. So I was in school for eight weeks and the teachers up there, they didn't speak to me for about seven months and then around February, they saw how I had this classroom in order. There was no noise. They were walking. I had I had some. I had some students who had I had behavior farmers and there were it were it was white students male and they were very angry that I was teaching them, but keep in mind their teacher who was on maternity leaving was African-Americans. But because I was a new older African-

American, they did not want to obey any of the rules. And so my experience to answer you the question. I didn't I didn't get I didn't get spoken to. People didn't speak to me. Let me let me rephrase that. The white teacher that this particular school did not speak to me until they found out I was able to keep this class in order. I had um and that was from August. I started August the 17th. I'll never forget. August 17th, I started in this school from August to February. majority of the teachers did not speak to me. If I spoke to them, they did not speak back or one will speak to me, they will just walk my class me. It was December and it was time for secret sentence, so I participated thinking that would help. I had a secret Santa and I would give her gifts that she hadn't listed on her on her list. I gave her everything she asked for gift cards. I think I got about three gift cards and the other two was what she wanted on her list. When we found out who when I found out who my secret sense was and who who was uh who I was who I had for a secret center I thought that would make a difference that she got everything on her list that she wanted. You know this teacher was a music teacher and she her office was right across from where I uh did title one with the students. After she found out I was her secret Santa, she never spoke. She never really spoke to me. She just like what's smile. She was cordial. I would say good morning and she was saying good morning, but she never went out of her way to speak to me after she knew I was her secret Santa, and so that kind of that kind of messed me up because I said I'll never do a secret Santa with nobody else in any school because I spent my money and bought her three gift cards and at that time it was like, I think up to 25 to 35 and I think I bought her a \$50 gift card. The next one was like \$30 and I think the last was \$25 and then the next one she got a mug with some candy and things like that. I never wanted to participate.”

P14

“I think for me I don't actually have to deal with racism because I'm surrounded by Black leaders and Black people. So I'm not actually going directly direct, but it is also inside of the ocean from Kansas

varials, a clear separation between their life to like. school and education. So indirectly the area is high poverty and high risk community. There are no Whites there.”

P15

“A lot of it was when I was working for the State Department and when I actually worked for the school district, the school districts I worked for three school districts and school district school school and I sat with the CEO and we talked on my exit and and when we talked about what me to the school and how that was what was actually from the school because I thought I could feel like I was value would be there because that's the mission of the school for the students. you know? um but yes, I I did that I did feel that way just based on um the things that I was trying to do do at the school like you hired me to do this particular job. um and then you adding all these other roles and responsibilities on which I'm happy to do. but now when you're hiring somebody else and you're concerned that she might be overwhelmed. Well, every all of us are doing a lot, so you aren't concerned that I would I be overwhelmed?”

P16

“The district majority you know, minorities are so well we had other races as well, but since I was at a district where I had kind of grew up in and had uh experience of, you know, sports or 20 scores. So I was the talented athlete at the back of my day. So I was kind of known. I didn't necessarily get a lot of slack, but you would get something on if it were you would get just that one that want to try you or try to size you up in their intellects or their physical or higher. But most times I feel like I was a one for the kids. So the kids loved me. So that made a lot easier for me. And some teachers didn't like that the kids like you so much and you just this sub, but if I'm doing sub on regular days or at the school regularly, it made it easier.”

Do you think Black students need Black teachers for role models, if so describe the impact that it has on the students that you've witnessed?

P4

“Absolutely. Because I know, um, for example, I keep going back to that the old school, but um we had started this um African-American lit course at that school. um Initially I was in um it was between me and this other black teacher. She went with him, but then he had some legal stuff going on. So then I had to take on the class. um so they assigned me at the course. They assigned me with this very powerful um um black man to leave the to co-teach the class. And um I just really saw it as a good space for students to just vent their frustrations because like I said, it is it's a mixed school in terms of the student body, but there's still you know, there's still obviously that sense of otherness that the black students felt and they didn't really have a space to have that like in an academic sense. So they did appreciate having that course. like taught by two black teachers um and really going through all the issues and um, you know, within black culture. um because like I said, they didn't really have that at that school. So, um and, you know, not just in the high school level, like I I feel like that's just needed just across the board. Like there should be a black, um teacher across the board. um, and it's funny because like I feel when I was so I used to live down south and down south, um in South Carolina, um, it's predominantly black, at least the community that I was in. So I always grew up having black teachers. That was always a thing. And now that I'm in my adult life, I'm hearing people say like, oh, I've only had one black teacher in my girlfriend life or. I've only had like one black professor that was all the way in college or whatever. And it's like mind boggling to me and I was like, wait, what? Like, you've only had one black teacher so like it um, and I think you were inviting me to this study because um you know, I guess in my pocket in South Carolina, like I didn't see that, but obviously everyone has different experiences and obviously now as an adult, I see like, oh yeah, there is a disparity, but black educators just across the board um, you know, so yeah.”

P5

“Ever since I wore my bonnet, a lot of my feet more comfortable wear about it now. They're like, oh, I didn't know if somebody would say something, I' b buy it. I'm like set that's how you protect your hair. That's part of our culture. We wear bonnets and protect our hair. And they was like, I didn't know we could do this. so it was like seeing that just that one little spark of excited to say, like, oh, that oh, I can do that. Like, because she she did it, I can do it too. And like, for instance, I have this T shirt, it just a black woman, who is the educator, and a lot of my suits come like, hey, she looks like me, and they get happy, and I'm like, yeah, this is this is like you and a lot of students now are saying like, I wanna be a pe teacher. I wanna be a classroom teacher. I didn't know, like, this year we have a lot more of black educators, that came in this year, and I will say, it has made my heart very happy, because we have now black men. in the education they're making so happy because we we don't have that many black male Rom model. It made me happy to see that as well., like there's and I have this one. So like a lot of teachers don't like how like, it's not coddling, but it's I understand where you're coming from, so I'm not gonna lash out, I'm just gonna meet out of eye and get to the wall. And with him with that new teacher, he just doing when he different, like he's quiet and wine, he falls directions. like, and I was like let his taste a lot, and every class that had a hard time built, but now that he has a black male model, this man, the teacher wore a superified, and they were like, that was like love the black. You' seeing how they portray black people, where it's a stereotype of oh, black people or black people are there, the black people are red, you're seeing that black people can be successful. I've seen like also with the like the Quincy hall thing, Quincy Hall, which out. I went to high school and like when I was said he went to were like, how? I said, because anything is possible, just because we're black does not mean that's any different. And like when they start saying, oh, like, I have a black teacher. I have kindergarteners who say I want to be in. And I was like, like, but it was like, you showed me so much, and I was like, yeah, like, you don't realize who's paying attention, but at the same time when they started having those role

models in front of them, they started seeing that, like, I can do it too. It's not just like, oh, it's just like people are just agent people' just fitting out. body is like anybody say or anything. But like once you start having more black staff, it might have crazy, I see a lot of that I do, but I was like, yes, yes, you can. Like, just because, like, oh, we're at a a smaller lower income food. That doesn't divine your future. It doesn't define any of that, and I feel like a lot of my students had to mindset we didn't have any food like educator, that it was like a I can get what I get that it, or I'm be a project of society. This is it. No, I no. and I thought like one thing started seeing, like the black males that came in. Like our focus features is a black male. and like, a lot of the kids, they would sit there and talk to them. and those kids, they have I I try to talk to them I was like, oh, like hey, what's going on? So I said kid have any problem with G. and them having that black male robot now they have somebody like them talk. So like they'll, oh, I don't talk to heroes. and I have like a mom with him and it made me feel to you and have a lot of them like, I don't have a father at home. I don't have around. just me and my mom and sisters and stuff, and like stuff like that. And then just seeing just those two black males start at the job, I thought a lot of my young black boy' perspectives changed a lot. Like, last year was oh, I wanna be a gang this, I wanna do this. I actually had kids with that like. Are you are you a blood cause you don't like blue? And I was like I just don't like the color blue. like blue just does it just doesn't pop on me. Yeah. I know, but like seeing more especially with society, like with the whole the bio, with situations, and seeing like black figures actually being recognized. I feel like with the black and plus that on top was like, I don't know, I like it brought their spar back to feel like there's more to life than the society of our good that makes sense. Yeah. I love that for them, yeah. Yes, it makes oh, it makes my heart like everything has changed. once we had, like our our counselor is black, our our fifth grade team is black, and all of them were like, I've seen being like, oh, she looks like me. And like, they're like, oh. I didn't know this. Like, oh my yes, like this this is you and they connect better if that makes the sense without feeling like, you know, have nothing to

against white people, but some white teachers do not understand black traumas, if that makes sense. It makes perfect. I have my with a you that he was like mom is jail. And like the teacher was like so angry and he's says. And I was like I don't realize this is a child who getting passed around because he does not have a stable hope. So it's like he needs the attention. He needs to support, but instead you're sending him out is said against another while. And I feel like once we start getting more black, they're like, okay. I understand where you're coming from, let me have you talk to this person and calm down instead of go to focus, take a ODRs, you're done for the day, this is the news. It's it feels like a lot of people who are not educated in the culture, like, there there are these I did have white teachers who actually cared for the culture. Those are the work who actually got some of the why within there's teachers who tend to push off the problem, instead of getting to know the why. Because they did experience, like, something similar, or like some traumatic experience, but, you know, like, the stereotypes you already have like people. they don't experience it, so they wouldn't be educated their own. This is why you get what you. is not to relate I feel like with the black educators it a lot mentally for our kids as well, because they're being besides physically they're mentally emotion. So I feel like that has helped as well.”

P8

“I do believe they should and um I'll say, oh, oh, let me stick to that one topic like, yeah, I believe they should. I also believe that we should have more black male teachers. That'd be great um especially in elementary. I know they're great for high school and I knows to pay I know it to pay. But we even even in the elementary level, really, really bad. um, you know, sometimes all you hear is from your mommy and teacher and your granny holidays. Like you need to have, you know, to me, I would say you need to have that that base. Here's somebody with sometimes. But I do believe, you know, I have the least since we're taught, um, the curriculum that we're taught. We also need that perspective from our point of view. um on how to navigate our own children. um, because we already know just systematically, you know,

we can see a child of color doing this in the in the caucasian child doing the same action. If somebody might view one worse than the other. And so, um, or they may say, oh, this child, they they give one child more grace than the other child. This is something that we spend throughout time. and also, you know, just in the public school system, just being African-American teacher as those teachers who are non-African-Americans cannot control them, then they always kind of seek us out or we become the behavior teacher. Or they give us the children that have been a attention issues or the behavior issues. And so um I think it's very important.”

P9

“Oh yeah. I definitely see still see our own black boys being, um um uh you know, uh all this like ideas that they're more violent being projected on some more sexualized being projected onto them, um, completely untrue, completely I bounded, but uh, you know, I I see I still see why teachers do these sorts of things where like, you know, or black kids just like speaking of vernacular and they're just like of something that this kid is saying. and therefore, you know, um I just I just can't like um I can't overstate how how much different, like just wife like white fear when it's projected one a black bodies and spaces, like how much of a difference that makes to that black persons um experience and and, you know, and at any moment that that white person's uh accuses his black person or something, you know what I'm saying? It's something taken seriously, just cause white fear is so um is so highly valued in this country over, you know, black reality, you know, over just truth, just any, just display, you know, that's why we had to, you know, show them all the videos. That's why that's why all those videos made, you know, saying uh, you know, that's what people had to see the videos. they see these white those reaction, reacting, such just terror over just a black person in front of them. and the shoe them dead and um and and that's those are the extremes, but like we we encounter the day to day microaggressions every single day, all day we we encounter the small versions of that every single day and all day. and and and white

folks are completely oblivious that they're doing this all the time. um, they just did it in a major way by relecting the Crazy dude, you know what I'm saying? Like this incredibly fearful this dude was a billionaire his whole life. All he talks about, all day long is how he is of everyone else and how much everyone else is taking advantage of him and all this sort of stuff. and that's how and and and that that that that message won over the majority of white people in the majority of people in this country, you know, because white fear is just dominate. It's just it it just rules the day here in this country. You know, what I'm saying? Like, they just do everything based upon their fear. it is wild, and they and they fear us the most. We, you know what I'm saying? Um, so yeah, it's wild. Yeah, I have I agree, and I was just it's I wish that, you know, black students had more teacher, you know, teachers like them that, you know, so the teachers could be able to relate to because I think that's the issue. One of the major issues is they're just not able to relate to yeah., you know so they recent interpreting and then they're writing up for stuff they don't't making any sense they're you know what I'm saying? They're they're over disciplining, they're over suspending them. They're they're the grading them harsh, more harshly, um, all these things, which is resulting in, you know, uh worse, you know, more dropout rates of black kids and worse, uh it's particularly it's hurting, you know, young black men, like black women as a group is are excelled, like doing really, really well, you know, as far as education, like, most educated groups in our country. And so, um uh, like, but it's it's it's affecting black men really, really black boys, really because we're the least educated group in the country. And so uh, it's you know what I'm saying? It's has been incredibly effective with the black boys. um, but, yeah.”

P12

“Yes, and also like a yes part two. I think that they need um just see us in a different light other than sports because when they find out that there is an educated black person within reach and not in a movie or just on TV they're amazed you know you know ask you went to school to this yes I went to school

and do this because they feel that you can only go to college if you have money you can only succeed when you have money if you don't have money you're gonna be stuck where you're at so indeed need to way to see sometimes or come and that's that's what I'm. The other part of that is I think that besides you know, you know they need teachers That's very care more more in that classroom Have you had any specific situation where a student, you know, maybe looked up to you based on, you know, you being able to see, you know, you being a black male teacher Have you had any specific situation where a student was you know amazed by that or different impact a couple of them put in the category basically like I can't do this and I took it was I mean, it was it was a terrible stand oh man it was like eight years worth of work that wasn't completed nothing was updated. It was horrible and and the reason is because as they say, the reoccurring kids and one of the things of the reoccurring kids was why are they always black you know yeah we had some of the white kids in trouble but the reoccurring when the severe cases as they put it were the black kids you know my first question to the other teachers was well what's going on? I don't know they just they always in trouble. That was the response I got I don't know. They're always in trouble OK so let's begin so it was they instead of them choosing to communicate they felt that there was a racial divide and there was no point to even trying to communicate because these black kids aren't going to understand me. I'm not going to understand you and that's hard. and I don't do that the kids didn't start believing that too. You know, they start believing oh, you know you don't understand where I came from because you're making a point to let me know it's so when I stepped in, they rely you know all you dress nice you know are you one of us and I not quite understand what they were saying and I was like nice because you know I'm a professional what do you mean that's when I started seeing the divide in the eyes of the kids based off just skin color a little and yeah after after a couple of those same black hands and kept getting in trouble can't get in trouble stop Viet in trouble because they had somebody to talk to set them up where counseling to talk to counselors about outside

life and how to deal with the puberty and all and stuff and it all could've been avoided if they felt that they had a a a somebody that looked like them that they could communicate with it sounds like it helped them out to be able to you know see themselves or see someone that looks like them”

P15

“I work 35 hours a week or whatever. I am a mentor in a program. I may have heard of it recently because it's been in the news. teachers like me, I'm I'm not over it, but I'm just one of the mentors. And teachers like me here in Kansas City area, um started to recruit black teachers to the Kansas City area. the country they provide housing. and they actually was recently on a show and now they're nominated to be the good neighbor, but the focus of that is because there there is something in valuing, not valuing, but seeing yourself and others, especially those that are are your role models. And um and that's why I but I also think there's also something in having it well rounded education. So, you know, celebrating who you are and celebrating who you are and learning about who you are, but also then celebrating other other cultures, and so I always I always said, my mom she she she made sure I knew about Christopher Columbus, but I also knew about Matthew Hanson. Yes. So it's kind of that, you know, so it's not just so I'm not just focusing on those, but and so to say that, honestly, sometimes or I say I don't see my counterparts that are of other nationalities bringing that the cultural piece. So I don't see that cultural pedag pedagogy coming from my counterparts a lot in the classroom. And so that's kind of what some shifting, and it might even make some people uncomfortable here since I start to kind of bring a different different culture. a few little changes, but I want what we do here in our school to reflect the students that are here in the school. And I don't know that all the things that we do are currently reflecting the students that are here. in terms of events and activities and and and so, and I know in Raytown, we've had a lot of conversations about that and just making sure that every student feels like, you know, they belong in this in this in this district when in our schools. So I don't know if you know

about the demographics of even this district, but uh we have 10 elementary schools. I am the only principal of color.”

P16

“Know the types things that you're going to go on and go through because it's not necessarily easy. We have roadblocks. We have, uh, you know, difficulties it's going to come our way and make it not as easy as, you know, other cultures or other races that have to help and support that we just don't have. And a lot of times we just don't have it. So to have that African-American male prom model up there, it's good to be able to have somebody to look up to or be through what you're trying to go through so you don't have to go through as much difficulties, but, yes. it is. I would say you need some African-American teachers to be role models and and they should want to be, you know, that that's thing that helps too. And I just there just to kill like J one that want to be there and one to help the next group that's what we need. What you say you had any black teacher role models coming up as a student? Oh yeah. Unfortunately, though there were a lot of black women, so my first grade teacher, third grade teacher, my fifth grade teacher. And it was and my first grade teacher came to my graduation from high school. I was something I just never forget like that was just amazing. Yeah, the thing is is, you know, I can remember just about all of my, you know, black teachers.”

Do you feel like you and your opinions are valued by school leaders, if not describe why?

P5

“Normally they ask us a question and what's like, you know, like we'll go what we already had in mind. So special teachers is it's done hard. I was like cause especially with my teachers, they tend to ask like, oh, how would you feel about this? And I say like, I don't like that. For example, fifth grade recognition. I don't like the pancakes through soc my my gym board gets sticky. I'm not a fan of it. and I feel like, you like doing the c? then it's through the excuses of oh, but this and but this, and I was like but this is

my classroom, like, are we not hearing that this is my faith? and as soon as you all are done it, I have to keep the class right there. and I have kids who are running on sticking and stuff or sitting on ser, but we have to go outside each other's crowned all over the place. I'm not having my food rental secret stuff because one, I always think about mother mode. I went out with my kids coming home and serve all of them. I would not with their their clothes, get messed up because they sat in pancake crumbs or something. no. and it was like, I always and felt like, do we do this instead, or can we have it in the cafeteria? Can we have like, this class and cafeteria, like, you eat breakfast down here the other parts of the program which something and they were like, no. face lives is better here. I' like okay, well can we change it from this? Like, they didn't they didn't understand the susceptible of I still have a plat light. I still have to do my job. like any time we had al like last year. we had this it was this Ore challenge. Ore your hit and they goes all the way down and there was a lot of Oreo chrome all over the order. My student offered to clean it up because they did not clean it up and I was like, okay, well hey, I told you all we're gonna use this I need somebody to clean up right after, because it like, as soon as assembly is, I literally take my class with me. I told them, hey, go to your number. Everybody else is. So I'm literally in my class as the assembly was over and they did not value the fact that hey, we left Oreo from all over the floor, left table, we left all types of stuff, and all okay. about like, Yeah. it's my space. like, I wouldn't go into your classroom and open up a bunch of snacks, leaving it all of the floor and not clean up. Right. And it I don't know if that's because like, just a PET perspective or it's like a they don't value me myself or everyone, but it it kind of made feel some kind of every time you have a family with like any food related stuff, it's always feeling trash you like after. They're like, oh yeah, we'll clean it up before. Like they'll oh, we'll have a cleaned up before before, we get it done for your and soon as is over, it's crumped everywhere, and I was like, oh, okay, like I this are we forgetting that this is my space? And actually I had to clean up after you all what I made my class and too, I didn't not sign up for any of the you all to

meet the space because it was the biggest space to gym. I mean, it was the whole cool, it kind of I can't really say if it's because of who I am or if it's because of my role, because a lot of other people they don't have issues with like, oh, it's dirty, but I don't know if the people in their school ignore in sync. But I'm the only black PE teacher as well, so I kind of can't decide on that either, so, yeah. Well, no, yeah, I get it, because I've been to like the middle school as a substitute teacher and, you know, I spoke to one of the gym teachers there and one of the things she mentioned was because I was wondering because the kids always stayed inside and play. You know, a lot of the time in middle school, you're able to go outside and walk around the track and stuff like that. So I asked her, I'm like, why don't the kids ever, you know, you don't because it was a nice day that day. And I'm like, you know, why don't they go outside and walk the track or anything like that? And she told me that the track was was dirty pretty much like it was so trashed that the kids can't even walk around the track. and I just thought that was horrible because you know, you should be able to have somebody come out there and clean that up so the kids can go outside and be kids, right? So, yeah, um, I definitely don't think that it's probably an issue with just you. It's probably, you know, an issue in other places as well, but definitely something that you know needs to be looked in because the kids shouldn't, you know, it should be clean. where the kids. I was like the biggest but I feel, and I don't I always chrome and I have. I have an outside, so I'm like you're leaving own, there's bugs, like this is the whole chain effect, and I don't want bugs because I have equipment. I have a tight storage space as well, I'm like, as supposed we attract bugs, I don't wanna have kids like, oh, hey, grab a basketball, and now you got spider on you. No. really like hygiene, I care about my face, like, I wouldn't even do some old house a live. doing in my classroom. I like have it in here please have this all out whatever frame. Like, for instance, if we have a concert. Can we please have this all cleaned out before the next say? I have to set up my gym right after the concert. Like, I'll literally say from 8 a to like, seven, you know, because I say I go for for like 20 minutes. But as soon as there over, all the staff is

gone, except like the music and like the other people. And we're putting up chairs and I'm like, okay, we get these racks out of the gym because my kids do laugh, we do laugh, and everything how we have PE, so I'm like, are you I use every corner of my face, and you all are taking my space because somebody doesn't want to do their job. That like, I feel he's not fair he was like, we had I have nothing against the son. I love my fathers, I really do. But it's like can't we at least move it into the hallway or something? cause like, is my face. Like, I'm literally trying to use this. So that I have to like change my lessons. Like I have to the death thing. of something, oh, I have chairs look. I can come in the morning and the chairs are still there. Or they'll say, oh, the risers are off. They're gonna be gone as soon you back. The risers are still there. Or they get the risers in the middle of the teaching, and it's like and it'd be a set time when I'm not in the middle of teaching, because I don't have to change my lesson that way to make sure none of my kids get it. They have their undivided attention, because kids and their attention fan is not long, so it's like, as soon as they see risers moving, they're like, oh, and they're like, okay, now we have to stop the class and now we're behind, and now we're kind of holding up this up. So like, it bothers me because like, I try to form more, the other coworkers is like, hey, can we do this or this doesn't happen, or can we have this? So it works like this? They're like, oh, but I like it this way. It's my space that you're using. And they don't put that part of consider it like, oh, it's just a gill. This is my classroom, though, like, this you where I teach, so it's like, it's not just a gill, but a lot of it's every school I like I've been to we're not every school, but like, most teachers I've talked to be teachers, they just say the same thing as your space is not that value, but your space is the most needed. So, that's the harder part is will be a piece people.”

P9

“Um I mean, I my opinion tends to be pretty valued just because I am um, you know, kind of expert in my bit field kind of thing and so I tend to be like, uh like I tend to be like one of the few folks that know how to do what I can do, like in the building. um Even while you were in public school? Um, yeah, even

though I was a close school, cause I was teaching film and stuff like that. And so uh, you know, theory and film, but um I mean, I okay, I would say like this. okay, this is this is the way that it'll it happens more than more than ever is um because, you know, there's a stereotype that black men don't understand, like budgets that don't understand, um, you know, finances. And so, when it comes to, you know, uh, uh you know, putting together a requesting, uh, like budgetary type stuff, I like almost always tend to get, like, um, like racism or assumptions projected along to me, like, um, you know, there're just assuming that I'm gonna be loose with money, there're assuming that, um that, you know, I don't understand, like, you know, budgets or or, you know, or how to do purchase order or purchase a press or any of that sort of stuff. um, that sort of stuff, like, they're just gonna assume that I don't know it, like, and then you know what I'm saying? And unless I start, you know, speaking as if I already know all this stuff, then they're like surprise, you know, and so I tend to get that quite a bit, um from from bad side things. That that I don't know about ever changed, you know what I'm saying? That that part is pretty yeah.”

P11

“My opinions are not valued by school leaders just an incident that I said the Hispanic boy threw a ball at me and I could not let that go for a while. and I never got a call from the principal. She never apologized to me. She gave all her, uh advice or whatever she wanted to say through the vice principle. I feel that being the leader of that school, she should have had the should have been humbled enough, no matter who what color it was. But for me to get enough hit in the head with a football, it was nothing but the grace of God, because whatever school I go to, at this particular school I always pray before I walk in. That's why I did not follow with the water that they go down the hallway, which was almost the whole hallway. Everybody was following by me. So, yes, it was not valued. Then all of the surveys, any to every school I've been in, you are given, I would say five to seven surveys a year. The surveys are to read to evaluate and to make suggestions and to to do something about all the surveys I got out of this

new district that the football almost hit me. I did about five to seven per year and I was there for two years, and not once did anyone call me. They just took my statement and so they did not value This teacher that I'm talking about this teacher is myself and I was I took pride in my in my school. I took pride in my classroom and I take pride and the hard work that I did to earn this this this uh certification of teaching. The student and intentionally threw the the ball at me football because they were upset because there was going to be a big fight, so I had them stay in and just work on their laptops. and he was sitting right over to the right from me and I moved from the from the front area of the classroom to the back area because I could see everybody from the front, I couldn't see in the back. so no one could go to the front because that was the classroom desk and I was the teachers dance and no one could get on the desk and the board. But in the back, I shift in the back and I can see all angles and he took the football and he aimed it and he even said, watch this. He aimed it right at my head, but like I said, it hit a desk right in front of me and then it gippped off and went on the floor. So yes, he intentionally was going to hit me in the head because they were upset that they couldn't go outside to have this spot. Yeah, but he was knocked he was not suspended. They had witnesses. We had our witnesses, there were several students who sat there quietly and they were come up and saying we hate this classroom. They said it's never no they said we never can get something done and the teacher who was on who was absent that day. She was Caucasian. And when I got back, she never came to me. She never apologized. She walked past me like she never said thank you for watching my class. It was just it was just I was ignored at that whole time during this incident and when I came back, all the kids were some of the majority of the kids were really happy on the elementary side. A lot of people said they thought that I had left and thought I had quit, but I came back. I just wanted something to be done and I told them the only reason I would come back, I would never work in that classroom again. and that's what I told them,

but they put me the next year that's when they put me in the middle school because those two teachers now, the art teacher and the um the math teacher.”

Do you feel that you are provided adequate tools or supplies to do your job, if not please explain?

P5

“I can't really say like the first year it was kind of like survival mode, but this year, I have all pretty much staffed, so they're kind of like trying to get to learn their stuff like, for instance, where pertaining our special rotation. But now I have they work through seven, instead of they went through three, and like, I don't know how to like the plan. I don't have single who how about to listen for it. And all the other sad members are like I don't know what we're doing either because this is us, but like we're all just like figuring out what to do. trying to figure out it was like I can't say I have the most forth, but then it's even harder than, like when with the other things I love the pictures I do, but being, like, a young, black woman, a lot of them are like older in a way, like a lot of them have they have a whole thing, like grown, very grown, live life done a lot of things, been in the teaching, stuff like 15, 20 years, something like. So I asked I feel like, um how do I feel? I feel like, you know how they say, like, not all questions are not smart, but when I wanna ask the questions, I don't feel smart asking, cause it's like a as soon as I asked instead of was, oh, where is this resource this this and this this? anytime my I' reach out to any staff, and they' were like, I don't get what you mean. I'm like, I'm literally explaining my question. I'm showing you. What you help with? And they're I don't know if they're like, they just don't know it so they're talking to like it off and like, yeah, we just act like we know, but we really don't know. But I will say with school yeah, I am probably like figured it out myself, because my coworkers are still trying to figure out they still. So we're kindly in the everybody is trying to figure it out. Figure it out. yeah. Yeah. my school they consider as like a whole new school. I think have like over 11 horn here. Over 11 what? fifth grade section, first grade. If everything is changed, but like everybody you really figure it out. So I

don't have as much support for your life, but I kind of can't knock it because we're all trying to get a support system at the same time.”

P7

“One of the things that I am ready for because I've been teaching, um a science teacher, I started out in my career teaching biology, which is a core science. It's a requirement for high school. I'm as a requirement for graduation. it'll with my tenure, I switched from, um core to now I teach CTE career in technical education classes, so I'm now, um, over the biomedical pathways. So now I know longer teach biology, but now I'm going I teach in a pathway with career and technical education, which is solely geared um to make that connection from students to industry, right? Because I've made that transition, there is a distinct difference being in the core side, um, of science versus being in the career in technical education side. Those two sides get funded differently. The core side gets funded from the school and, um this career and technical education um portion is funded through grants and district initiatives. So I get a lot of money under the CTE side, so I'm capable to get the training, the supplies, the things that I need. versus when I was on that science side, it was like pulling teeth in order to get supplies and things a lot of it had to be through a grant, um our budgets were so tight. um, a lot of the things had to be um cross uh content. So, um looking at other departments and materials that they have and borrowing things versus having things of our own. So to answer your question and is yes, on my CTE side, I do have um, the money, the resources that I need. Yes. Okay. But not when, you know, on the on the end that's understandable.”

P8

“When I talk public, no absolutely not. I spent majority of my I want to say majority of my check, but yeah, I would try innovative ways of Dollar Tree, dollar general dollar dollar Walmart, anything I remember um and I even just school supplies, like even behavior intensions before they was a dojo store

or they were dojo points like I would give you know, like you had a great week you earned an animal like in that's literally out of my pocket or if my kids in the I had kids in my class that their parents were, you know, in poverty, you know, and they didn't have a snack or they didn't have enough lunch, you know, I would have a kid that would eat ramen noodles, dry, you know, every day. And I'm like every, you know, and so um, you know, so I would always have some type of extra food in my class or put something in the M fridge, you know, something I would mind, you know? And, but um, yeah, public school, no. You were saying with the money that they get per head that that would be um a more importance, but it's not. um coming off, I mean, people think, oh, it's just a pencil or it's just, you know, but if you think about how many times kids lose things. you know, uh supplies eventually, you know, you have to go to the store and to go but I'm, you know, you reach out to some of the parents, they just they don't have it or they're like you'll figure it out as an adult, you know? I don't know what Johnny Deal happens. I go get another one. I don't know where you're going to get it. And so instead of going back and forth with the principal or whoever, you just be like, you know what, let me just go the store and go get these flies, you know, that's just how it is. But no, I don't feel like even book wise, I remember in public kids City that I remember I was teaching the science curriculum and I looked at the year and it was like 1972. I said, why are we still teaching the science books in 1972? That's crazy. And it was like, I was just like, why? So I on my own, I just started cooling up like a Missouri standards and I just started looking at them and and started just teaching stuff and out of my pocket, you know, doing secret float and all this stuff coming out of my pocket because at the end of the day, I wanted these students to be prepared and in this 1972 science book, they're talking about bears. I'm like, that's great. But you know, this is first grade. Like, we they already know that bears time when. Let's move on. You know what I mean? Like 1972? No, we have to do better than that. So yeah, I spent a lot of coins when I try, I mean, public. Just trying to keep my kids where I felt like they needed to be, absolutely. And that

was nice of you to, you know, go and out of your pocket and so they can have things that they need. I think a lot of teachers are very, and I'll sweet for like for a lot of black teachers, majority of us love what we do. We love it. I agree. It's just, I think we love it. Otherwise, we would be doing something else, but I think where we get weary and we get tired is when we put all this effort forward and it's not recognized or it's not recognized like I have to win an award, but I think recognition and support is the biggest thing. And when you kind of feel like after a while you're not receiving support, I'm known phenomenal teachers who have left the teaching field to become one became like a airline stewardess, and another one. they've left fields to do other things. They' just like, I'm not going to keep pressing myself out. I've met a teacher weirdly a couple of years ago here in Houston, she actually went to school and she's a mur ER doctor. She was like yeah, I used to be a teacher. I was like, well, she's an ER doctor. And she was like, I so like I don't know how you do. She was like, I, I, I love my job. She said, look, it just, she's like it's too much. She said crazy. It's easier. She said it's easier for me to be an ER doctor than this for me to teacher school.”

P10

“I was definitely blessed where a lot of people were willing to support me. um, to where I got stuff. So like, I didn't have to go out and buy a whole classroom library, where you recommend you have, like 300 books in your library. um I' have to because somebody retired and they gave me theirs. Um I definitely am adding books to it to make it very new modern M needs of this age of, this group of kids. So I'm constantly adding new books to it to keep their interest. But um that was one way where I was shown a lot of grace and things I did have to go with him spend a lot of money on um a classroom set right at the beginning. um a lot of things I always go and buy out of pocket, which one of waiting to get approved from admin, and then they have to get it sent off and have, um finance approved that they can do it like it's like a month, nothing to have before I even get what I need. It is easier for me just to go

buy a box of pencils than to wait a month for you to approve that I can be contacted. Um so there's there some of it is me where it's like, I just don't wanna wait. I'm just get what I mean. But a lot of it where, um, once that classroom budget is spent, which every building is different, every district is different, um, once the classroom budget is spent, that's kind of that's it. And after that it comes whatever you need comes out of your pocket and that's it. Yeah. Luckily, I mean, I had a pretty good, um budget this year since it as a new teacher. um, I have two2550 so I spent half and then I'm save the other half so that I can get what I needed this investor, but I definitely have spent, um out of personally out of my own learning of a whole lot more than that, um but I know other schools even in the district where they're like we just an established teacher, not a new teacher. their budgets \$50. So if you have \$50 for the whole year and you're spending a whole lot more out of pocket just to make sure your students have what they need a pencil um if we're doing, you know, dry race markers, whatever they need gl blue stick, a lot of times our students don't come with what they mean.. it's can't afford all the supplies or just don't take the time, whatever the situation may be. um, they don't have what they need, so I have to supply that for them in order for them to be successful. say be successful you need a pencil, but if I'm not supplying and they don't have they're already doom from the start. So, yeah, I always wondered that. So when the teacher so like at the beginning of the year, when the students would bring an in out, their supplies and some of the students don't have the supplies that they bring in, of course. One thing I did just as a being a first year teacher, I let everybody keep their stuff, but I also I went and I spent a lot of money before the beginning of the year before um when Walmart had all the supplies, I went and I spent a lot of money, so I had a big stacks of paper, folders, a whole lot of pencils, um buying full packs off of Amazon, just to make sure I have what I need. But one thing I will change differently, which most teachers do in elementary, they make it all community supplies. I just know I'm the type of person where it's like, well, this is what I got, or this is my stuff I like my stuff when it comes today. So I was trying to approach it as allow them

to approach the situation and saying where, well, these are the pencils that I picked out. I want these, even though they look exactly the same as everybody else's. I want the fact that I fixed. Um, but next year I definitely will make this everything community supplies. Um one, so that if somebody doesn't have they can have it, but two, it's like we all use it. Like I have a um an area where I have extra supplies. So at so far, everyone has gone to that, um, like my I call it my student center, where they gone and got it got a pencil. a couple of times, so if we're all dipping from the same pot, I feel like if we if we're able to, let's all contribute. We're gonna go back there anyway, so you might as we'll just put a put it in there. So in a situation where like yeah, so I'm sorry, go ahead. It's just something I'm aware of. Yeah. just in general, like in our community we um like thinking about the uh the plaza thing in the curfew, how they used to be a curfew because our kids were the ones that were out there because they didn't have what for whatever reason either a supervision or they just wanted to do what they wanted to do regardless of what they their parents said. um the curfew was and stated because most majority of our kids was out there, but yet you don't are city or state doesn't fund um programs for them. You can go into le Summit, you can go into bel and find a whole lot of um go carney or whatever, and find a whole lot of activities and stuff for these kids. Even if it does cost a lot of money, there' they're we find a lot more grants and stuff for them to do it. But then our students are our kids are standing on the corner trying to ask right next to homeless people, trying to get donations just to get uniforms to play this play this season. So it's like we don't we complain about them, not being where they need to be or what that ha having resources, but no one wants to fund it either. So I think if had it across the board. Okay, if I can help this kid get a uniform so they can stay out of the streets, then let's do it. If I can give them a pencil so they can get an education to stay out of the streets, then let's do it.”

P15

“Originally because of don't although I have a mentor, but sometimes you don't know that you needed to ask your mor about something until after this already, then what's down the line and what's. And so I think that in and part of it is I'm just a perfectionist in terms of cause I take this profession very seriously. so I always wanna make sure that I'm doing my best cause I feel like it's a gift to be able to work with people's children. You know they could have they could send their kids anywhere, but they're allowing you to have 7 1/2 hours of their child's time and so I take it very seriously so I wanna make sure that that I'm always doing my best and so if I'm not doing something right or things aren't organized I'm like wait a minute you know so I feel like in terms of giving tools I don't feel like when I started I had the tools that I need to just jump right in the organizational tools or maybe the heads up but I have quickly gathered them because I do not like things that are chaotic and out of order, so I quickly start developing my own system and my own checks and balances and things like that um and learning along the way. So things that I've found that were a struggle for me, I've tried to find other strategies to work through them, and so they not trying to make sure that I teach my vice principle, this is an example of how you wanna do it, not necessarily mean you have to, or let me give you some examples of how you wanna roll this out because I no one show gave me an examples. and so I was just kind of like, flying by to see to my pants as they say, so I don't want the frustration I went through for this for you to have to go through the same frustration. Now, whether she takes it when she becomes a principal or not, that's up to her, but I don't wanna picture whether that as I learn things and she's also learning things too. You know, what I learned is there's a lot of people that say, just call me anytime I'll help you call me anytime. kind of you I'm, it makes you feel like you can't out and ask the questions that you need to ask. And so it's kind of like, um, you know, it's one of those things where I wasn't surprised, but I was disappointed because I you know, I was here before as a black educator and it's kind of one of those things, like, as black women we do, we gotta do. So I just say, you know what? I'll do what I gotta do. And I think

every time a lot of times I what I've learned since I've started is everybody who says that they are there to help you is not necessarily there to help you. and, you know, does it is what it is.”

Are you satisfied with your pay rate and benefits, if not please explain what changes should be made?

P1

“I mean better. I use my wife's benefits because ours are really expensive and they don't cover as much and I had I was already on my wife's when I started the job, so we just kind of maintained that. um but um pay wise, I do think it needs to be more pay for teachers. I mean, if you look at and this is not to talk about anybody else's profession or anything like that, but uh if you look at doctors, lawyers, uh athletes and this nothing, and they make so much money. Somebody has to teach those people. Abs. I mean, I think that's a value that doesn't happen. I think the reason as a teacher shortage and a teacher a African-American shortage is, you know, we're looking in our communities a lot of times like, man, we got to find jobs that make money and bring wealth to our families. teachers salary don't, you know, alone, say if you're a single parent with two, three kids, you're going to be struggling future still. I single goal and pay for all the education and end up becoming a, you know, admin or a head press where you're making six figures, but or you were in it for so long and got out and paid the education, you got two different degrees to be able to get paid over to the highest pay scale and then you got longevity in the district. That's when you'll start actually making it like real money, but like starting off and where we at now, I do think there needs to be a higher pay for teachers.”

Do you think there's a need for more Black school teachers, if so please explain why?

P4

“Yeah I think so like going back to what I said before about how some people say like, oh, I've only had one black teacher and all my years to school, like so I think that it does need to be fixed. yeah, I mean, and you know, like, I'm obviously in New York City, but um you know, with my experience in both of

the schools, how there were very few black faces in my school and the high school that was in. um I know even one of the students when I had the African-American lit course, they were like, you're literally like the only black teacher I've had in the school and I'm like, what? I mean, I see a couple in the hallway and stuff, but I guess you never had that person in particular so I think, you know, I should just be fixed across the board.”

P5

“Like, now it it's just getting worse and worse, but sometimes, like financially is it worth the stress? Because it's like, every teacher that's at my school has a we have a second guy. Everybody had a second jobs. and it like, it types of pul is like, in the daytime, I have children in the nighttime, I have adult children. and that's the only way we can get by who but we don't have a mental break. in order to like, oh, okay let me just breathe. Like we have let's see, they incorporated well this Wednesday, so the day we get off, but it's like, we have to come back to a whole meeting that's like two, three hours, or we have the PD thing right our prin, so it's kind of like financially in not really, we don't get paid enough. We don't eat fan enough at all, because the things that we can go through today, I have I have third grade or two as really crazy questions. So Kai, I feel like in my end kind of I think. something I kind of think like, was it really worth so far into college? cause like, I think about the whole oh, I have my sister alone in, but I be able pay it off. And with every season I have oh, you're like, I still paying for the. I have a second job, I have a third job. I have this kind of like financially I'm not be like a mental and a physical fall and emotional like it' drain if that makes it does someone against the smouse, the highlights, but all those things that we do draining and it feels like when it's time for payday, we pay all our bills, you have nothing like, what do I have what to show? What I receiveving back? Because like the benefit wise, I will say I'm not on the insurance stuff yet, because I have some self 26 so I'm waiting for to get off of it. But the benefit wise, I feel like it needs a little bit more if that makes sense. If not if not financially a

little bit more, something the value teachers more. Like I still have teacher appreciation, but it's teaching is not single week. and it is really not, and especially what it's like in this economy, it's already hard and then you have products of society here that are living in this economy as well that you're trying to deal with while trying to provide these, it doesn't balance all in my opinion. It is desert balanced financially at all.”

P12

“Terrible across the board, uh pay rate to all teachers, no matter what color underappreciated far as the pay is concerned they don't parents don't understand what they go through and some parents don't understand what they put them through and when it comes to being a black teacher, uh one of the even if you're not doing anything wrong, one of the main threats from a white parent is taking your job when you're a black teacher wanted to make threats from a black parent is you're supposed to be one of us and it all centers around what their kid is doing not what you're doing to their kid what their kid is doing but they don't care about that between the hours of X and Y that's your problem and that's how they feel and teachers don't get paid enough to deal with that. Absolutely. Hence why I'm not a teacher so but I love the work. Oh my gosh, I love the work but the way it's set up you know towards black teachers and the pay your kids just can't do it. Would you ever consider teaching again like maybe like when you retire or anything or when I retire, yes. Yes. Because in a sense, I was still have a dual income, my retirement and uh little money from teaching. Yeah, because I mean, I just feel like if you have that passion for it and, you know, a lot of black students they need they need role models, just like yourself to be able to look up to. And so, you know, even if you could do that after you retire, you're able to add that inspiration and those children's lives and I just feel like that's important and it, you know, it makes a difference.”

P13

“No. And a lot of them should be made, uh, so again, when I was teaching, my husband, it he was working at uh JC Penney's at the time. So our health insurance was on him and the only thing that I could pay was the dental insurance. So I'm sure it probably hasn't changed very much now unless you're in um administration or you're a counselor. But as far as teaching, no, the pay is very inadequate. And at the same foot of the benefits. So that's why you have to um teachers who do summer school, I even did summer school, uh you can't uh fail a student, you know, it's up to the parent and then I know eventually it got to you can recommend summer school and then it got to where um you had to pay for summer, you know, the parents would have to pay for some of the school. So, I mean, if you got to pay for it, then normally in the inner city, I know them students you know what ain't going to be going. So, you know, you have them six, seven and eighth grade. So by the time the child turns 13, um with pretention being up to the parent, uh, you would just have to go on and send them to mid- uh high school. And then, of course, I believe that a lot of kids would drop out by then because definitely by the time you get to high school and you're in middle school, the teaching is not the same and the teachers aren't. They don't have that kind of uh time to cater that whatever your the students issue might be.”

P14

“I think there's always a need for more black teachers. I just think there's a lead for more so that representation in all glasses will be. So religious that I think this our country, we's it's like more relates the wealthy famous, um, but a lot of the times we don't look at the challenges of the black end theaces, if you not with the singer, it we like with this football player, or if you don't have the right, give us to cross over and similar really two white coachers, and as far as do find it out of strategy to come. living in, lack of life so is not just like, blessed in making momaces, lack of us even teasing, like me said, and blue back in the day three years ago with my grandfather and grandmother was from school, and they knew their children, their teachers knew their parents, and lived in the same neighborhood that they knew each

other between the milkman and each other in the sense of family community was so strong on I just think that it integration what kind of hurt the on the black community more that help you terms of white's life and what leaving recall this being or not. It's the we are where at right now. So um and a micro level, these case of space always like the so two could the rest of the public system.”

P16

“Of course there’s always room for more blacks teachers with the young African Americans that we have now, they need that mentor, whether male, female, you know, someone to see that they can keep going and not there's no opportunities out there for us than in certain things that we think we can just get a plateau to or so, but and we need teachers that want to teach and want to give the knowledge that they learned out here as well. And there are some that are actually great influencers and leaders and, you know, pourer of students of color. So I do feel that way. I got some friends that are actually really good teachers. I think got some friends that are actually just there to teach.”

Explain a time when you felt you were treated unfairly or witnessed another Black teacher being treated unfairly while working at school?

P3

“I don't think I was in the situation and I'm thinking of I don't think he was treated unfairly because of raise. I think it would more age of so sometimes I am look at more because of what I wear. um but there will be another older teacher, woman who wears something similar, if not baby shorter, but nothing would be said to her.. And I can come in here with something that may be a little questionable, but it meets the requirement. But as soon as I walk the door, I what you and turn around, like I've been sent home before, too. It was like they' like biker shorts, but they were close to my knee. but I'm thinking, you know, we help with a third day one I coming in here wearing um slack and a dress shirt. I'm not no, no. So I had that one, so it was apparently too short. and too tight, so I had to go home and change

clothes. So did you have on, like a shirt that was long? I just on a regular T shirt. one I literally when I got dressed, I said, this is real gay, because we' don't feel. We' running around doing stuff. So I didn't think it was gonna be an issue, but apparently it was, I got sent home to change. When I looked back at it, I said I should have stayed home, because I just wasted gas, coming back and forth. But So, well, what they have recommended that you wear on field day some I mean, when it was hot outside, right? So they're just saying that the short should have been longer and more elooof. or shorts I don't know. I like I guess they're saying they're supposed to be come to your knees and be baggy. throwing the water and ice cream and bounce house and I Well, it was it was interesting for sure.”

P6

“Um maybe I'm going to cover a couple of um questions with this one. Um, this experience is the reason why I don't teach anymore. um I had a fellow black, um drama teacher. and we was on once we was on once um we was on lunch together. We had lunch duty together or whatever. and we went in this end this kid, a white kid called African American a black kid black girl, a black N word. and the black and this was in the middle of the cafeteria and in the barraced the black girl in the black bureau, beacest girl was beating this girl up. She knocked on the ground and started hitting her and the white girl hit the white kid's head was hitting off the ground. I personally was the thought they was just still arguing because all the kids were standing up. When he went over there, she was pounding the girl, this teacher grabbed the girl off of the off of the girl from being her up, right? And he kind of picked her up across her like this and then he hooked her his arm under her leg and he pulled her off. Now, my job is to walk with him, so I'm walking with him to the office. He's in front of me. He got the girl tied up, she's going crazy because she was beating up on that girl, put her in a chair in the principal's office and say, you see it here to the classroom. We go back to lunch attention, he goes against the other girl, the other the other girl didn't wanna go. So he grabbed her right her arm and says, you're going to the principal's office at

that, which supposed to restrained, and can, you know, so we come to the going to principal's office or whatever, and um passport, just fast forward to make it quick. Fast forward, make it quick. They end up firing him because they said they he grabbed a girl inappropriately. And he was breaking up a fighting. And this is a This is a black teacher. He is one of the best black teachers. They say he touched her inappropriately, even if he was breaking up to fight. and he just grabbed he just snatched the girl up. It wasn't like he said, I'm put my hand right here on her and take my other hand and grab. He said, you just grab the girl took her to the's office, got the other one brother, put it in the counsel's office. So they can handle the situation. We went to go write our like all teachers have to do and we see a fight. By the time we come back, he's getting fired because he didn't grab through. They got him on camera, grabbing the girl inappropriately when breaking up the fight. And that would have never happened to a white, ever. I saw before he did that, this was at my year 15, 14. Before I did that, I used to see, um another Coach break up fights all the time on them, because we used to go outside. There were fights all the time. He would, grab, grab a girl by whatever, boy, by whatever, like just to try to break the fights up. You know, they'd just be like these. So I just thought it would never would have happened if it was like, oh gee, they did that because anyway.”

P15

“A friend of mine. she and we were in the same district and we were at the same school and we both transferred to another school in that district. And we both went, you know, transferred to the same schools, so we were still together. And the things that happened to her that I watched transpired were unfair. to that were plan. but you only put on a pip when the school leadership has met with you, giving you some strategies to try and you have either not tried them or you try them and you're still, you know, failing. and so then they put you on a professional improvement plan, which is a more serious thing. and when they when that go when he goes there, um they're that's their documentation that they're starting

because they're gonna be cutting you loose, but it caused so much stress, so much anxiety that she actually miscarried that semester. walk away from that school husband told it wasn't it. Her blood pressure was up and just the comments that our principal and vice principal were making to her and I do believe because she was not a um a docile teacher, just she you know, she they asked her opinion and she would say, you know?"

Have you experienced any trauma while working at school, that may potentially lead to you wanting to resign now or in the future?

P2

"There was a time back in 2012 back in 2012 when um I had transferred from one school thinking it was going to be better for me to um leave and go to a different school south. um not knowing that what I was walking into was felt like I was flying a plane and tried to build it at the same time.. They um because this was a new school that the district was opening because they took over a charter school so the district took back the school. Oh my goodness, had to go. my life are it's okay. Okay. I can still see it. Okay, they took back a charter school and so they considered a new school and that it was open up to people anywhere in the district that wanted to sign up to school. So we had kids that was at kids that was at that wanted to get a new start that could come. But then they also enrolled students at that time, two charter schools that closed. Well, three, three charter schools and one of them was a alternative school closed and they put all those kids in one school. So we had schools from three different charter schools, uh new students throughout the district, and they did not mesh. It was so pretty. For the first two to three weeks, we couldn't even have school because of uh fire alarm was pulled and I should have shared that and then also it just seemed like people downtown. They like it was our problem because we were the leaders to get we were we were told we were gonna have these this many students, but to come and turn out we had received 300 more students. Wow. and it was it was stressful, and it was a new principal from a new

city, uh first year, uh principal at the elementary school. It was it was oh my goodness. It was dramatic. That experience was traumatic. because it was supposed to been a K through 12, one principle over K through 12 and we had when that's gonna focus on the elementary ones gonna focus on the two bicycles, one focus on the elementary one to focus on the high school. But because we received so many students that they didn't tell us that new vice principle had to run the elementary school and it was the worst in. So his life and it was a almost the worst experience of my life. Yeah, that I mean, I can imagine as a first year principal, that sounds really traumatizing, because I know out of control, we couldn't class we outside one time these games came up, no, and they knew it was gonna be outside. And so we brought everybody inside, and then one of the other price principal got hit in the face with a full can of pop. And then that weekend, we had to give like they had to do like a and you know, I mean, we had to provide like 150 names to them to the district office to um have them go to another school. So a lot of people from the district office called the call those students and said, those students raners and said they couldn't come back. and it was so odd that one of the girls that we let go is currently not a vice principal in this district. She remembered me as a vice principal. and she was like, but you say my life. when you kick me out of that school, you saved my life, because I was going down the wrong path. And so that is that's the plus coming out of it. But living experience was worse. And being the following year, they got a new principle because the principal that hired me that one year he said it was just one and done for him. He couldn't take just out of curiosity was that another black person? Is he still in the education system or he just quit? It just made him quit completely., you know Dubai. He left the US for that.”

P12

“Basically just unfair pay and just a unfairness of the pay and how no matter how long you've been teaching your status is never above one of the white teachers even if the white teachers are started and I

said it's been this we had a black teacher close to retiring and she's never one time been invited to do the curriculum, but um a new teacher was invited to do it so it doesn't it doesn't matter to them.”

P13

“I would say that uh yes. So that again, even that experience did not deter me from running to be a teacher. It just made it where I did not want to get a B as close to the kids anymore. So uh one of the students I had he knew my maiden name was dolphins and knew that my last name was getting ready to be like his last name. So, uh years later, after I probably was still teaching, but uh it he was killed and the his girlfriend was killed and they did have a child and they didn't harm the child. But that that really done something to me and I just did not want to um develop a close relationship with any other students, like what me and that student had. Yeah, because it's kind of it's it was traumatizing for you. Yeah. Yeah. So definitely unexpected um another incident, I did have to go to, um elementary school, but I of course, I had taught uh fifth grade and then I think one year with me having my second child, I was brought down the second grade and I did not want, uh, the younger kids because they were hugging feely and not carrying a child and I didn't want to be touched. Um But one student there, they had a day where you have to be outside for an extended period of time playing and he was being a little rough with one of the young ladies. So at that time, I had just uh graduated and I had to grab him and let him know, you know, hey, that's unacceptable. And someone had said something to me and I was like, well, I may end up losing this job, but I'm not going to, uh, let that kind of behavior go on. uh He had done other things later on. I had to call the mother and the father were not together. So I will call the father. Now, one time I called the mother and she wanted to, you know, go down to the school board and I was like, well, I see now, you know, if I have a problem with him, I'll call the father because I know that problem will be solved. A seeing him years later as an adult and he really he wanted to thank me for everything that I had done. And I was like, oh, you know, well, that ain't that something that's good to see, you

know, that you turned out okay, everything went well and that you did gain something from what I was trying to have you experience. Yeah, absolutely. And I've heard other teachers say that as well. Like, you know, when they see maybe like one of their students that they had to discipline or, you know, something like that. And then they see them when they're older and they thank them. And that is, you know, it does make you feel good to see that you were able to make a difference. Because if you just allow them to go down the same path, then they may not have that. And that's what I was saying about um I didn't want the kids to say, yeah, you know, Miss was my teacher and Miss you know, or, you know, she passed me and I was like, no, I do not want to uh, be rubbish than anybody through because you were my future, you know, and if I'm saying, yeah, you got it and you can't read the uh, that's unacceptable or because I don't want to deal with administration. And then they'll say, you know, I'm not doing my part when I am doing my part. um, which back to the looping, one student I had and I was like, ugh, I can't wait until he gets he goes on to the next school because the mother was just so set on the problem was me. and I had suggested, you know, well, while you guys are at the grocery store, you know, have him add up, you know, what you're total is. Or when you're cooking, I don't know if you're you doing a recipe, have him breathe that to you while you get everything together. Or looking at the newspaper that figure out what's on sale and you can see that the problem is not me, it's your child.”

P16

“Had some, uh medical school middle school fight. uh, uh, I didn't want to leave now. I just wanted to be there more see where I could help out. so like I could have nipped the situation in the bud before it got to the escalates where it got to where you know, you know, a young man got into it with a girl and then yeah, he she got into the school with a razor blade. She bought it in her hair. So she cut the boy, but he they mess each other up pretty bad. That is so horrible that she brought it in in her hair like tied up in the hair a couple of them. Too late by I got to both had messed each other up. She put a gash in it across

his face and on his arm and he a well he's still a guy, he's still you know, swoll her up a little bit and slammed her, but I had got there, you know, I didn't even know. I could have got cut and not know it was And stabbed him instead of her. I used to do that anyway. They tried to teach you how to handle and grab certain people in certain ways and just try to be cautious, you know, so, after I grabbed him, I kind of talked to I can kind of talk to him later and go, but he was bleeding pretty bad. So yeah, he was okay with going ahead and going to the Nurburg. She was still fighting the women didn't want to hold her so kind of trying to hold her by both her hands just so she can you got to chill out and security take their time and it was older at the time. needed little more use.”

Is there anything else you would like to add?

P1

“I do think school districts need to target those areas, especially the urban area, urban school districts need to target the HBCUs and target more black teachers and get more black professionals into teaching um I just think it's good for our for the community. um you know, like you said, when and I don't know the statistics or the numbers of how many teachers are actually, how many black teachers are actually in our district, but I know, like I said, it's 51% black kids and I know it's not 51% black teachers. So I do think that I need to see more of us as well. But I also think that, you know, education starts at home so our black families need to be a little bit more solid and more put on education, and maybe if there is more black teachers, more of our black parents, black families will be more relatable or more willing to partner as well. No, that's it.”

P6

“Yes. I really would like to say that I really would hope to, like to research and I hope that a lot of people uh that's in power to bring in more uh African-American teachers hear your I hear your research because it really puts a real good balance into your school, having African-American male and females

in and even in our school, you know, it helps them to the diver diversify and puts in social lights on how the real world is. And I don't, for the longest time, it never is like the and it needs to be like that. Now granted, I've been, you know, I haven't teach in a while, but it needs to be more heard that it helped your school. We do a lot for school, African American do a lot for white schools because kids that never be around African Americans, Mexicans, other ethnicities and they get out of the real world have to run with these people. They're very awkward. They're very awkward and they're very outside of the social loops, you know, it's just given perspective and I hope everything, you know, this research really get heard by a lot of, you know, a lot of people.”

P7

“I just look forward to your work, uh, like you said, unraveling the teacher shortage. Um, I look forward to see what your research brings out and the solutions that's gonna come from your work. um I think it's a phenomenal topic. Definitely one, um, that needs to have a deep dive. Thank you.”

P11

“I will just like to add that thank you for even considering me and if anyone who knows about the community and the schools and the behaviors and the experiences would be me because I've been in education over 20 plus years and I really do hope that something is done soon real soon for all the violence behaviors and the things that are going on in our school district. We have to lock doors. We have we have students just in a Christian school not too long ago. We had a killing. We should not walk in fear at school. We should have security guards, licensed security policemen and our school, if that's what we need. We do not have security in our school. We may have one come through. You see that security once a week what does that do on the rest of the week or the rest of the day? If students see that they're not smart, they can play something and already have it done by time that security come back. So we need more teachers, African American in place. We need more African women, teachers in place.

We need secured policemen in place at every school and I believe that we need more just hire, more, not even certified teachers or whatever, certified teachers who are not working but just there, we need two teachers in a classroom. We need more than just one teacher to teach to see, to watch, to observe and to uh watch all these behaviors. You can be in the classroom and someone can get hurt because you have one teacher trying to solve one problem up in the front, but there are two or three problems going back in the back. We need more than one teacher in a classroom. even more than one teacher or less students per class. less students in a per classroom or two teachers that you have more than 20 21 students have a lot of students for one person to watch. That's what I want to do, so I hope something done. I really hope something is done. I pray that something is done. Our schools are out of control, and it's time for the administrators to come from their desks and walk in these schools unannounced, not even telling no one, just come in and see what's going on, and more than them, we need a c with them. They need security guards. They need um staff members who sits high, we need to blad up directors to walk in. Where are they at? They're behind making all these decisions for teachers, but they don't have no experience with the students and that's what I got to say.”

P16

“You gotta love your job. You know if you do it'll be worth it and it'll come easier. It'll be worth it and want to be uh a leader and I want to be you know just someone for them to look up to and I'm saying nobody's perfect, but it's always good to find the teachers that that you can somewhat relate to or have relatability to you to help guide you and your next steps. Yeah. That's about it I got for that.”

Are you asked to perform extra duties when it comes to physical altercations?

P1

“I do also from my standpoint I jump in because I don't wanna see your kid Andrew cause I know how far fights go and how long it takes for sometimes how long it takes for a security get there. The other flip

side of that is I well or not supposed to jump into those situations because if they're not trained to restrain students, then we could be liable. Or it's like a real fine line, like, I understand, like, why most teachers would not. I understand why teachers should do as well. I understand why a female teacher wouldn't. I mean, a lot of times, especially when in secondary school or in high school or middle school, some of those kids are bigger than a lot of the female teachers that we had are at the same size, that could be an injury or whatnot, it can be up pop in the face, you know. I mean, you don't know what the reaction is, you know, what the injury maybe you know, as far as that goes, but no, I do feel more obligated to be able to get it in and break it up or I swim around. I feel like people are looking to the men teachers to be the ones that break it up. Now when we don't, we're like now we can't because we can't. We're looked at differently too, you just happen is what we honestly supposed to do but a lot of we just take it ourselves to try to get it or intervene before it gets to a point before they actually swung or actually touched each other if we can try to get in there between and like hold another student back and both of us get in back to back and take the students the opposite way. I think it works out a lot more. I mean, I think younger in my uh earlier days because I was trained, I was just chunk right in the middle of it and grab kids and get them out the way. bit older and a little bit less, I mean, a little bit further away from the training that I had. I don't I'm sure we got to get and don't I'm not sure. I think you have to be trained like yearly on it to make sure it's up to date and certified for you to be able to do it because they don't they just don't want to put you in a situation where you're liable because if you grab a kid the wrong way and it bruised and a parent can get upset, a kid can get upset or even if, I mean, they say, you know, with me being a male teacher, I jump in and I grab a girl the wrong way to try to get her about the way, I actually grab a grab her breast or something like that. She feels like I did, then that's another situation that I would be put in. sometimes it's just protection of yourself, but I do feel obligated.”

P6

“I kind of feel like if I'm in a room and I see two kids fighting and I see a girl's head bouncing off the ground. I me. I can't speak for everybody else. No what that consequence is. He that person can die. So I'm my just instinct kick in now to somebody that's not used to being say a white teacher that's never been into a fight before. How would they know that out of that's going to be that's gonna make them react to them breaking up the fight? It never happens. The reason why coach used to be there, because he's from New York. why the white coach that I was telling you about, he was from New York. He was a white pe teacher, but he break up fights all the time because he' from New York... We used to talk about that all the time. He's not scared, cause he understands the thing. He ran to the poll, got up and got to a fight. He stopped to fight immediately kid there already days from hitting to pole. So the other teachers like, what's wrong? so I don't know, I feel like it' be that's why they always used to have the two black male teachers always, and are you know, always work with them like these two black male teachers together, which we like it like that, honestly, but it's the same time they would make you feel like it's your responsibility. And if something happened to those kids, it's your fault.”

P16

“Had some, uh medical school middle school fight. uh, uh, I didn't want to leave now. I just wanted to be there more see where I could help out. so like I could have nipped the situation in the bud before it got to the escalates where it got to where you know, you know, a young man got into it with a girl and then yeah, he she got into the school with a razor blade.

A few teachers were asked why they switched to teaching private school over public school.”

P8

“I got tired of just seeing when I was told one year that I need to teach to the runners and not the crawlers that bothered my whole soul. So these kids who have IPs, these kids who you can tell they are not diagnosed yet. We basically just leaving behind no ketchup and that's not necessary of truth. And so

then that's how you have. And these are black children. It' so clear. You know, and so, you know, I was told I was spending too much time trying to help those. I need to help the ones that are ready. And I just didn't not like that. I was just like, this is crazy, you know, and even as how I to my mom who was, you know, she was a retired schoolteacher and he even her saying, you know, the school system has changed so much. You know, she was she was a public school. And uh, she actually did uh, she retired from center, center uh school district. And so, um I went to private, um, not intentionally, just one of my school dis was like, hey, what's this school? And I was like, oh, let me check it out. And when I went, that's the whole other subject but when I went, I was like, ooh, you know, beautiful edifice, love lovely building. um Honestly, I did take some blood of a pickup, but this is how it didn't affect me because in private school, the parents basically in a nutshell understood all that. So I've got more raises in private. I have, um, I had surgery, and when year I had surgery and my parents literally paid for my groceries all summer, um, even for holidays and not about the money, but they it was more appreciation and it was more um it's more investment in we want our child to see, not saying people don't in private. I mean, in public, but private didn't mean much. You know, whereas's in private, I mean, in public, you know, you might have this this mom, she's working two jobs, she got three kids. You know what I'm saying? She's just worn out. you know where yeah, where it's in private, you know, this mom is going to hide yoga and the nanny pick up every day. being honest, because that's just how do it. But um, like I said, I just got a lot of red tape and then um in private, too, it's like, if I say, you know, this child needs this accommodation, they're on top of it more.”

P9

“I was tired of the, you know what I'm saying tired of, like, not having to resources. Um like, um you know, like, like in in public school is it's gonna be what I mean, even if you're at the best, like you're not gonna have enough stack, you're not gonna have enough, you know, resources, you're not it's just they're

gonna expect you to come out of pocket with some resources, and it's just, you know what I'm saying? now that's not every public school, everywhere, it's not every district, everywhere, um, but in my experience from my, you know, I was in the cab County, um and even though the Cat County was one of the best, definitely in in Georgia, um actually never mind work. They were one of the best, but there were so many more accounts that would do one better. But um but uh yeah, no, um it's uh I was I was I I grown with, and I was just like no I wanted to I only do my last 20 years as a teacher, like, and, you know, with all the researchers that I know I need, everything I know I need, and with, you know, retirement plan, all the things, you know what I'm saying? I'm like, I'm not I'm not doing this crime anymore. I pay my dudes, that's how I feel. You know what I'm saying? I'm tired of like, like, I'm tired of I putting all the moments on individuals to take to just sacrifice their own lives when the money is there, we just need to reallocate it to the schools. You know what I'm saying? Like we have them, we're the richest nation ever to exist on the history of the world. not just today, the history of what we our economy is 27 trillion dollars. That's every year, you know what I'm saying? Like we have the money definitely. We're just not allocating it. We just don't frankly, we don't this is this is the real this is a real reality of why America doesn't spend money in public the school. It's because they know that that money will go to black kids and brown kids. and so they don't want that to happen. and so, you know, all the money instead now is going in and it's been this has been happening since the 60 years and 50s and 60 six we integrated schools, all the white bull pulled all their money out of the public schools system, because they didn't want black people to even touch that money, you know what I'm saying? It's like literally, literally billions of dollars, you know what I'm saying? Like imagine like at each school is like a small little company. and stir there are certain places all over the nation where they're all black, especially in Atlanta, so they don't want to give black people billions of dollars. They just don't want to. They don't even want to that thought it entering their head or just like, no. And so they rather pull their

money out, put it all in private school, and put it all in private sources and and and take it away from the you know, the public sources. And so I'm I'm tired of fighting. I've been fighting since I was like 20, I'm 37 now. I'm done. I did I paid my dues, you know what I'm saying? America clearly doesn't wanna save yourself. I'm gonna you know, I'm saying, spend the rest of my life, like, uh doing the best I can taken care of me and my family, that's it. You know what I'm saying? That that's really why that's really why I switched over because I was like it's clear we're not, you know what I'm saying? We're not that's an out America is for America is very selfish, is very everybody self is very about like, you know, only things that is really going to invest in publicly is in the military. That's nearly half our half all our resources have our test go straight to the military. and that's only it's like seriously investing in. Everything else just gets pinnies and crumbs and just enough to keep the lights on type of stuff. So, um, like I'm just I'm tired of playing that game, you know what I'm saying? I much rather just go to a space and cause I really love teaching, like I love to teach, but I hate doing anything frustrated. I hate doing anything where it's just like, man, we just we just don't have enough, we just don't, we just I really wanna do the real thing, you feel me? You not and I'm happening to enough to go and work for digies and, you know what I'm saying, but I have this heart that just wants to teach and just wants to give. And so, like, you know, but I'm not gonna like go do it, you know, with nothing, you feel me? So, like, that's why I'm at this private school in that way I literally have all the resources on the planet. Like, um like when I first got there, they didn't have a Mac lab, you didn't had any Max and lab and in all creatives were with Mac. and so I put together this presentation, I was like, hey, we need to invest and get and literally, I put together the presentation week later they proved it, you know what I'm saying? And they they're spending like now eight, 90 grand just to do new Mac labs. Are they about to, you know, run bail next year. You feel me? and like that because that's how that's how America really is. That's so much money we actually do have. And they play what us in these public schools and pretending like we don't have money because

they just don't they're racist, they just don't want to sell the money, you know what I'm saying? But they cool with it if as long as it's majority white hand session it, they' cool with that. You feel what I mean? It's but it's just wild that America's still so unintelligent. It's a mental illness. It's like it's a thing of like the Neanderthals. It' some it's some like backwards, backwards type, you feel me? Like it's not like the most advanced intellectual thing we can come up with. you feel me? It's not smart. And so anyone still investing in it is not smart. And so I'm just tired of arguing with them with planning any of those sort of games. I'd rather just go on over here to where the money is, and that's where it's at. I'm just gonna do the rest of my life or where the money at. You know?"

### **Demographics of Participants**

The findings retrieved from this research determine the different factors which contribute to the United States K-12 public school Black teacher shortage. Data was collected using participant interviews in which the participants are asked interview questions. There is a total of 16 participant interviews with a combination of interview responses from 10 Black female participants and 6 Black male participants.

### **Limitations**

While the outcome narratives of this research have led to high assumptions of contributions to the Black teacher shortage there are some limitations. These limitations are worth mentioning for the benefit of future research pertaining to the Black teacher shortage. Limitations described in this section pertain only to the limited sample population described in this research. Participants selected for this study are Black K-12 teachers who currently or previously have worked in the United States K-12 public school system. The results of this study may or may not apply to teachers outside of this designation.

One limitation is that this study only contains a small sample sized collection of participant interviews. All the responses from each participant interview are not included in this study. Only the information that was considered important, relevant, and appropriate responses are included.

Another limitation is that I am familiar with majority of the research participants. Most of the participants are coworkers or friends of the researcher. Very few participants were complete strangers.

There are also some limitations in the researcher's ability to bring some of the participants emotions to life. It can be difficult to show some of the emotional details using writing and transcriptions. But there are some situations that got very emotional for the research participants as well as the researcher which include pauses, breaks, and even some emotional tears or crying.

### **Research Biases**

While the researcher has tried her best to not include any bias during her research of "Black Teachers Matter". Researcher is a Black female teacher who experiences closely match some of the participant experiences. Some experiences can be very emotional and may be difficult to remove all researcher bias from the entirety of the research.

### **Research Questions and Answers**

#### Research Questions

1. What are the physical and emotional challenges of the Black teacher shortage?
2. What are the personal lived experiences of Black teachers in K-12 public schools and how might these experiences contribute to the Black teacher shortage in the United States?
3. What contributing factors help a Black teacher or potential applicant decide rather or not to accept, remain, or decline a professional career as a teacher in United States K-12 public schools

and what changes need to be made within the United States public school system to help retain or encourage more Black teachers?

4. What changes need to be made within the United States public school system to help retain or encourage more Black teachers?

#### Research Question Answers

1. What are the physical and emotional challenges of the Black teacher shortage?

Based on “Black Teachers Matter” research the physical and emotional challenges may lead to poor Black student academic performance and negative emotional outcomes as far as feelings of discouragement, low self-esteem, self-doubt, and negative self-talk. This contributes to the issue of the Black teacher shortage throughout history, and it has become much easier for Black people to pursue other career choices. Black teachers have suggested that other factors such as pay, recognition, and feelings of inclusion may lead to the United States public school system ability to attract or retain more Black school teachers.

2. What are the personal lived experiences of Black teachers in K-12 public schools and how might these experiences contribute to the Black teacher shortage in the United States?

“Black Teachers Matter” discusses the lived experiences of some Black teachers working in the United States public school system. Most of them were happy to tell their stories and voiced feelings of relief because they finally felt like somebody cared, and that they were finally being heard. Many Black teachers have expressed issues with racism, isolation, financial struggles, and feel like their voices are not heard. Mostly Black school teachers working in suburban or predominantly White communities have experienced issues with racism, trauma, and exclusion while working at school as opposed to Black school teachers in inner city or predominantly Black schools. Many Black teachers have expressed

feelings of exclusion. They do not feel welcomed by teachers of other cultures, and there are many times where they are not acknowledged by other teachers.

Some Black teachers have witnessed some White teachers treat Black students differently due to their inability to relate to them. In some situations, Black teachers try to find innovative ways to professionally stepped in to help the Black student without offending the other teacher. This impacts Black students emotionally as well as their ability to perform academically.

3. What contributing factors help a Black teacher or potential applicant decide rather or not to accept, remain, or decline a professional career as a teacher in United States K-12 public schools and what changes need to be made within the United States public school system to help retain or encourage more Black teachers?

“Black Teachers Matter” research discusses some of the implications that have led to the inability to retain Black teachers in the United States public school system. Many teachers expressed concerns with racism, isolation, blatant disrespect, and simply not feeling included with the other teachers.

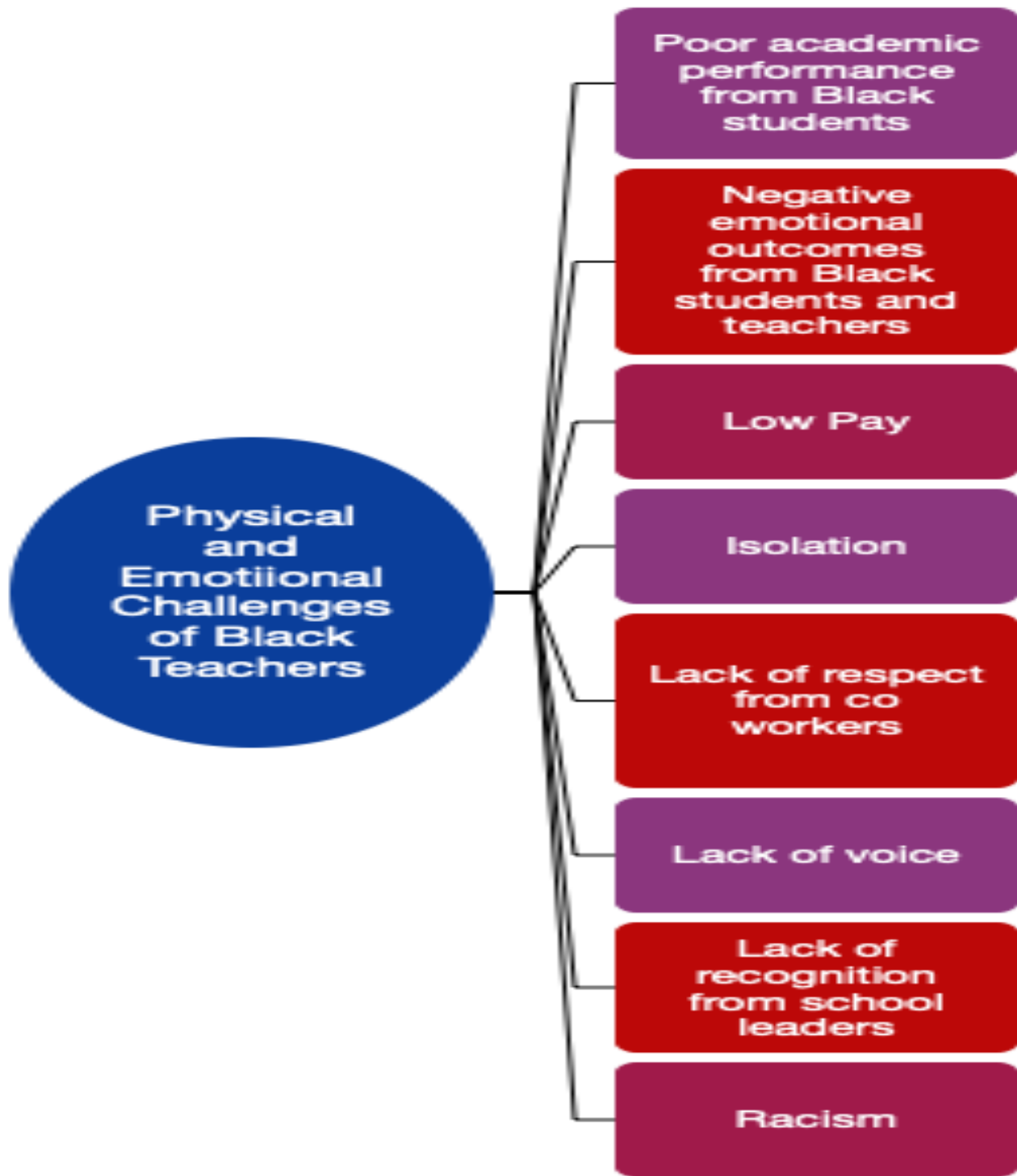
Ex teachers stated that it was not enough pay to provide for their families. Despite their love for the professions, they simply had to decide to leave based on their financial concerns. Several teachers have spent money out of their own pockets to cover some of their students supplies. Many teachers have indicated that they work a second job because the teacher pay rate is not sufficient.

4. What changes need to be made within the United States public school system to help retain or encourage more Black teachers?

Based on “Black Teacher’s Matter Research Black teachers want to feel included. Some Black teachers expressed concerns with not feeling like their work is being recognized, and they want their voices to be heard by school leaders. There are also some financial concerns with being able to provide

the necessities for themselves and their families. They have voiced concerns with extra duties that are typically not expected of other teachers of other cultural backgrounds. There are also concerns with the way Black students and teachers are treated or misunderstood by some teachers of other cultures. If these things are fixed then the Black teacher shortage can be fixed which will also contribute to the Nationwide teacher shortage that we are experiencing today.

## Physical and Emotional Challenges of Black Teachers Mind Map



## **Discussions & Impact in the Field**

As we all know we are experiencing a nationwide teacher shortage. According to the U.S. Department of Education all 50 states reported shortages in more than one area for the 2022-2023 school year. According to The National Center for Education Statistics nearly half of all United States schools are experiencing shortages (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). There is a research gap in the impact this has on student achievement in the K-12 public school system. Teacher shortages have several negative disadvantages linked to student performance. The stress caused from the teacher shortage negatively affects student learning, relationships, academic achievement, graduation rates, educational opportunities, and marginalizes minority students (Effect of Teacher Shortage on Students, 2022).

However, there is a Black teacher shortage that has been going on much longer. There is a research gap in the reason for the small amount of African American teachers in the United States K-12 public school system. Black teachers are currently underrepresented in United States public schools. The percentage of black teachers have not surpassed 5 percent in the past 5 decades (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019). It's important for students to have qualified students who are engaged, especially for students that deal with systematic barriers. Qualified teachers are the most important school related predictor that can positively impact student achievement. Educators who share similar cultural backgrounds as their students tend to have higher expectations for them than teachers of other cultural backgrounds (Stewart & Sawko, 2022).

There is a need for more research on why the education system has failed to retain and employ enough Black teachers. The main issue is when desegregation marked the beginning of an extended period of the loss of Black teachers. Schools refused to hire Black teachers in desegregated schools, as future opportunities opened, fewer Black teachers entered the pipeline (Madkins, 2011).

Black students are often misunderstood or overlooked. “Black Teachers Matter” can help make a positive impact in the quality of education for Black students. The public education system should realize how much of a positive impact it is for Black students to have teachers that look like themselves to look up to. Having more Black teacher’s working in the K-12 public school system would be beneficial to everyone. There should be more discussions today about ways to encourage more Blacks to pursue teaching careers, and ways to retain Black teachers. Many students in the field of education argue that schooling for Black youth is dehumanizing.

Black teachers need to feel accepted and that their voices matter. “Black Teachers Matter” makes a positive impact in current and future careers of Black teachers. “Black Teachers Matter” brings more awareness to the Black teacher shortage issue in the United States. It also offers ways to improve the Black teacher shortage issue by sharing some of the lived experiences of Black teacher’s currently working for the United States public education system. This study gives Black teachers the opportunity to have a voice and the ability to share their experiences working in the education system with the world.

Black students need teachers that they can relate to and vice versa. “Black Teachers Matter” gives Black students the opportunity to have more teachers/ role models that look like themselves working within the U.S. education system. This helps increase their confidence and sets the tone for them to be more successful students academically.

There are many structural factors that retain Black people as a permanent underclass. Black Teachers Matter relates to transformative learning when it comes to humanizing student teacher relationships. While also recognizing the realities of racial oppression the social and emotional learning is as an intervention that promotes inclusive school cultures and relationships (Legette & Warren, 2022). Transformative social emotional learning invites educators, scholars, and practitioners to recognize the

realities of racial oppression when modeling the core competencies which is; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Legette & Warren, 2022).

Many Black female teachers have expressed concerns with voicing their opinions because they are afraid their voices won't be heard. Some are afraid to get mixed up with the angry Black woman stereotype. Most decide to keep a lot of their emotions and opinions to themselves. Therefore, their voice in an educational setting is either silenced or simply overlooked in most situations. Based on "Black Teachers Matter" thematic analysis several Black female teachers expressed that they have remained silent in situations that they should have spoken up. Their reasoning is that they fear that they might be perceived as an angry Black woman.

Many Black male teachers have been put in situations where they are expected to do extra duties when it comes to physical altercations at school. Most are put in situations where they are expected to alleviate the situation or break up physical altercations. Some leading to situations where they can be disciplined or terminated claiming that they may have grabbed a student inappropriately while breaking up a physical altercation. Based on "Black Teachers Matter" thematic analysis several Black male teachers expressed concerns with not only being the teacher expected to be the one to break up physical altercations at school. But also, being disciplined, accused, or terminated for accidentally grabbing a student the wrong way while breaking up a physical altercation.

"Black Teachers Matter" relates to transformative education because it changes people's perspectives on how Black teachers and students are treated or viewed in the United States public school system. By bringing awareness to the Black teacher shortage issue Black teachers can now be viewed through a new lens. Through this new lens the United States public school system should be able to see the importance of allowing more diversification within their teaching staff at school.

“Black Teachers Matter” also transforms the way the marginalized communities of Black teachers and students are treated in the education system. By encouraging more Black teachers to retain their position and encouraging other Blacks to pursue teaching careers. More Black teachers would be beneficial to Black students emotionally and academically.

### **Digital Media in DDP**

“Black Teachers Matter” research uses digital media to represent the feelings that Black teachers may encounter while working at school. There are drawings that catch the reader’s attention of the experiences of Black teachers in the education system. More Black teachers can have a positive impact on Black students. It begins with a picture of a black person with scars on their back that says, “Black Teachers Matter.” There is a picture of a happy Black student in a class with a Black teacher followed by another sad picture of a Black student in a class with a White teacher. While this does not mean that a White teacher is not capable of teaching a Black student or caring for a Black student. It simply means that Black student’s need more teachers that look like themselves to look up to, and to understand certain things that a White teacher can’t relate to. Black students need to know that they can be successful too. The only way for them to know that is for the education system to provide more Black teachers. Some of the poetry will be from famous poets such as Maya Angelou, but still educational and culturally related.

#### The Caged Bird

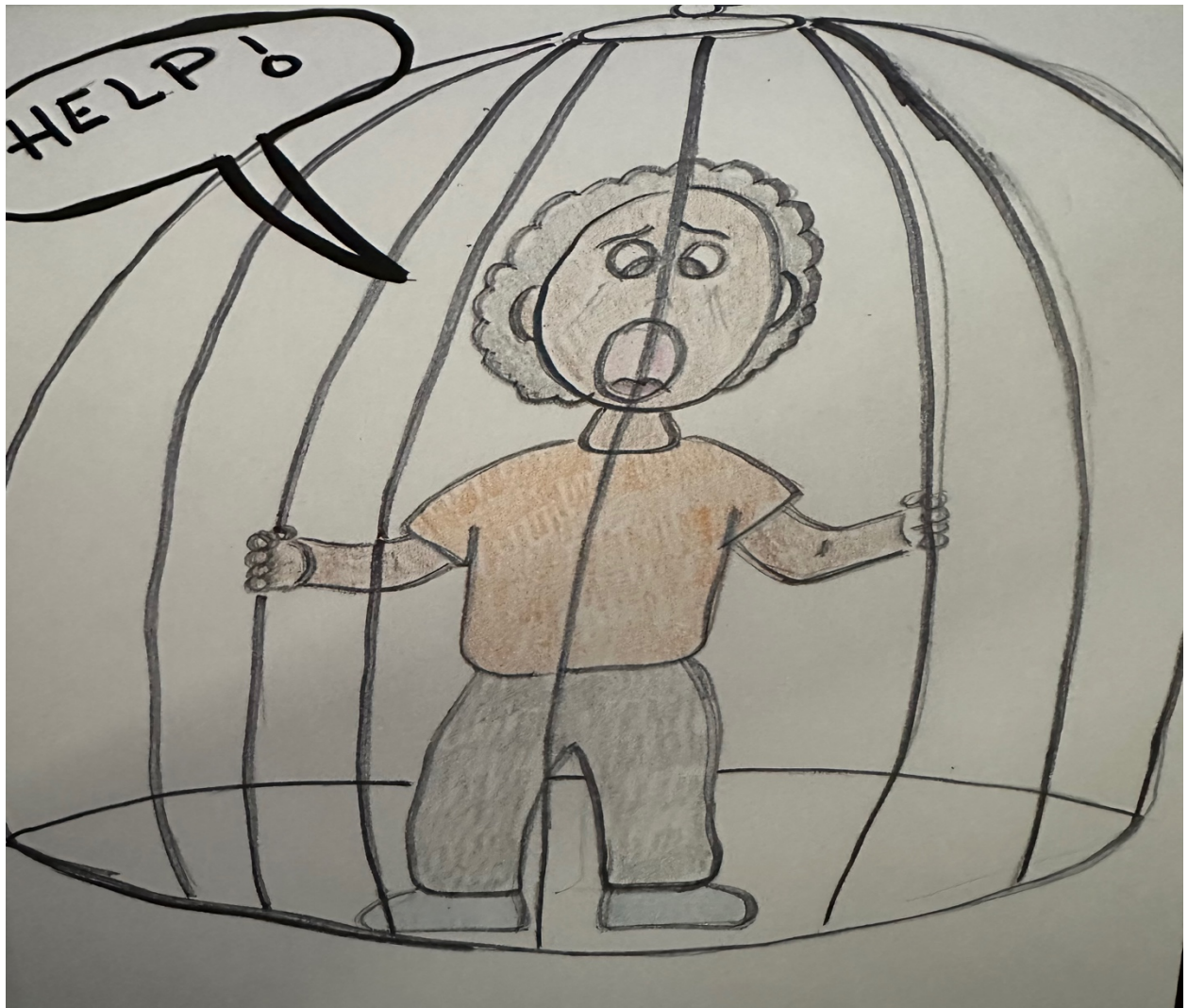
“But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars or rage  
his wings are clipped  
and his feet are tied

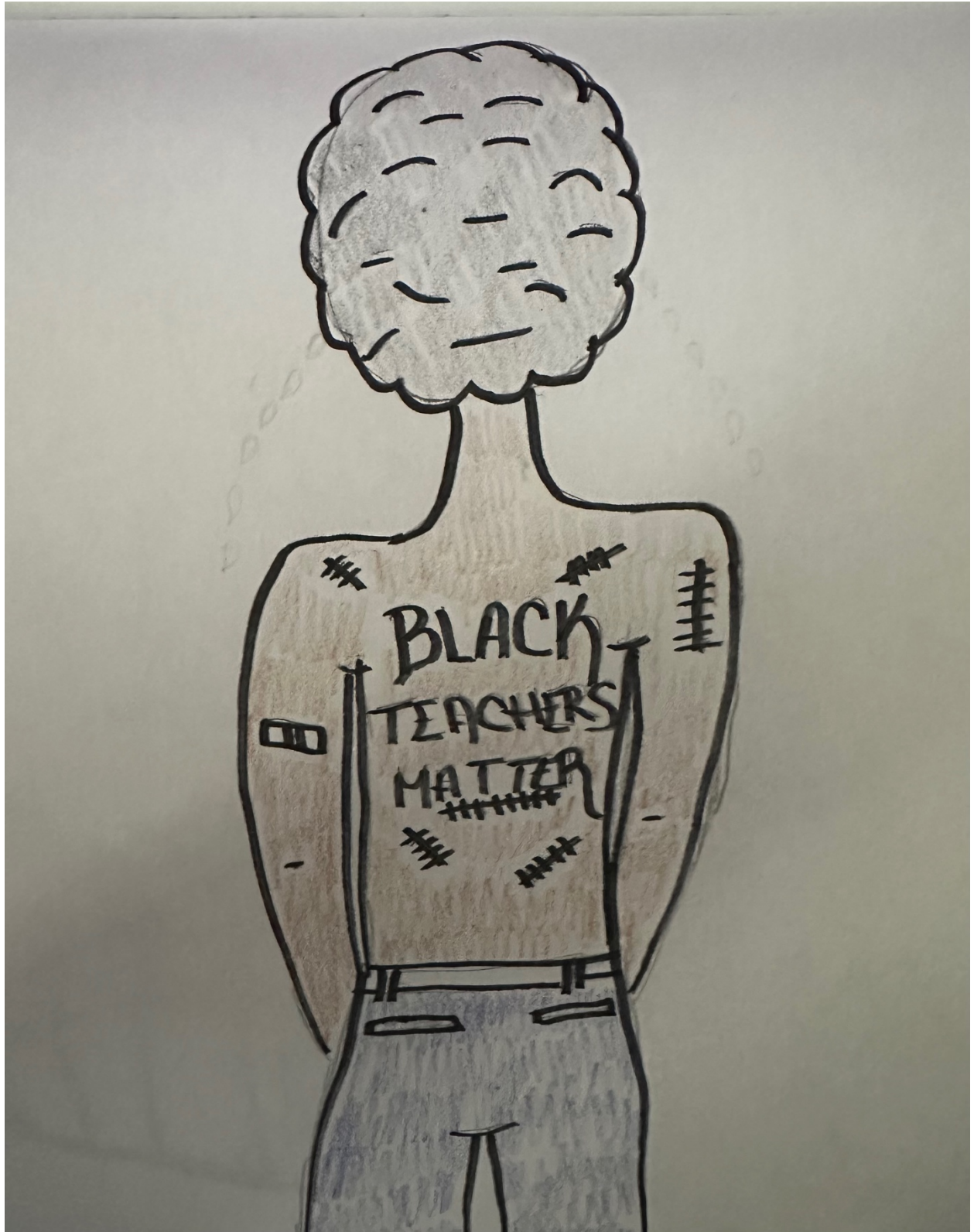
so he opens his throat to sing

-Maya Angelou

According to Maya Angelou this poem means although discrimination and racism has made a cage for Black people It cannot stop Black people from dreaming. This poem is strong because it compares the systematic struggles of Black people in the United States to that of a caged bird. His wings are clipped, and his feet are tied relates to the constant barriers Black teachers must deal with when working in the United States education system. He opens his throat to sing reminds me of the cry and the voice of Black people asking for equality continuously throughout history only to still be treated unequally and face the systematic inequities within our United States education system (Tripura, 2023). There is a picture of a black person in that cage in place of the bird to help capture the true meaning of the poem. This picture compares Black people to a caged bird in terms of how they have been treated in the United States education system.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom  
-Maya Angelou





In terms of “Black Teacher’s Matter” this poem speaks of Black people who have desired for equality within the education system throughout history. Even though Black people have accomplished so much historically, true equality still is far away. Black people still long for the idea that they can all be treated equally and have equal opportunities within the education system for themselves and for Black children in the United States.

“Black Teacher’s Matter” also includes poetry about Black teacher experiences working at school. Another poem is by Amanda Gorman. Amanda Gorman is a national poet that shared one of the most powerful moments during the 2021 presidential inauguration when she shared her poem “The Hill We Climb.” When discussing educational inequality Amanda Gorman says (Patton, 2024).

“I do not know with certainty that society will ever reach the city on a hill to which Bell refers. I do not know that in this lifetime the promises of Brown and the larger struggle for civil rights will ever materialize. But I am prepared to fight and committed to being a light during the darkest moments on the hill. We all can be a light (Patton, 2024). I also will include a picture of a light bulb that represents the light that we can all be.

### **We Can All Be Light**

When day comes, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade? . . . For there is

always light,

if only we’re brave enough to see it

If only we’re brave enough to be it.

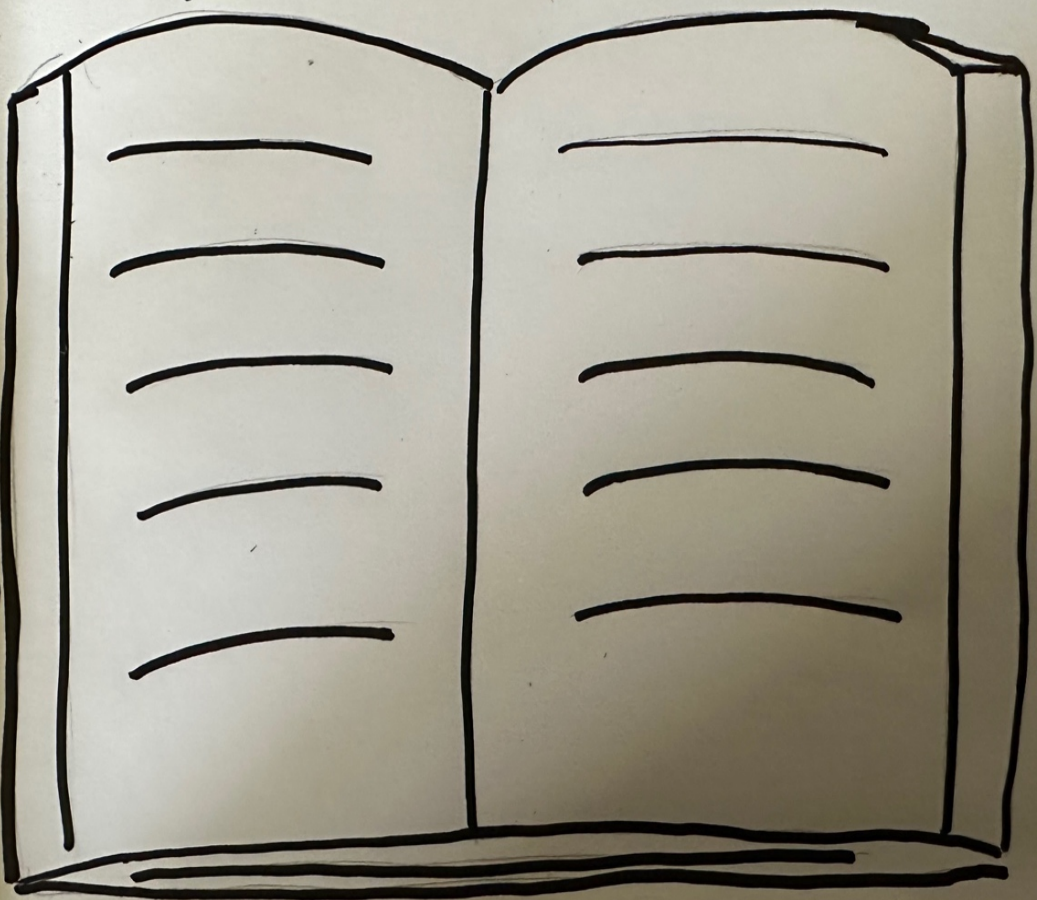
-Amanda Gorman



The drawings in Black Teacher's Matter refer to the counter-storytelling method of research and Critical Race Theory. Relating to Black student responses to a black teacher in comparison to a white teacher. It shows a more positive response when they have a teacher that looks more like themselves.

CRITICAL RACE

SAY YES TO



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## Appendix

### **Interview Protocol**

Semi-structured oral interview- The oral interview is completed in one session via zoom and documented through use of audio recordings. Once completed the recordings were transcribed into words for use in “Black Teachers Matter” research. The interview process consists of three parts which includes the opening scripts, interview questions, and the closure of the interview. Each participant interview took an average thirty minutes to one hour.

### **Interview Transcript**

The interviewer is the researcher Andrea Drone. There was a total of 16 research participants. The participants information remains confidential to protect the identity of the participants. All participants are either prior or current K-12 public school teachers who were interviewed for Black Teachers Matter research. Participants are identified in this research as P1-P16.

#### Initial Interview Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate and the research study regarding the shortage of black teachers in the United States public school system before we get started, I would like to briefly remind you of my research topic, which is called black teachers Matter, unraveling the black teacher shortage by exploring the lived experiences of black educators, working in the United States K through 12 education system. During this interview, you will have the opportunity to share some of your experiences, working as a black educator and the United States education system. I recognize that this interview can be very personal and can also bring about some intense emotions. I want to remind you that you are in control of what you decide to share with me today. If you need to pause, take a break, or even end the interview, just let me know you are in no way being forced to complete this interview and the completion of this interview is at your own discretion. However, I would like to remind you of the importance of this

interview and I would also like to invite you to try to relax and speak your mind to the best of your ability because what you share here today is very important and you can help make a difference in the lives of other black educators, just like yourself by telling your story here today. Now, also keep in mind that a lot of this information is confidential so just try to, you know, refrain from like using names. To begin I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study today as I know your time is valuable.

Can you please give us an idea about why you decided to participate in this research study?

#### Closing Script

Anything else you would like to add to this interview that you feel would be relevant or important to this research topic?

Thank you for completing the interview for “Black Teachers Matter” and I appreciate your time.