[All Electronic Theses and Dissertations](#)

2019

Contributing Causes for Retention or Turnover of Black Teachers in Minnesota Metropolitan Area Public Schools

Chris Bellmont
Bethel University

Follow this and additional works at: https://spark.bethel.edu/etd

Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Contributing Causes for Retention or Turnover of Black Teachers

in Minnesota Metropolitan Area Public Schools

Chris Bellmont

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Saint Paul, MN

2019

Approved by:

Advisor: Dr. Michael Lindstrom

Reader: Dr. Chris Kamrath

Reader: Dr. Stacie Stanley

Abstract

Teaching, above all else, is about relationships and engagement. Students need to see teachers, especially in their affinity group, as successful and guiding role models. American schools have spent 20+ years implementing strategies that seek to match student and teaching staff demographics. Through examination of lived experiences and related artifacts, the counter-stories within this study created the space for trends and recommendations to be identified. This phenomenological case study attempted to explain the cause for Black teachers in the United States to be more likely to leave a school than their White counterparts. Through a series of interviews with nine Black teachers in a variety of contextual situations within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, the study aimed to identify key attributes a school may feature that could increase the likelihood of minority teacher retention. The study also attempted to identify strong features of a school's organization which increases the likelihood of retention for Black teachers. Descriptive analysis directed subsequent interviews of the teacher subjects as well as identified tangible next steps for schools and districts to implement in reversing the underrepresentation of teachers of color in American schools. Based on this study's findings, there are opportunities for school leaders to initiate supports and systems to better influence Black teacher retention. Additionally, the findings indicate that future studies in this area are warranted to confirm recommendations and identify other data measures to investigate.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Nancy and Don. They have provided me with

the compassion, understanding, and drive to make the world a better and more just place.

Acknowledgments page

This study could not have possibly occurred without the support of so many key people.

To the Black educators who I have been privileged to spend meaningful, powerful, hours with. You opened the window to your world to a White stranger in a spirit of true vulnerability, courage, and strength. I am in awe of the way you selflessly live to serve others.

To my family. You are my inspiration and personal 'Why'. On a recent Saturday our son, Eddie, "Daddy, you started this whole thing when I was born?" This led to tears of joy and guilt. Now it is endless appreciation and admiration.

To my advisor, Dr. Mike Lindstrom. There were multiple times I wanted to give up on this whole process. Your belief in me and authentic words of motivation kept the train going. When I think of what it means to be an effective teacher, I think of you.

To my mentors and dissertation team, especially the Black mentors in my life like Dr. Carla Hines, Dr. Janice Porter, and Dr. Stacie Stanley. Thank you for believing in this topic and, most importantly, believing and teaching me when you absolutely didn't have to.

To my students and families that I serve in my role as an educator. You are my professional 'Why'. I seek to create better circumstances for all students to flourish and realize their endless brilliance. You inspire me.

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction

The Need for Black Teachers in American Schools

The landscape of American schools has changed in recent years. Demographic studies suggest that, by 2040 or perhaps earlier, the majority of people in the United States will not be White (Colby & Ortman, 2014). There exists anecdotal and quantitative data that show having a teacher who shares the background of a student can significantly improve academic achievement (Cherng & Halprin, 2016). From the early 1990's, research has suggested a minority teacher is more likely to have had significant and relatable experiences that translate to an increased likelihood of forming productive relationships with students of color (Ehrenberg, Goldhaber, & Brewer, 1994). With this proven impact of having teachers that share cultural and racial traits with students well documented, school districts have initiated a variety of strategies and programs to recruit and hire teachers of color (Magan, 2013). This is especially true in Minnesota, a traditionally White state that has seen a 13% increase from 2002-2012 in students of color entering preschool (Webster & Koumpilova, 2012). This case can be magnified in some districts that have experienced a much more rapid, steep growth in students of color. With the knowledge and need so prevalent, the review of current literature strongly suggests schools and districts are unable to make substantial gains in hiring and retaining teachers who have similar backgrounds to the students they are educating. In spite of documented strategies being implemented in many places for decades, extant literature points to an increasingly wide gap between students of color and the teachers in front of them (Magan, 2013; United States Department of Education, 2017). Additionally, there are noticeable disparities in the percentage of teachers of color working in school districts throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area districts (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). Research also strongly suggested that

the primary issue may rest more in retention rather than recruitment (Igersoll & May, 2011). While the questions and need have been significantly studied, research has not yet identified a coherent plan for schools and districts to change the trend of teachers of color fleeing the institution or profession altogether. This study sought to identify what schools and districts are doing to retain teachers of color and explored new areas that could be addressed in order to change the predictable outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The vision of a school, in order to be truly effective, must seek to enfranchise its students of various backgrounds. American schools have systemically reinforced White superiority with everything from resources and staffing allocation to school discipline and school segregation (Hughes & Berry, 2012). A predominantly White teaching staff leads to lower expectations for students of color and a vicious cycle that leads to an opportunity gap more than simply an achievement gap (Gasman, Samayoa, & Ginsberg, 2017). Schools and districts seek to improve this reality by recruiting and maintaining teachers of color. It is particularly apparent in classrooms where Science Technology and Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is being taught (Chang et al., 2011). Chang et al. (2011) informed us this lack of diverse student engagement in STEM classes could be attributed to a lack of mentors and teachers in similar roles and of similar backgrounds. A study by the Education Innovation Institute at the University of Northern Colorado found that increasing a school's percentage of Black math teachers had a significant effect on the number of Black students that subsequently tried rigorous math courses (Klopfenstein, 2005). In some respects, higher education is responding to the need. More teachers of color are graduating with teaching degrees than ever before (Lodaya, 2013). However, this additional supply of minority teachers had a 24% higher turnover rate from 2009-

2011 than its White counterparts (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

An additional note is the variation that exists amongst like districts in the Minnesota metropolitan area. Nationally, Black teachers make up just over 6% of the teaching force, with less than 2% being Black male teachers (Pabon, 2016). This is a concerning contrast in workforce given, as of 2014, at least 15% of students are Black (United States Department of Education, 2014). For example, Bloomington Public School District and Eden Prairie Public School district are both inner ring suburbs (within 10 miles) of the urban center of Minneapolis. Both districts serve approximately 10,000 students (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). Where the two districts diverge statistically appears to be the contrast between students and teachers with Bloomington capturing 2.74% of their teachers of color while Eden Prairie retained 9.01% of their teachers of color (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). This is a stark difference, especially when Eden Prairie has 39% students of color as opposed to Bloomington with 49%, respectively (Appendix B). Ingersoll and May (2011), along with several other studies, attempted to explore why some districts and schools may be retaining more teachers of color than others (Cherng, 2013; Cherng & Halprin, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative case study sought to expand previous research conducted by Ingersoll and May (2011), as well as Cherng and Halprin (2016). Additionally, this research attempted to further explain why teachers of color are nearly 25% more likely to leave the profession than White teachers. There exists a need to identify conditions schools and districts could put into place to improve retention of Black teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2011). This study sought to explain how a Black teacher's interactions with the school system and individuals within it impact the subject's likelihood of leaving the system or profession. Explaining these lived

experiences will allow organizations to identify practices that should either enter or leave their systems. The study intentionally included open-ended questions in its approach in order to identify new trends or confirm potential practices that would increase a Black teacher's job satisfaction and retention. This study was significantly anchored in Critical Race Theory in order to provide a research lens for the lived experience of a Black person in contrast with a member of the dominant group. The historically dominant group in American education has been White.

How this can Impact Change

It is difficult to argue that race is not at the forefront of many conversations in 21st century American schools. Many communities are experiencing more racial diversity than ever before and this is getting played out inside their schools (Kholi, 2016). White teachers in diverse areas are facing, perhaps, the greatest strife with this change as their race and experiences are not matching up to the students in their classrooms (Frankenberg, 2006). Teachers of color can challenge the normalized constructs of White privilege that exist in education (Heer, 2017). However, the role of a teacher of color is often times made to be some sort of hero figure or spokesperson for their particular race, thus taking on a very narrow, unrealistically demanding identity (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Teachers of color are formally and informally expected to cure systemic challenges all by themselves in racially diverse schools (Hughes & Berry, 2012). Policies and programs have been designed and implemented to recruit as many teachers of color as a district can find. While this has yielded some positive numbers in teacher availability, it is not the end solution. For the first time in the history of the United States, all teachers are being asked to work together to meet high expectations for every student regardless of circumstance (Dichele, 2006). The fact that teachers of color are significantly less likely to remain in a

building may have something to do with the teacher's experience while in the building (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

While there exists a large amount of research featuring described challenges that can accompany minority teacher recruitment, there appears to be less research focused on minority teacher retention (Ingersoll & May, 2011). This study sought to explain the cause and explore solutions to keeping our Black members of the teaching workforce within the school. In turn, this study attempted to identify the deeply rooted values and trends that teachers experience either in schools where they want to stay forever, or schools they would leave at the first decent opportunity. The study has attempted to find out what organizational features and traits a school can begin to try and emulate in order to authentically retain these valuable members of teacher teams. It is likely that, if a school or district cannot produce the kind of supportive conditions to engage a teacher of color, the organization will struggle to engage students and families of color as well (Heer, 2017).

The achievement gap is at the forefront of many educational reform conversations (Pabon, 2016). Researchers have moved to describe the achievement gap as an opportunity gap. The concept of an opportunity gap states that for many minority students, especially Black males, states that current systemic structures guarantee a limited opportunity for said individuals (Donnor & Shockley, 2010). The majority of students attending public schools in the United States today are of a racial/ethnic minority (United States Department of Education, 2013). Helping students, usually Black or Latino, raise achievement in order to meet levels set by White students is what every integrated district seems to be attempting (Ladson-Billings, 2005). A common strategy is to bring in a leader in the arena of professional development and best practices to help the school staff change. This professional development or diversity leader,

often times a person of the minority group the school is interested in seeing achieve higher results, typically speaks to the staff and moves on. The educational leader, or consultant, will attempt to project information and mindset to a staff in an external capacity. Diversity training has not effectively led to gains in student achievement for Black and Brown students (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

The research suggests race matching, or having teachers in front of our students who have like racial and/or cultural characteristics, can make a difference for minority populations. Teacher perceptions of their students can be successfully matched to student achievement. Hattie's (2016) meta-analysis on effect size showed a positive effect size of .9 for teacher credibility. Teacher credibility is defined by four key factors including trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy (Hattie, 2016). These factors are vital for learning to occur (Hattie, 2016). Analysis of an MET study featuring 2,756 teachers in 317 schools by Cherng and Halpin (2016) found that all students, regardless of race, are more likely to favor minority teachers over White teachers. Cherng and Halprin (2016) also found teachers who were perceived as less favorable in the eyes of their students were more likely to have low expectations for themselves and others. This suggests a two-way, reciprocal experience that occurs when strong or ineffective teacher-student interactions occur.

A poorly perceived relationship for a student will lead to less achievement (Hattie, 2016). In turn, having a Black teacher is likely to improve the perceived relationship for the student, thus improving achievement (Cherng & Halprin, 2015). Other studies suggest similar and positive implications for racial matching in American classrooms. Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015) found some minor but positive effects in achievement for Florida students who had matched race teachers. Cherng and Halpin (2016) suggest one potential cause for these

increased, positive, perceptions of minority teachers by minority students is that teachers of color are more likely to have personal experiences navigating racial struggles like stereotypes and micro-aggressions. In her research, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009) uses African American case studies to dive deeply into why the relationship of racially matched students and teachers can yield strong benefits. Strategies like storytelling, connecting over culturally relevant curriculum, and creating community are described. Ladson-Billings (2009) points out that the art of quality teaching of Black students is not completely dependent on the artist, or teacher, being Black. However, Ladson-Billings (2009) does point out an African American teacher may have an easier pathway to success because of lived experiences that lend themselves to culturally relevant practices and therefore a complete reconstruction of the learning environment. Ladson-Billings (2000) further exemplifies this idea of reconstruction and therefore changing the game for our students through the example of gender equality in the United States. Mathematics was traditionally seen as a venture best performed by boys, and the academic achievement data supported this. It was not until the school environment, and the teachers who were in front of girls, was considered did the achievement in mathematics for girls begin to equal boys. Therefore, the strategies implemented must redefine the internal structures for a marginalized group to achieve at the same level as the dominant group (Billings, 2000). This study has sought to analyze which internal structures might help influence minority teacher experience culminating in greater student engagement and learning for students of color. The magic recipe for seemingly every school's top initiative is driven by internal structures and this study seeks to identify the strategies that can bring about significant changes for American schools (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Research Questions

There were two primary research questions driving this study.

1. What is a Black teacher's lived experience as it relates to educational position retention within a Minnesota metropolitan area school?

   a. What are the micro-level experiences that occur for Black teachers which are less likely or not likely to occur for a White teacher?

   b. What are the lived experiences for Black teachers related to retaining their specific position in the school setting and at what rate are they likely to occur?

2. What organizational factors influence a Black Teacher's likelihood to stay within a Minnesota metropolitan area school?

   a. Is there a difference in intentional actions and systemic structures across Minnesota metropolitan area schools and districts related to the retention of Black teachers?

Significance of the Study

This research positively contributed to the need to identify proactive, inclusive approaches that ensure students will have the opportunity to learn from Black educators in our increasingly diverse public school system. Research has indicated that all students prefer and can benefit from the opportunity to learn from teachers of color (Cherng & Halprin, 2016). This study was valuable as it collected reflections of Black teachers in the field who have experienced factors leading them to leave a school or district. The lived experiences of the Black teachers within a Critical Race Theory context may lead to understandings of why a Black teacher is less likely to remain in a position than their White counterparts (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The collected narratives and identified trends may give schools, organizations, and communities

direction on how to provide better contexts for teachers of color going forward. This may lead to higher teacher retention for Black teachers, a group who is experiencing flight at a higher rate than their White peers (Ingersoll & May, 2014). Furthermore, this research is beneficial to the greater context of Critical Race Theory and can develop thought for how systems and organizations may move beyond simply hiring practices to forming and maintaining a culture where all members of the community feel engaged.

Definition of Terms

Please note that the use of the terms *Black* and *African American* are used interchangeably throughout this study. This is due to three main factors: One, in general, people of color who could be classified as Black or African American people interviewed in the Field Study share no decisive, universal, opinion about which was preferred. Two, the preference in terminology of Black or African American is not conclusive, with both being accepted as interchangeable by the U.S. Census Bureau (Gertz, 2014). Third, the American Psychological Association, 6th edition states that the terms *Black* and *African American* are both widely accepted and can be used interchangeably with a spirit of sensitivity and common sense.

The terms *school* and *district* are used in many circumstances throughout the study. *School* refers to the site specific, student service building where a teacher practices. *District* refers to the overarching system of schools which serves the community. The term *organization* refers to both the school and the district.

The *Minnesota Metropolitan Area* consists of the counties surrounding and/or encompassing the urban centers of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota as defined by the Minnesota State Demographic Center (2017). These counties are: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. For the purposes of this study, *Minnesota*

17

Metropolitan Area can reference any community and person who works or resides within the counties identified.

Assumptions and Limitations

Measuring a person's lived experience can be challenging in that a person is self-reporting from a time period which could be more than two-three years in the past. A subject may have had the opportunity to rationalize, reflect, and process their lived experience with others. This means that they could have internalized feedback and opinions from others and will now apply the feedback received to this study.

Also, with Critical Race Theory (CRT) being a framework for this study, it may be difficult to apply race and culture across a broad spectrum, given that cultures within cultures are vast and significant (Lindsey, Junwirth, Pahl, & Lindsey, 2009). This variation within cultures and races means personal narratives may vary depending on the subject's own interpretation of the existence of their own race and culture.

Finally, the researcher must seek to set aside his own experiences as it relates to race and culture for the study to maintain integrity.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative in nature. This study has sought to capture lived experiences related to career longevity by using participatory reflection through the context of Critical Race Theory. The study has attempted to identify the contributing historical, political, and/or social factors which lead to Black teachers being more likely to leave a school, district, or teaching in general. In turn, the study has examined experiences for Black teachers that make them more likely to experience longer retention in his/her teaching position. A survey has been conducted

to gather data with the expectation of further reflection or follow up questions dependent on the subject's responses.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

A literature review has laid the foundational groundwork and current research related to the need to retain Black teachers within a school or district. Furthermore, Chapter II, the literature review, explores circumstantial trends which increase or decrease the likelihood a Black teacher will retain their position within a school or district. The review has also has deeply explored Critical Race Theory and lays this as a foundational framework for the study. After detailing the methodology of this qualitative study in Chapter III, Chapters IV and V seek to identify key findings and suggest next steps for schools and districts to achieve better results in retaining their Black teaching force.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Windows and mirrors. Research points to a reality that Black teachers are in a position to effectively teach Black students because of a more intimate understanding of a student's home and community experience (Easton-Brooks, 2013). As Style (1996) contributes in her research, eyesight and experience lead to insight and results. If students are subjected to seeing and hearing in a way that is disconnected from their own experiences, they will in turn remain disconnected from the curriculum. Two important steps students take toward strong learning are interacting with the curriculum and building a relationship with a mentoring adult (Littky, 2004). Therefore, it is up to educational leaders to create circumstances within the classroom where there is an increased likelihood of students interacting with the curriculum. Since No Child Left Behind legislation passed in 2001, there has been increased attention on the achievement gap between White and non-White students in the United States (Dichele, 2006).

While many attempts have been made throughout the United States to eliminate the achievement gap between Black and White students, a clear and direct route to decreasing the gap has not been conclusively accepted by the educational field. Instead, the preponderance of evidence suggests that the recipe for success is met with a mix of variety and commonality (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). As Style (1996) points out, with so many existing variables, a school that engages students by helping them feel confident and connected to learning has a foundational approach to achieving success. With relationships being centerfold to the learning process, a Black teacher is more likely to have specific knowledge about the community affiliations, cultural practices, and formal and informal languages spoken of Black students. This insight leads to strong, positive relationships (Heer, 2017).

A study by Cherng and Halprin (2016) took an approach which included seven measures of teacher favorability in the eyes of their students. They found conclusively that Latino and Black students favor teachers of their background over White teachers in all seven categories (Cherng & Halprin, 2016). As an identified contributive factor to the aforementioned results, Cherng and Halprin (2016) found that Black and Latino teachers were more multiculturally aware than their White counterparts. The study by Cherng and Halprin (2016) also found that teachers of color were not just preferred by Black and Latino students. The study concluded that all students, regardless of racial background, preferred teachers of color to their White counterparts. The study suggests teachers of color are more likely to authentically hold all students to high expectations and support the struggle to gain social and academic momentum in schools (Cherng & Halprin, 2016). Achinstein Ogawa, Sexton, and Freitas (2010) describe the need for hiring and maintaining teachers who mirror their students as a "demographic imperative" which has been echoed by educators and policymakers.

Recruiting teachers in response to the "demographic imperative" has been a priority for schools and districts for decades. According to 2007-08 data released by the National Center for Education Statistics, 16.9% of United States (U.S.) public school teachers were minorities while 44% of U.S. students were minority (NCES, 2008). With this proven disparity, schools and districts have been trying many strategies to improve results. One obvious and often cited strategy are the "Grow your Own" programs developed in many places throughout the United States (Torres & Peck, 2004). These programs seek to follow students of color through college and incentivize them to return to their communities as teaching staff. A simiar program is "Future Teachers of America" where districts partner with higher educational institutions to produce supportive and intentionally avenues for people of color to enter the teaching field

21

(Torres & Peck, 2004). A third strategy used by many schools and districts is alternative licensure routes for teachers of color that may face barriers in on one of the administrative requirements for teaching certification (Brown, 2012). Essentially, these strategies are meant to prioritize and focus energy on getting teachers of color into the classroom to help flesh out the proven benefits this environmental factor can have on student learning. While some working models exist, it is important to note factors of strong programs to recruit and retain teachers. One study (Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2012) found that, to be effective, programs must operate with Critical Race Theory at its core. Additionally, successful programs must acknowledge and provide discourse for the barriers Black teachers face while operating within the existing structure. Providing community-centered experiences that allow teachers to have supported opportunities to address the bigger context is necessary for these programs to sustain teachers of color in the field (Rogers-Ard et. al., 2012).

One explanation for why the efforts of having Black teachers in schools has not resulted in significant effect is interest-convergence. Interest-convergence is a powerful pillar of Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1980; Gillborn, 2005). The concept of interest-convergence says the dominant (White) group will not advance on the interests of the non-dominant (Black) group until there is significant incentive for the dominant group (Gillborn, 2005). More specifically, it is likely the system has not truly sought the intended outcomes of more Black teachers because the White holders of power within the system have not been incentivized to do so. This suggests deeper work needs to be done transforming hearts and minds of White individuals within the system before substantial change can occur in recruiting and retaining more Black teachers (Achinstein et. al., 2019).

Teacher retention. Despite programs and initiatives in place throughout the United States, 40-50% of all teachers nationwide are likely to be out of the teaching profession after 5 years of teaching (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). The rate of young teachers leaving the profession is nearly three times higher than teachers with 11-30 years of experience (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). With a proven outcome of newer and younger teachers being more likely to leave the professional field of education, an even more disproportionate reality exists for minority teachers (Kohli, 2016).

While research has suggested there is still a large disparity between schools recruiting a workforce that demographically mirrors the student body, minority teachers are less likely to remain in a position than White teachers once hired (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Ingersoll and May (2011) found that the number of minority teachers has actually increased by over 90% in a 20-year period, thus intimating the problem may lie more with retention than recruitment. With turnover rates for minority teachers outpacing non-minority teachers, Ingersoll and May (2011) found quantitative evidence that there is a direct correlation between structural organization of the school and a minority teacher's likelihood to migrate. The finding attributed to Ingersoll and May (2011) demonstrates the importance of minority teacher turnover for two key reasons. First, it illustrates the importance in differentiating between teachers leaving the profession and those choosing to move to other schools. Second, the aforementioned finding by Ingersoll and May (2011) describes the need for qualitative educational research in this area. While documentation exists regarding the need for recruitment of teachers of color and their increased likelihood to leave said position, there fails to be an adequate amount of information for why this is occurring. Research on overall teacher retention provides insufficient resolve for schools and districts to correct the problem (Achinstein et. al., 2010).

23

Ingersoll and May (2010) discovered, as is the case in many spheres of inclusion practices, strategies for improving teacher retention for Black teachers can be applied to the greater, overarching, need of teacher retention nationwide (Achinstein et. al., 2019). Ingersoll and May (2011) were able to point to factors like strong school structures, teacher autonomy, and collegial relationships as increasing teacher retention. Teacher workload and salary have proven to be contributing factors for a teacher to leave the school or profession entirely (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). While some causes for teacher stress like salary can be more fixed if the teacher is newer to the profession, professional connectedness and administrative support can lead to a longer career and therefore higher salary (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). Contrary to hypotheses in some realms, the actual characteristics of the students within the school (e.g., urban, suburban, poor, wealthy) are not the driving forces for teachers to leave (Kohli, 2016). Rather, the conditions of the school environment were more likely to be contributive factors to teachers leaving (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Lochmiller, Adachi, Chesnut, & Johnson, 2016). While fixed outcomes like salary, school demographics, and teacher workload may have some underlying implications for teacher retention, these seem to be minimal in contrast to the feel of the school environment and relationship among team members. Research identifies and theorizes specific patterns which causes teachers to leave a school or the profession.

School environment. School conditions that foster a feeling of humanistic commitment for teachers will increase the likelihood of teacher retention (Kohli, 2016). Induction programs that seek to form an environment of support have proven to create the circumstances for retention (Ingersoll, 2012). Ingersoll (2012) found that one component of successful educational environments featured teachers having common planning time to work through the stressful challenges of the teaching profession with trusted colleagues. There are many varieties of

24

induction programs for teachers, however, a strategic and sustainable induction program that sticks with teachers over their first 5 years in the profession will positively impact retention (Ingersoll, 2012). Teachers utilize each other as resources to form a greater sense of purpose and effectiveness within the school (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). If teachers can form tightly knit families dedicated to learning, their classrooms will transform into tightly knit families of learning (Delpit, 2006). To truly get to this point, everyone must be seen as an individual with varying perspectives and values. A good leader sees this and seeks for all members of the learning community to feel valued and productive. The leader does this successfully by focusing on context within the group (Testa & Erhart, 2005).

A transformational leader seeks out new ways to tap into an individual's level of talent. Teacher teams, for example, looking to identify gifted mathematics students will develop a different mindset of each other because they are working together for a cause (Coxton, et al., 2013). The effect of strong teams working together leads to individuals within the group moving from a fixed to a growth mindset (Dweck, 2012). Once the leader is able to help facilitate this mindset shift, the individual skills and attributes of each member of the collaborative team will be more evident and appreciated (Buffman, et al., 2008). A focus on the individual skills each team member brings to the table is a powerful strategy in helping overcome obvious challenges that are brought about by moving towards a collaborative team structure within schools. The concept of leadership and creating positive, coherent, supportive teams has increasingly meaningful outcomes when race is involved. The humanistic orientation of teaching suggests that the leader must foster a school culture where the specific needs of teachers of color are overtly and covertly addressed (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). Black teachers who feel they are positively impacting the school organization and the Black students within it have increased

self-confidence and inspiration (Bell, 1984; Hughes & Berry, 2012). In contrast, a lack of affinity to make decisions in the best interest of students was identified as a contributor to professional flight for Black male teachers (Pabon, 2016). Creating school environments of support increases teacher retention in a greater way than factors like attributes involving the students themselves. Schools with high poverty, student mobility, and linguistic and cultural diversity are much more likely to have inexperienced teachers working in them. However, with teacher retention being more strongly linked to a need for supported collaborative practices than student demographics, the research suggests schools with students of color and poverty will have large pockets of teachers in need of support rather than prepared to give it (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2017). This cycle of inexperienced teachers many urban American schools are caught in helps articulate the need for a diverse, supported team of teachers working within them. The environmental factors a school leader creates have a higher impact on retaining Black teachers than factors involving the student population themselves.

Impact of race and mentoring. Teacher preparation programs do too little to significantly prepare teachers of color to navigate the teaching profession as a minority (Hughes & Berry, 2012). This systemic shortfall transcends into the school community once the teacher is out of the preparation program and into the field. Feelings of apathy and frustration by a school's inability to address racial inequities may have a more damaging impact on teachers of color (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016). Research indicates that minority groups have had to work for equal treatment inside the school workplace. For example, Nowlin (2008) uncovered the horrific challenges faced by Black female leaders in South Carolina. The need to fit in with a group while maintaining racial identity can be stressful and debilitating. However, it is clear through Nowlin's research that the seven women in this study were vital to making the diverse

school collaborative teams more effective in meeting the needs of students. The need for more racially diverse leadership teams in schools is not without cause. Browne (2012) describes the racial opportunity gap faced by students of color in our schools. Browne (2012) and Decosta (2012) discuss a school's moral imperative to provide students with collaborative teams of teachers that can offer opportunities for learning that the system is designed to withhold from students of color. Only through successful, collaborative work will the organization become more culturally competent. Race is a factor everywhere within schools, and in particular within collaborative teams.

While No Child Left Behind (2001) articulates the need to eliminate the achievement gap between White and minority students, research has suggested the challenge articulated by NCLB is better addressed by decreasing the opportunity gap. The opportunity gap includes the programs, courses, activities, and high expectations historically afforded to White students and not Black students (Verstegen, 2015). Equity scorecards and audits are used by many school leaders to help individuals and groups identify causes for the increased opportunity gap in our schools (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012; Decosta, 2012). Some schools have taken further steps to adjust their hiring practices to become more welcoming towards minority groups (Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, Richards, 2004). Examples are not just limited to African American teaching presence but Latino and other underrepresented groups as well (Bruning, 2006). The research clearly articulates a need for collegial collaboration across all groups within our increasingly diverse educational settings. Mentorship, both formal and informal, has proven to be beneficial to educators of color as they move through the streams of challenge these teachers may face. In a related study of higher educators, Zambrana, Ray, Espino, Castro, Cohen, and Eliason (2014), found that strong mentorship programs can be a critically positive aspect of retaining a teacher of

color within an educational organization. The study also found that schools and organizations have traditionally struggled to differentiate mentorship and training programs. Studies found that a lack of early, sustainable, mentors provided to a teacher transitioning into a new role to be highly important for job sustainability (Chenowet & Theokas, 2013; Pabon, Anderson, & Kharem, 2011; Zambrana, et. al., 2014).

An additional study found that the uniqueness of one's minority teaching status demands a need for networking and mentoring (Hughes & Berry, 2012). This occurs for Black teachers in integrated schools who found that their White teaching counterparts were either uninterested in any racial discourse or teaching students of color at all. In her case study of Black women teachers, Dingus (2008) identified the need for black teachers in newly integrated schools to form tight communities out of necessity. Black teachers had a need to meet in mentoring networks to discuss larger concerns about how Black children were taught by White teachers and the perceived outcomes (Dingus, 2008). The need for these tight mentoring networks of Black teachers may also be related specifically to unique traits of African American culture. Knowledge in African American culture can be uniquely generated and transmitted across generations of Black women with traditions of "mothering the mind" where mentoring is attended to in deep, meaningful ways (Collins, 2000). With the importance of deep relationships being so critical to Black women, mentors use their collective and individual expertise to help mentees fight oppression. Mentorship roles amongst Black women were found to be communicated verbally but also through modeling of professional behaviors and responses in integrated settings (Dingus, 2008).

Critical Race Theory. A minority teacher is often led to feel marginalized in their workplace due to historical and institutional factors. The Critical Race Theory is used in this

study as an anchor to explain how the permanence of racism fuels a Black teacher's experience in a way a White teacher cannot relate to. Critical Race Theory (CRT) uses narratives of minority people to explain the institutional racism which is engrained into the fabric of American society (Ladson-Billings, 2003). CRT took its roots as a response to civil rights and other legal discourse in our country, which has generally benefited Whites more than any other group (Ladson-Billings, 2003). With racism being an innate part of our institutional fiber, no place is as likely to see things as clearly "played out" as American schools. As schools in the United States become increasingly more diverse, the White institutions that have been established since our country's inception continue to dig their talons into change and true progress. Whether in low-income or wealthy schools, research has unmasked powerful personal and observed stories of racial injustice in American schools (Kholi, 2009).

The previously mentioned No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation held, at its core, an attempt to substantially level the playing field for students of color. However, because institutional racism in schools and housing continue to be reinforced, true academic and social gains have not occurred (Noguera, 2008). Bell (1992) describes the racist structures as a permanent fixture in the psychology, economy, society, and culture of the modern world. Attempts thus far to address these fixtures have amounted to little more than bogus checks that cannot be cashed by people of color (Bell, 1992). This can lead to feelings of resentment and frustration for a teacher of color. At the very least, it can lead to a need for teachers of color to have more relationships and time dedicated to the opportunity to talk about race and its implications on our schools and society (Gasman, Samayoa, & Ginsberg, 2017). During recent years, solutions for helping ease the physical and psychological impacts on teachers of color have emerged. A study by Mosely (2018) suggested that teachers benefit from several systems,

including the opportunity to engage in affinity grouping spaces. These affinity opportunities allow for the teacher to be connected with other teachers in order to co-navigate the challenges of isolation, micro-aggressions, and implicit bias that can take place (Mosely, 2018). Mosely (2018) also described affinity groups as 'rejuvenation spaces' that allow for teachers to collectively name and discuss issues in order to move forward in their work.

The research conducted by Bell (1992) further articulated the historical origins that have evolved into CRT. With racism being an omnipresent component of our society, it is reliant on societal changes to ever impact its core (Bell, 1992):

> True awareness requires an understanding of the Rules of Racial Standing. As an individual's understanding of these rules increases, there will be more and more instances where one can discern their workings. Using this knowledge, one gains the gift of prophecy about racism, its essence, its goals, even its remedies. The price of its knowledge is the frustration that follows its recognition that no amount of public prophecy, no matter its accuracy, can either repeal the Rules of Racial Standing or prevent their operation. (p.125)

Bell's (1992) rules illustrate the predicament a minority teacher finds themselves in a White dominated organizational culture. Ladson-Billings (1999) suggests that Critical Race Theory becomes a key strategy in unmasking racism and the subsequent effects it has on our social systems. The teacher will become increasingly aware of the racial injustices at play for themselves and/or their students. However, while becoming more aware of these injustices, the teacher will increase an understanding of how impenetrable the cultural stigma around the system can be. This can lead to feelings of distrust, powerlessness, and overall dissatisfaction with one's journey. The research Bell (1992) introduces works overtly against the very reasons a

teacher gets into the field-to make positive change. Therefore, ignorance is rewarded for a member of the non-dominant group in a system that clearly favors the dominant (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Restated, being unaware of racial realities is preferred for White people who are less likely than their Black counterparts to have a personal and emotional connection to the disparate attributes of the American school experience. CRT is at the central core of this research and operates as a filter for the creation of the theoretical framework and research questions. Five main tenets of CRT that have direct influence on this study (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2007):

(1) *Centrality of race and racism.* All research related to CRT must acknowledge the permanence and existence of racism as a central and regular factor in explaining an individual's experience. The conflict that occurs from these various experiences with race and individual qualities are always at the surface of one's experience in a social setting.

(2) *Challenge to dominant ideology.* Using the CRT framework requires an understanding of the inherent systemic and structural means of oppression by design. Throughout this study, the dominant perspective is challenged through the lens of people who have experienced through the non-dominant, or the African American teacher's perspective.

(3) *Commitment to social justice.* The motivational pretext of this research is rooted in social justice. Identifying and examining layers of oppression must be the overarching goal of CRT driven research. The outcomes of CRT research must seek to a.) take steps towards eradicating the world of injustices like racism, sexism, and poverty and b.) empower the non-dominant group to have a greater stake in

31

ownership of social institutions and experiences previously guarded by the dominant group.

(4) *Value of experiential knowledge.* While White (the dominant) culture may oftentimes be rooted in data and objective recitations of history, a CRT approach must adhere to experiential knowledge of those in the field. This is due to 1.) the control that the dominant group holds on the institutional narratives of social order and expectations and 2.) in adherence to the oral traditions of many Communities of Color throughout the world. The lived experience of subjects is therefore critical in explaining phenomena related to CRT.

(5) *The interdisciplinary perspective.* The CRT framework in education seeks to challenge history and must analyze racism in both a historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods. The research must consider the history, sociology, psychology, and education as it impacts the findings of the subject's lived experience in a K-12 setting. Sending personal narratives through a filter of the various disciplines allows for actionable outcomes to be derived (pp. 312-313).

Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, the researcher will use counter stories to help construct a response to the research questions. The use of counter stories is proven to reveal emergent themes to identify existing systemic structures that can be altered to benefit historically disenfranchised people (Martinez, 2014). CRT consists of dominant reality and subaltern reality. Historically, the lived experiences of those who love outside the dominant reality are filtered out of conversations involving the impact of race on systems (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Because of this construct of credibility being exclusively assigned to the dominant reality, a counter story must capture the perceptions of the marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The counter

story provides much needed narratives in contrast to the dominant, historical perspectives that have reigned supreme in American institutions for centuries (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Roberts (2010) expresses the responsibility researchers have on the moral development of education to utilize teacher counter stories to better inform the system. Matias and DiAngelo (2013) describe this process of utilizing counter stories is the only way we can create the emotional possibilities of "liberating our humanity from racism and White supremacy" (p. 18).

Micro-aggressions and Racial Battle Fatigue. A Black teacher is trapped in between the world of their culture and the predominant culture of a White teacher that exists in nearly all American schools. Oftentimes, a minority teacher is the only member of color on the teaching team (and sometimes the entire department or school).

In a study of teachers of color working in Los Angeles public schools, Kholi (2009) identified the harmful racial undertones teachers of color face in their quest to support students of color. Teachers of color found themselves shocked by damaging statements about Black students that White teachers were willing to make in front of Black counterparts. An increased understanding of the opportunity gap takes place as the Black teacher works for racial justice (Kholi, 2009). The teacher can then be made as a puppet of sorts or a token diversity expert in the eyes of the White (dominant) group (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Pabon (2016) was able to use qualitative case studies to explain the unrealistic expectations coupled with misguided pressure as leading to Black male teacher turnover. Teachers encountered stereotypical judgments and expectations to be 'Black Supermen' where they would exude their physical prowess and mentor student athletes.

In addition, Pabon (2016) found that teacher preparation programs did not adequately help African American male teachers prepare to effectively teach in urban settings. The African

American teacher often becomes the voice for their race and is no longer valued in any other realm within the profession. Schools who hold the student and teacher's culture at the center of their curriculum and daily interactions can produce positive gains for its students and leave teachers feeling powerful and satisfied (Delpit, 2006). However, this translation is far too rare and exists in only small examples (Delpit, 2006). The practice of placing an isolated member of a minority group as an expert for their racial group has been occurring since slavery. This was evident when the house maid was felt to enjoy pieces of privilege leading to feelings of despair and frustration that one was forced to be a part of two divergent worlds (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Beyond the rigors of classroom instruction, an isolated minority teacher will take on additional stressors and feelings that White teachers are completely immune to. Research now suggests chronic exposure to racial discrimination, whether institutional or overt, is analogous to the constant pressure soldiers face on the battlefield (Nauert, 2011). Racial micro-aggressions are defined as subtle verbal and non-verbal insults directed at people of color, often automatically or unconsciously (Lynn, 2002). These micro-aggressions can be cumulative in nature and lead down a road to physical and mental anguish. It leads to a version of unintended psychological warfare which undoubtedly leads a marginalized, isolated, teacher away from the organization. Micro-aggressions can come from a wide variety of places and at any time (Nauert, 2011). To further complicate matters, teachers of color can face micro-aggressions from students of their own racial background being called a "sell-out" to a racially hostile system (Heer, 2017). Without the correct structures and culture in place, it is apparent why a minority teacher is more likely to leave a teaching job than a White teacher. The repeated and consistent battering which occurs leads to a mental and physical retreat for teachers in these difficult positions (Heer, 2017).

Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano (2006) explicitly link Racial Battle Fatigue and Critical Race Theory. They suggest that, without the framework of CRT, a person of color will not have an outlet to use narratives in order to release the stressors caused by racial fatigue. People of color need useful tools and outlets in order to see the world in a less stressful way. Otherwise, they can be consumed by the daily micro-aggressions put forth by the endemic nature of current American society. Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano (2006) argue the only way for someone to stay in a circumstance and thus build resilience to racial battle fatigue is to work from a CRT lens. The opportunity to have a forum to share narratives improves the likelihood to operate from the CRT lens. Additionally, students of color are likely to need a forum to discuss issues of race (Hughes & Berry, 2012). This point adds to the certainty that a teacher of color can provide an environment for students to address the complicated and harsh realities of racism as it permeates through American societal structures. In fact, school leaders who can cultivate an environment of social justice are more likely to recruit and retain teachers who see the world through a lens of social justice reform (Bell McKenzie et al., 2008). Hughes and Berry (2012) discuss the need for schools to be place where students can heal, plan, and move on in a positive way from the debilitating constraints of racial injustice. Hines (2016) analyzed the role White school leaders have in creating and enhancing school cultures that allow for racism and micro-aggressions to be examined by White teachers. The approach of leaders taking purposeful steps to break down White privilege and fragility allows for authentic work around race (Hines, 2016). The research suggests that leaders must not, however, focus solely on helping White teachers examine race. Hughes and Berry (2012) argue that teacher education programs and school settings must provide communities where people of color can be collectively and individually reflective about their experiences. If communities cannot be fully engaged around topics related to social and

35

racial justice, schools are likely to fall trapped in being reactive systems designed to simply remediate student failure (Bell McKenzie et al., 2008). Conclusively, the need to have understanding colleagues who are able to accept and reflect narratives that are associated with one's own culture is critical for a person to avoid the overwhelming emotional and physical damage caused by Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith, Yosso, & Solorzano, 2006).

Research indicates that all students, especially Black students, benefit from a Black teacher in their classroom (Cherng & Halprin, 2016). With this knowledge, Ingersoll and May (2011) discovered schools still have a greater challenge in retaining Black Teachers than White teachers. Additionally, contributing factors like strong teacher teams, induction programs, and leaders focused on affirming the work of Black teachers have been suggested (Browne, 2012; Decosta, 2012; Kholi, 2009; Zambrano et. al., 2014). At this time, however, and based on the literature review, schools do not have conclusive structures and systems to put in place to offset the trend of flight for Black educators from American schools.

Chapter III: Procedures and Research Design

Introduction and Methodology

It is important that the study has realized balance between structure and freedom. Therefore, the study features a qualitative approach to understanding the research questions and identifying new knowledge and insight from the subjects. Instead of attempting to control the variables and environment, the phenomenological approach examines experiences and situations within people's everyday lives. In a narrower frame, the study is a phenomenological case study, where there is a strategic attempt to tell the story of a group of people's real experiences in the hopes of providing better circumstances in the future. The qualitative approach has allowed for triangulation of data sources. Utilizing multiple data collection methods, especially interviewing, is crucial in determining what people are thinking when it is not readily observable by simply observing them in their environment (Merriam, 2009). The data collection methods included formal interviews, photo elicitation feedback, and field research within this study that was able to clearly identify trends and adequately address the research questions. Photo-elicitation can trigger emotional responses in the subject that may otherwise be forgotten or suppressed (Burns, 2011). Using qualitative methods has allowed for the opportunity and space needed to peel the layers of race within people's minds and hearts and has, in turn, provided for the structure and buoyancy needed to have effective results (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) points to phenomenological research as "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (p. 13). The study was semi-structured and has utilized open and closed ended interview questions to identify and quantify human behavior. While the study features some structured questions seeking an

informed response, the bulk of the interview questions has allowed the researcher to dig deep and adjust with the information at hand (Merriam, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

The researcher has employed Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the grounding framework for the study. CRT provides an overall orienting lens for the lived experiences of the subjects (Creswell, 2009). CRT states that racism is a permanent and pervasive aspect of society which directly affects the lived experiences of a person of color differently than a member of the dominant group (Bell, 1987). A theoretical assumption has been made that racism, at a systemic and individual level, controls and directs experiences for the subjects in this study. It is only through intentional, meaningful discourse about race that one can derive meaning of the lived experiences of those with the CRT framework (Ladson-Billings, 2000). The study has sought to explore ways for schools and districts to move outside of the constraints posed by CRT. By designing interview questions that are intentionally open and seek deep reflection, the researcher has been able to extrapolate findings and compare them to past research. Using this process has allowed for new or extended outcomes to be determined.

Research Questions

There were two primary research questions driving this study.

1. What is a Black teacher's lived experience as it relates to educational position retention within a Minnesota metropolitan area school?

    a. What are the micro-level experiences that occur for Black teachers which are less likely or not likely to occur for a White teacher?

    b. What are the lived experiences for Black teachers related to retaining their specific position in the school setting and at what rate are they likely to occur?

2. What organizational factors influence a Black Teacher's likelihood to stay within a Minnesota metropolitan area school?

   a. Is there a difference in intentional actions and systemic structures across Minnesota metropolitan area schools and districts related to the retention of Black teachers?

Objectives

This study has led to three main objectives. First, this study has identified and described feelings of connectedness and self-worth for minority teachers in their workplace setting. Second, the study uses a Critical Race Theory framework to identify causes for Black teachers to leave the school, district, or teaching profession. Third, the study has solicited specific steps a school or district can take in order to better recruit and retain African American teachers.

Sampling Design

The current study used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is common among qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). It has allowed for a targeted sampling given the realm of conversation the researcher is seeking to explore. This enabled the researcher to use a snowball sample to identify key people to solicit feedback, thus leading to further identification of previously unidentified subjects. The sample plan featured a total of nine educators whom identified themselves as non-White and are subsequently a racial minority amongst their staff. All nine educators stated they would be likely or have previously used the term Black or African American as a general identification in census/governmental related processes. Of the nine educators, at least six, or 67%, have roles as general education teachers. Eight of the nine educators, 78%, were teachers who had vacated positions or districts at some point in their career. At least one of the nine educators, or 11%, was a teacher who has vacated the K-12

public teaching profession. To create a valid and purposeful sample, the researcher sought out key contacts and stakeholders in the schools to craft the necessary sampling. The researcher was able to access connections in the Black community in order to locate subjects interested and able to participate in the study. The reason for this overall approach was to ensure a variety of perspectives while being purposeful in seeking deep understandings of why Black teachers may feel alienated and frustrated in their work setting. The sample plan successfully allowed for a snowball effect and kept all avenues open to reflections and perspectives from the subjects not anticipated through the literature review. With this allowance, the researcher was able to make sure fidelity in this study was paid to the parameters illustrated in this section.

Setting

The setting of this study was a collection of urban and suburban schools within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The researcher engaged in a lengthy Institutional Review Board (IRB) process with the University and five local metropolitan area school districts. After engaging in the processes, three of the five districts approved the study and sought to be participants. The researcher was then given latitude to seek out the teacher sample using the snowball sampling approach with individual Black educators. The researcher has sought to preserve the anonymity of the participating districts, schools, and teachers at all costs. In addition, the researcher worked to identify educators who work or worked in schools with varying student enrollment figures and demographics. The study has sought, but not necessarily completely committed to, finding schools that have similar comparative factors in regards to student makeup and proximity or involvement in an urban community. Three of the workplace settings were Secondary (serving students Grades 6-12), four were Elementary (typically serving students Grades Pre-K-5). Two of the workplace settings were at a district office/support level.

The schools emerged as the researcher identified the nine individuals to interview, observe in their environment, and elicit authentic reflective statements about their lived experience within the setting.

Instrumentation and Measures

The instruments selected had a high face validity score. With the triangulation method of data collection and analysis, an increased likelihood of reliable and valid results will occur (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, the use of tools to help accurately transcribe the interviews, observational, and reflective feedback were helpful when it came to authentic data collection and analysis. The interview questions were designed based on research and multiple field and pilot tests. Utilizing input from Black people in the educational field, but not part of the sample, was critical in designing practical and effective questions. The questions were meant to make sense to the interviewer based on anticipated experience while leaving the possibility for unanticipated trends and narratives to emerge. Having field tested the questions by people who also know what it is like to be a minority educator increased the appropriateness and usefulness. There was exerted effort by the researcher to ask questions that were to solicit feelings and emotions. The issue of race and belonging was emotional in nature and therefore could only detect meaning in an emotional realm where there exists a sense of trust and endlessness in the dialogue (Hughes & Berry, 2012). Qualitative research is essential as it involves the study of people's lives under real world conditions (Yin, 2016). Therefore, asking questions that will trigger objective responses was sought in this study in order to dig deeper with subsequent observations and/or dialogue (Merriam, 2008). Using the information provided by the SmartPen technology/programing platform helped organize and ensure reliability in the figures and

transcripts. There existed high motivation to use valid and reliable measures in order to produce complex theme connections in this increasingly important contribution to the field of research.

Data Collection Procedures

Multiple methods of data collection were employed in order to collect various sources of data for analysis. The first form of data collection used was one-on-one interviews. The researcher met, either virtually or in person, at least twice with each of the nine subjects. At least one of the interviews took place in person and everything was recorded with audio capturing technology. Google Hangout assisted with meetings that could not readily take place due to time and space. Google Hangout is an instant messaging and video platform designed to emulate a person to person meeting. The various settings could impact the type of data received. For example, a conversation over Google Hangout makes data collection different since the researcher is unable to account for environmental factors apparent by actually being face-to-face at the site.   For the purposes of this study, Google Hangout was necessary for four (or 22%) of the 18 total interviews.

The remainder of the interviews took place in person. The questions in this study were intentionally open-ended and attempted to elicit authentic views and opinions. The interviewer was able to capture the content with a recording during each interaction. A device featuring a Smart Recorder and transcriber (Lifescribe Pen) was used to document all interviews. The Smart Recorder, used in conjunction with an application on an iPhone, was the primary tools for documenting interviews that were not in person. The Smart Recorder application allowed the interviewer to capture the content of both interviews and review the information during analysis. The second round of interviews featured an increasingly refined set of questions that included the possibility for snowballing, or adjustment based on the responses. Following the first round of

interview questions, the researcher field tested five more questions that were created based on the responses from the first round interviews. The second interviews enabled the researcher to further explore emotions, feelings, and observations previously unattainable. This possibility was due to two main reasons. One, the questions were orchestrated in a way to follow up on statements previously made. Two, the subject had a significant amount time, three-five weeks, to synthesize and reflect on topics asked in round one. The purpose of the interviews is to dig more deeply into a topic that has deep-rooted impact points for people (Creswell, 2009). If the questions remain at the surface level, the data would not have produced as valuable results.

Another form of data collection used was observations. Whenever possible, the researcher spent time immersed within the workplace setting of the subject. The researcher intentionally changed lenses and shift perspectives to adequately collect a wide scope of data during this phase. This method of data collection was used less often out of ethical considerations for the participants to remain anonymous and comfortable throughout the study and into publication. Therefore, five (28%) of the 18 interviews included significant observational field data collection and instead relied on information gleaned by the observational data produced in the various interview settings. Descriptive notes were the primary tool for conducting these observations as well as taking advantage of technology (Smart Pen) to assist in capturing as much authentic data as possible. Phenomenological studies must seek to be as faithful as possible to the lived experiences of the participants (Yin, 2016). Therefore, using tools like the Smart Pen that accurately captures data from the participants was useful. In addition, any observational data was helpful as it can help explore topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss (Creswell, 2009).

The third form of data sought was information elicited from photographic data provided by the subjects. Qualitative research strives to integrate information from a variety of contexts and locations (Yin, 2016). This sometimes requires the researcher to collect information beyond interviews or field observations, including artifact gathering (Yin, 2016). It was for the purpose of an integrative, triangulated approach that artifact gathering was implemented into the process. According to Harper (2002), a Photo-Elicitation Interview (PEI) is "a postmodern dialogue based on the authority of the subject rather than the researcher" (p. 15) and revolves around the use of a photograph in an interview. The researcher requested the interviewer to capture 1-3 photographs between the first and second interview. The researcher asked the subjects to capture photographs that represent their feelings (positive, neutral, or negative) about the subject's work in education as it relates to their experience as a Black educator. Asking subjects to capture feelings, motives, and insights through the use of digital photography undoubtedly brought out responses that might have been repressed (Burns, 2011). In an era of Selfies, Snapchat, and Facebook, Photo-Elicitation is an objective way to identify obstacles an individual might face in an educational setting (Torre & Murphy, 2015).

All three of the aforementioned approaches to data collection yielded results that allowed the researcher to identify trends going forward.

Field Testing

Field tests were used in three strategic locations within the study. The interview questions and data collection instruments were field tested, prior to the interviews, by four Black administrators and teachers throughout the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area not included as subjects in the study. The intent of the field test was to identify questions and processes to solicit meaningful and authentic reflection from the subjects. Second, the photo elicitation

process was reviewed by the same four Black educators prior to the first round of interviews. Third and finally, the process to date and interview questions for the second round of interviews were field tested by three additional Black educators from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan area not included as subjects in the study. Feedback from each of the three Field Tests was obtained by the researcher, considered, and led to adjustment of the study. Having Field Testing data from Black educators helped the researcher avoid bias and reliability mistakes by the White researcher.

Data Analysis

The goal of the data analysis process was deep engagement and investigation of the meaning brought forth by the data. The researcher worked hard to identify some general themes and trends from the various perspectives collected through detailed triangulation. The information gathered was then sorted in order for quality analysis to take place (Merriam, 2009). The researcher completed processes during and after the interview timeline using a descriptive statistical analysis. The researcher made sure that the subjects were engaged, transparent, and partnered participants during the transcribed and artifact analysis. The authentic, transparent, and trusted engagement of the participants with the researcher was of paramount importance (Yin, 2016). This process assisted the researcher in coding the information in order to readily pull out and further explore trends in the data. In short, the goal was to move from a "thorough general" to a "refined meaningful" by using a pre-constructed systemic approach of detailed guidance, narration and coding (Merriam, 2009).

Limitations and Delimitations

As limitations were explored for this study, several were identified as a primary area of concern. One was the individual bias of the researcher. The research required a large span of

input and resources in the development of the study, especially in regards to the interview questions. The questions were to remain neutral, yet open-ended enough, in order to extract emotion and deep thought. The personal experiences of the researcher in regard to equity and race did exist. Therefore, the researcher needed to be aware of bias and seek to eliminate it and its influences. Tools like the SmartPen allowed for the study to be more bias-neutral as it accurately captured words, voice, and tone while the researcher was jotting down notes and key trends.

Second, the sample was relatively small considering the type of study the researcher implemented. The concern to be aware of is ensuring the quality of information gathered from the relatively small sample identifies enough compelling connections to lead to legitimate conclusions. Because of the researcher's 'Whiteness', the researcher may have communicated and interpreted information incorrectly since various cultural differences exist between the researcher and the subject (Moore & Llompart, 2017). The sample size is also limiting in that the findings cannot necessarily be assumed to represent all Black teachers or all schools where Black teachers have been employed. This is particular of note give that three of the five districts sought for Institutional Review Board (IRB) status were moved forward into the study. While having three different districts was representative and significant, the sample size of just three of the 336 Minnesota school districts is potentially limiting in scope (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019).

The third limitation of significant note is the issue of trust. The sensitive and emotional nature of this study required an open-ended approach and for the subject to feel comfortable in the presence of the researcher. Of particular concern would be the short time frame the researcher has, as a White male, to bridge an apparent trust gap in order to solicit authentic and

deep reflections from the subject. Considerations of pre-interview communications were certainly taken into account in order to establish some baseline trust between the subject and researcher.

Some delimitations of this study included the White teachers that will not be interviewed. These teachers also have a story to tell, but this study was not meant to be a comparative analysis between the two groups. Additionally, if more subjects turn out to work with a particular age range of students, the research findings could be limited in scope. Other inherent limitations include the scope of the sample size. Having just nine subjects could open the conversation against reliability and breadth of the research. It was extremely important to structure the sample in a strategic way that led to increased reliability and covered a spectrum of contexts and experiences of potential subjects. The open-ended, relational, and observational approach to this study yielded significant, meaningful, results. Another delimitation considered in this study was to reduce the possibility that subjects were likely to be led by the interview questions to fixed responses based on the questions themselves. To accommodate for this possibility, the questions were placed in an order and utilize language that will solicit genuine responses from the subjects with no bias. One intent of this research is to elicit findings that will lead to further quantitative research comparing the experience of White teachers with Black teachers. The considerations for delimitations listed above should provide a pathway for future studies.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were necessary to be examined throughout this study. Because of the somewhat sensitive nature of the topic, the study required intentional fidelity from the onset to maximize the confidentiality of the research subjects. Qualitative research involves collecting information about people, from people (Punch, 2005). Nearly everyone can feel defensive and

uneasy in responding to questions concerning race, and the study will need to be very cognizant of this. The Belmont Report clearly states that all research subjects should receive all of the benefits and protection they could possibly need. The interviewer will continue to make sure identities and all data provided by the subjects is kept strictly confidential. This has occurred using pseudonyms only throughout the process. Subjects worked alongside the researcher to help arrive at a specific pseudonym they prefer to be published under for the purposes of this study. Their individual preferences were specifically honored by the interviewer, especially in respect to cultural and ethnic identity for the research subjects. To further protect anonymity of the subjects, only approximate tenure ranges were used to help the reader identify individual context for the individual subject. The researcher chose not to include exact ages or tenure length of the participants. This relatively small sample size of Black teachers in the Minnesota Metropolitan area was specifically considered throughout in order to be sensitive to the commitment to ethical protection of anonymity for the participants.

In addition, the researcher went to great lengths to ensure the anonymity of participating school districts. The three participating school districts were assigned a random letter (A, B, and C) for data collection and reporting purposes. The researcher also worked with subjects to create authentic replicas of the elicited images in order to make sure they could not be connected to a specific school or district. Through field and pilot testing, it was determined that the occasional use of close replicas would not change the reliability of the data or the related findings. Clear, systematic structures were present throughout the study in order to completely remove reservation from the research subject's mind in order for the feedback to remain completely confidential, respected, and honored. Data was stored, 100% of the time, on password protected computers at all times to maintain integrity and privacy of the subjects. Any and all physical

notes will only be identified through pseudonym was stored in a locked cabinet throughout the study. Finally, all data, regardless of form, was destroyed within two years of the publishing of the findings. The wording and tone of interview questions used was of paramount importance (Merriam, 2009).

This study also required an acceptable amount of depth, or an adequate amount of research, in order to ask appropriate questions. The subjects, in many respects, are the experts. Creating parameters and structures for the experts to provide as much quality information as possible was critical to the study (Creswell, 2009). This is somewhat counterintuitive to predispositions in research methods. In this study, the researcher sought to become an expert by soliciting and analyzing expert views of people that have lived their lives as a Black person. The primary task was to have thoughtful, effective, research-based interview questions for the subjects and then apply deep analysis to uncover trends and to authentically represent their story. The study detailed plenty of consideration regarding time and space. When working with subjects in the arena of a potentially emotional topic like race, there was extra attention paid to adhering to ethical rights as outlined in the CITI modules.

The researcher sought to use a triangulated approach to this qualitative study. The triangulation included interview questions, field observations, and photo-elicitation collection. The use of photo-elicitation contains particular risks that must be limited in order to increase the value of the study and protect its subjects. The researcher strictly ensured that the photographs used in this study were non-identifiable. Non-identifiable, for the purposes of this study, meant that names, faces, and distinguishing features that might link the photo to the actual identity of a subject were not used under careful scrutiny. To ensure anonymity, some of the photo images produced by the interview subjects were replicas of the intended image from their workplace.

Ethical considerations are of central importance as awareness of bias, miscommunication, and emotional prompting on topics involving race can occur (Moore & Llompart, 2017). Field observations emerged as a delicate issue within the process, since potentially uncomfortable questions might emerge for the subjects with the researcher on site. Therefore, the researcher worked with the subjects to be very sensitive to the need within the field observations and, in most instances, limited the observations to data that emerged in or around the interviews. The study sought to engage Black teachers who have worked in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area in a variety of contexts with varying professional stories. The study used notes and recordings from open-ended interviews, field research, and Photo-Elicitation interviews with a broad based grounding in Critical Race Theory in order to address the research questions.

Chapter IV: Results of Study

Introduction of the Results

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to analyze the lived experiences of nine Black teachers from the Minnesota Metropolitan area who work or currently work in public school settings. The study sought to use the tenants of Critical Race Theory as a framework for sharing counter story narratives for why minority teachers in the United States are 24% less likely to remain in a position or the field of education (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

This chapter identifies the approach that was used to help tell the counter stories for the nine research participants. Each participant and school district are introduced in relation to the interview questions. This section details the raw data obtained through interviews, observations and artifacts with the nine educators. The researcher used a triangulation approach for data analysis after an open ended, go with the flow, approach to collection (Yin, 2016). Reliable findings in this study were largely dependent on the researcher's ability to form and maintain trusting relationships with the participants. Substantive data results were largely made possible through open, honest, and authentic presentation of self and a willingness to commit to building trust and rapport around the very personal and emotional topic of race (Yin, 2016). The researcher sought to approach the interviews by representing an authentic picture representing the intent and purpose behind this study. The authentic, trust building, relationship focused approach was essential in obtaining the open and honest data that was produced by the research subjects (Yin, 2016). The results included over 35 hours of recorded interviews, 18 artifacts in the form of photo-elicitation feedback, and 31 pages of observational notes with identified trend data that emerged throughout the process.

Overview of the Study

Data was obtained by using a purposeful, snowball sample by seeking to engage teachers who were recommended through known connections the researcher had in the participating districts and the Black community. The nine participating educators were identified through a variety of connections and do not necessarily have any personal connections amongst each other. Email solicitations were created for each participant as well as any individuals who were able to connect the researcher with prospective subjects (see Appendix B). The researcher received 14 responses and ultimately confirmed nine subjects to participate in the study. Subjects consented to two rounds of interviews with photo elicitation artifact collection in between interviews.

The open-ended, go-with-the-flow, interview protocols were implemented in both rounds. The questions were semi-structured with the interviews able to move in various directions as needed. Subjects were seen by the researcher as active partners in the data collection. The researcher sought to build authentic rapport and trust with each subject through transparency, open and honest dialogue, and a clearly communicated purpose for the study. All nine research subjects shared a desire to contribute to the topic as the primary reason for participation and the researcher sought to repay the participants with authentic and ethical consideration for the process. Fifteen of the 18 interviews were face-to-face with Smart Pen recording devices for transcription. Three of the interviews were conducted via Google Hangouts with the Smart Pen used to record the data provided. In between interviews, participants were asked to capture pictures to serve as artifacts. Instructions were given (see Appendix E) to help guide participants in seeking images that helped relay their lived experience as Black educators. The use of photo elicited images can be valuable in helping interact with key themes and connections about social experiences that might otherwise go unidentified (Ketelle, 2010). The use of images can help

create more intimate responses which are especially valuable to research topics emotional in nature (Harper, 2002). To ensure active participation and consideration of the subjects throughout, research subjects were consulted in the following aspects: completion of the informed consent form (see Appendix D); choice and feedback for the pseudonym used in the study and subsequent publication; and a verbal review of the transcribed notes between the interviewer and subject before and after the second interview. The researcher sought to provide an authentic reflection of the thoughts and experiences the participants shared throughout the data collection process.

What follows is the data protocols implemented as a framework for this study. Also following is an introduction of each of the nine participants as well as each of the three participating districts. By analyzing both in-case data and cross-data trends, the study sought to provide finding to two key questions: (1) What are the lived experiences of Black educators in Minnesota metropolitan area public schools? and (2) What school and/or district factors might increase a Black educator's likelihood in being retained within the organization? Through careful, descriptive, analysis the data created outcomes to address both questions.

Table 1

Framework of the Study

Protocol	Collection	Analysis
Interview #1	• 50-75 minutes • Semi-structured interviews	• Accurate recordings and transcription.
Photo-Elicitation Process	• 3-5 weeks in between Interview #1 and #2 • Individual reflection	• Photo-elicitation instructions. • Visual artifact tracking • Data helped shape the structure and approach for Interview #2.
Interview #2	• 45-60 minutes	• Review of emergent

	• Semi-structured interviews • Emergent theme reporting	themes from Interview #1 and artifact gathering (photos)
Complete Transcription reading	• In-case data tracking. • Researcher led – all recordings reviewed in entirety.	• Researcher listened for tone, documentation of key themes.
Descriptive Analysis	• In-case data tracking	• Emerging trends identified in relationship to the main questions.
Identification of emergent themes and trends	• Cross-case data tracking.	• Emerging trends identified in relationship to the main questions.

Introduction of Districts and In-Case Data Analysis

Table 2 represents a general description of the three Independent School districts were represented within this study. All three districts are part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area and are considered large districts (enrollment consistently within the top 20% of all school districts in Minnesota). All three districts have seen an increase of students of color enrolled in their system over the past 10 years. In order to honor the strict ethical consideration of anonymity, demographic descriptions are surface level and described in percentile range rather than specific, and potentially identifiable, figures (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019).

Table 2

Participating Districts

Pseudonym	% Students of Color (SOC) in 2019	% of SOC in 2009	% Free/Reduced Price Lunch
District A	30-40%	10-20%	20-30%
District B	70-80%	60-70%	60-70%
District C	25-35%	10-20%	30-40%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education (2019)

Introduction of Participants

The following table displays the nine participants in chronological order of their first interview experience with the researcher. An approximate length of career in education was used to give the reader a contextual indication while honoring the strict ethical consideration of anonymity.

Table 3

Participant Information

Pseudonym	Racial/Gender Self Identification	Teaching Role / District	Career Length in Education
Lauren	Black Female	Districtwide support / District B	20-30 years
Patricia	African American Female	Elementary / District A	5-10 years
Miguel	Black Male	High School / District C	5-10 years
Darius	African American Male Black Male	Elementary / District C	15-20 years
Ryan	African American Male African Male	Middle School / District A	10-15 years
Jaclyn	African American Female	Elementary / District B	20-30 years
Elliot	Black American Male Louisiana/Haitian	High School / District A	3-7 years
Raven	Queen of African descent	Elementary / District B	0-5 years
Carol	African American Female	Former Lead Teacher / Districtwide / District B	20-30 years

Lauren. Lauren is a Teacher on special assignment in District A. District A is the third educational organization she has worked in during her long career. She has worked in a number of teaching roles throughout her career. Lauren grew up in the Southern United States and attended a predominantly White K-12 private school. Lauren then chose to attend a historically

Black college. She described, at length, the identity shift that occurred when she went between these two vastly different racial environments. Lauren is a lifelong learner and holds multiple advanced degrees. She began teaching in the Southern United States and moved to Minnesota for her graduate work and subsequently continued teaching in a charter school. Lauren feels that trusted relationships and clearly communicated processes are critical for supporting Black teachers in staying the field. Lauren stated that she struggles when leadership does not come across as dedicated and student driven. In addition, Lauren Because of her drive and quest to get things right, Lauren now seeks out teachers whom she mentors and supports through clearly communicated vision, trusted relationships, and a commitment to helping all students succeed.

Lauren believes here lived experience, as a Black American, features increased challenges that the system must adapt to. She described being on dysfunctional teams within broken school systems as a reason she has left previous positions. As a Black woman motivated to create positive change for students, Lauren has high expectations for herself and prefers to be on teams that have similar drive. The participant, Lauren, believes that Black teachers are more likely to feel like they are isolated in the field, especially in Minnesota. Lauren stated, "No one wants to feel like you are living on an island all by yourself, and therefore the support looks different." Because of this need, Lauren seeks to reach out to teachers of color to help fill the gaps that likely exist with peers. She is highly motivated to make a positive difference for students and therefore models trust, integrity, clarity. The participant, Lauren, feels that what is lying beneath the surface is what makes a powerful difference, good or bad, for people working to educate children.

Figure 4.1. Iceberg Model

Lauren included a picture of the Iceberg Model for Culture (Hall, 1976). The picture can typically be found very near to her workspace. Lauren stated, "We are not making progress with desegregation in our schools because we are not paying attention enough to what is happening deep down below the iceberg."

Patricia. Patricia is in the relatively early part of her educational career, all of which has occurred in District A. She has strong charisma and unrelenting passion for helping see the students in her care flourish. Patricia grew up in a local, K-12, public school setting. Growing up, Patricia did not have a family setting with familiarity and experiences with the purposes and how to navigate the educational system. Subsequently, she did not have a positive K-12 experience and does not have memories of feeling supported navigating the experience of how to do 'school' well. Patricia vividly remembers sitting in her Elementary class and thinking about wanting to be a teacher someday to right the wrongs that were happening to her. It was not until college that she felt more supported and empowered to be an effective student. Patricia credits some mentors and school leaders who sought her out regardless of barriers because they saw in her abilities to be an extraordinary teacher. She felt District A had an informal support system featuring other staff of color that helped her feel welcomed from the first day. Her lived

experiences, to date, have been polarizing and motivating to her as an educator dedicated to seeing all of her students succeed.

Patricia feels that, while she has strong connections with many District A representatives at the district level, it has been more difficult to form strong bonds at the site level. She feels this may be due to her being the only Black teacher on staff. "I question myself a lot. Everything I say seems to be looked and treated differently on my staff because of who I am." The participant, Patricia, has struggled to feel comfortable on her all-White teacher teams. It is hard for her to see the way that some White teachers treat students of color, yet still seem to be honored by the system. One example of this was when a teacher stated to her, "I don't understand those parents. They say they need free lunch but then the student has brand new Jordan tennis shoes." The inability of some of the participant's White colleagues to look at things from a different, more empathetic, lens for her students of color is a constant source of frustration. Patricia sees the day to day micro-aggressions, hypocrisies and double standards within her teaching team and sometimes boils over inside. Nonetheless, the participant feels strongly that she can seek to change the system through the experiences of all her students. She described powerful learning, connecting, experiences with White students and families. She believes firmly that a teacher of color can be a learner, role model, and inspiration within the system.

Figure 4.2. MLK

Patricia chose a powerful image of Martin Luther King, Jr. that students display in her classroom. She chooses to intentionally teach in an identity affirming, racially conscious, inspiring way. Patricia chooses to create change from within the system and through the eyes, minds, and hearts of her students. She stated, "I can never be myself……I am not allowed to speak my mind in staff meetings like many because I will be labeled as the 'angry Black woman'. I have to sit and listen to others. My change occurs with all of my students. I use history and new thinking to create change."

Miguel. Miguel is in the early stages of his career as an educator. Miguel grew up in a two parent household in an urban community.   His mother is a first generation immigrant from West Africa. His father passed away when Miguel was relatively young. Miguel's family moved to a predominantly White Suburban K-12 school experience and then went to a larger, urban district for the onset of his career. Miguel's primary mentor is White. Additionally, he has multiple White family connections in his life. From a professional lens, Miguel has primarily worked with high school students during his career. After finishing his licensure, he returned to the school district and, subsequently, community he grew up in. Miguel has very

much enjoyed mentoring young students of all racial and cultural backgrounds. Miguel was able to describe experiences of initial mistrust and fear from his White students and families that later turned into true mutual respect and appreciation.

Miguel comes across as a very personable, caring, and considerate young man. Miguel had a positive beginning to his career teaching at the large suburban High School. Frustrations set in when his, nearly all, White administrators displayed behaviors that felt unsupportive of Miguel's work and rewarding those of White teachers who were perpetuating, at times, inequities within the system. There were several examples were administration specifically siding with White students, families, and staff after some racist incidents publicly occurred. The participant, Miguel, felt frequently isolated in his role. He did not interact with Black teachers on a regular basis. A group of teachers started an affinity group for District C after a couple years in order to connect. The word isolation was used by Miguel 14 times in our two and a half hours together. Miguel spoke about seeing this isolation transcend to the students. He spoke about students of color seeking him out even though he was not a part of their formal schedule. Despite the feelings of isolation and frustration, the students are Miguel's source of energy and positive strength. Even with strong connections with students and families, Miguel continued to be frustrated by inequitable policies that were creating even more inequitable outcomes while the participant was being told to focus on making sure all of the technical sides of his job were covered. Miguel stated, "You cannot say you want to recruit and retain teachers of color and create structures and systems that make Black people have to abandon who they are." Less than six weeks following our first interview, Miguel had resigned his position at the suburban High School in order to move to a move to a teaching opportunity in a more diverse setting.

Figure 4.3. Innocence destroyed

Miguel stated, "Children start out so innocent and then, caring and untainted. At some point racism takes hold and you find yourself making a judgment or thought about someone who looks different."

Darius. Darius has been working in the same local, Elementary school in District C for the large majority of his career. He is heavily invested in the community he serves. Darius was born in Minnesota, moved out of state with his family for some time, and then returned to Minnesota suburban public schools for the majority of his K-12 experience. The participant, Darius, did not feel connected with his identity as a Black man until his undergraduate experience at a Minnesota public University. Darius believes that relationships between people are paramount to create progress and advancement for all students. He is comfortable being uncomfortable. Darius stated, "We really need to cross over our own barriers and our own comfort levels to live as others do." Darius has, since college, sought out to learn from others even if that meant personal discomfort and risk taking. He has his master's degrees and continues to seek out new learning opportunities today. The participant reports that he is the only Black person at his school and his ability to code shift while staying true to his authentic self is the reason he thrives in his workplace. Code shifting occurs when a person must make adapt culture and/or language to the environment they are experiencing (Craig, Kolenic, &

Hensel, 2014). Darius is passionate about community building in order to support the needs of all students.

The biggest struggles and challenges for Darius centers around eliminating barriers for his students. He wishes, at times, there were more people in the schools who are more comfortable taking risks, building community, and truly knowing one's authentic self and therefore the students he serves. The largest amount of frustration for Darius in his long and successful career has to do with the barriers his students face each day. He hopes people can come together in order to overcome the barriers that appear to be increasing. Darius reported, "I don't like the idea of agree to disagree. We must be better than that. We must work together to create change." Upon our second interview, Darius mentioned his school community had been taken strong, recent steps over the past couple months in the area of equity and racial consciousness. Darius stated, "Teachers need to see and bridge any holes our students might have with their identity balance. People (students) sometimes have a greater need for true friendship, true acceptance, and leveled opportunities." He seemed genuinely excited about the progress that was being made at his school and believes that it will translate to stronger student engagement in schools.

Figure 4.4. Together works better

This picture represents Darius' quest to bring people together through shared experiences and community support. Darius stated, "The more people who are connected, the more people will work to eliminate barriers. It is about relationships."

Ryan. Ryan is a highly regarded Middle School teacher in District A. He has taught in three school districts in his relatively young career. Ryan identifies as both African American and African. He is a first generation immigrant and, depending on his context, can see himself and identify in many different ways. Ryan's parents grew up in a West African country and moved to the United States before having children. Growing up in a diverse Minnesota neighborhood and then attending integrated schools, Ryan became very aware of differences and nuances related to culture and race. The participant, Ryan, stated, "In middle school and high school, I always had friends but I never knew how they were going to respond based on the perceived differences. If I went over to a White friends' house I was sometimes told how well I speak for being a Black person. I never knew exactly where I fit." Ryan believes he is successful today because he had strong support from family. The participant then attended a predominantly White, yet larger, public University for his undergraduate teaching degree. After college, Ryan went to teach in a highly diverse, large urban district in a state in Southern United States. He then moved back to Minnesota where he has taught in two different school districts, most recently in District A.

Ryan feels best when he is serving students and helping them understand who they are and what they can be. He reports that he feels best in diverse settings with discussions that don't need to feel as distant and uncomfortable. Ryan was on a staff in his first teaching job that was very diverse. The participant described the excitement and comfort of being able to talk about race and culture in an open and honest way. Ryan has not felt this comfort in discussions with

63

his predominantly White colleagues in Minnesota schools. Ryan stated, "If I say something, what are they going to think? Are they going to think I am an angry Black man? Sometimes it is just way easier to be quiet." Ryan spoke about feelings of seeing teachers of color dismissed by White educators for going against the status quo. He has seen recent improvements in his school with more supportive and strategic work around equity. In fact, there was just a teacher group in the district formed based on racial affinity. With all of this perceived progress, he knows representation is still a challenge. The participant notices that his students have very few opportunities, if any, to see teachers who look like them. Ryan stated, "I just wish we had more time, consistency and allies to do this work. I think everyone would then benefit." During the second interview, Ryan described an experience where he was in an informal meeting in the Principal's office with three other Black educators and him. All four Black educators happened to be in the space randomly and unplanned. Upon recognizing this immediately, the four educators laughed and acknowledged the reality that they were the only four of hundreds of educators serving the thousands of Black and White students in their care.

Figure 4.5. The principal's office

This image is a representative image of that chance meeting in the administration office. Ryan stated, "Maybe someday there will be enough educators of color so that we will need a way bigger room."

Jaclyn. Jaclyn is truly a product of her community. She was born and raised in the neighborhood she has now served as a teacher in for more than 20 years. Jaclyn attended K-12 schools in an integrated, Minnesota setting. She then went to a Historically Black College in southern United States for her undergraduate work. Following graduation, she was pursuing a career in Business when she was recruited back to Minnesota for an incentive Master's Program. The program was seeking to increase and support teachers of color in Minnesota schools. Jaclyn feels her strong connection to the community she serves is a critical aspect to who she is a strong, Black teacher. Jaclyn describes this as, "I am able to teach where I went. It is very much full circle."

Jaclyn worries for her students at a personal and professional level. One of her biggest concerns is that students of color are consciously, or unconsciously, given lower expectations than White students. The participant, Jaclyn, sees high expectations and community as the antidote for the achievement gap. Having programs like the one she went through, Jaclyn sees avenues to help more teachers of color navigate the system and work through the potential barriers of seeing the low expectations in practice as important. She refuses to give into the challenges that face the children in her care. The participant will always work harder, more passionately, and more strategically to help the students learn. Accessing networks of teachers of color help build community and a feeling of family is for Jaclyn, "This place is me. This neighborhood is me. This is part of who I am," she stated. The participant stated she needs leaders who will always hold high expectations for each and every student and teacher. Jaclyn feels that she is treated well in her school and does think it helps that she has been in one school for such a long time. She feels that trust and relationships are high amongst her and her administrators. Jaclyn stated that teachers of color might be more likely to have high

65

expectations and strong relationships with students of color because they can relate to the struggles of students in a different way.

The fact that Jaclyn is one of the few teachers of color in her current school worries her about the expectations. Jaclyn reminded us, "Kids know if you care or not. They can see things in different ways and they know what is unfair in this world. We need relationships to help with this." She hopes that there will be more teachers of color in the future for the growing student diversity. Jaclyn stated, "This [keeping minority teachers] is a Minnesota challenge. It is the weather, the supports, a lot of things go into this issue."

Figure 4.6. Family, community, and connections

Figure 4.6 is a picture representing the Historically Black College Jaclyn attended as an undergraduate student. She stated, "Having a blend of connections to the community and high expectations for life success is so important for our students."

Elliot. Elliot is a passionate educator who is in the early stages of his teaching career. He has taught primarily middle and high school. Elliot is not originally from Minnesota. He grew up in mostly urban areas in Eastern United States and then graduated from an integrated Minnesota suburban High School. The participant, Elliot, identifies as a Black American. He feels it is important, with many more recent African immigrants, that we begin to differentiate the experiences of people, especially in relationship to slavery in the United States. Elliot stated

he became more racially conscious in his undergraduate program, especially in African American studies courses. It was at this time he realized he would like to teach and influence young students and serve students who are historically underrepresented. The participant earned his master's degree and has since taught in one other Minnesota metropolitan area school district prior to joining District A.

When Elliot was working in his first district prior to moving to District A, he became very aware of what it was like to work in nearly all White school structures. He vividly recalls how he felt staring out to the nearly all White class of students on the first day. The participant chose to connect with his White students in a very authentic way. Elliot learned he was the first Black man that most of his students had ever interacted with. On week two of his teaching experience, Elliot encountered overt racism of a student calling him a monkey. He was shocked at this but did use the opportunity to engage the class, the student, and the family of the student. Elliot sees racial and cultural conflict as very real and actionable experiences for teaching. Now teaching in District A, Elliot has continued to encounter racism and micro-aggressions on a daily basis. He seeks to be a mirror for students in his school setting. Elliot appreciates others empowering and amplifying his voice. The participant especially appreciates the White allies in his daily interactions. In turn, when his administrators and other leaders attempt to stifle change and maintain the status quo, it fuels his frustration. Elliot stated, "When I hear people talk about 'those kids' and the way they talk, look, and act I know what is at play – White status being upheld." Elliot seeks to empower his voice, and the voice of underrepresented students, in order to address the inequities that exist.

At our second interview, Elliot shared some frustration over a recent encounter with his administrator. The administrator was seeking to delay a promotion for Elliot because of a

technical concern with job performance. This led to a need for repair in the relationship Elliot has with his administrator that was, previously, largely positive and empowering. As of the second interview, the relationship was still in need of some repair. Through all of the conflict, Elliot remains positive. He stated, "I love teaching students and they need me at this school. That makes the extra stress and frustrations worthwhile."

Figure 4.7. The bridge to conflict

This visual represents the bridge from the urban areas into the suburbs in the Minneapolis metropolitan area. Elliot stated, "The bridge represents so much to me each day. It is crossing into a warzone in some respects. I have to conform for survival purposes but I will never change my identity." This image represents the challenges facing Black educators and students who enter predominantly and historically all White spaces each day.

Raven. Raven believes that racial identity does not just start with what you see in front of you. She is a person who views her students with high expectations, passion for learning, and a relentless connection with her school community. Raven was raised in Minnesota. Raven was raised by her grandmother after her mom committed suicide at a very young age. Raven's father never completed middle school. She was unaware of the purpose of school and the power of education. The participant, Raven, was essentially living on her own in high school when she met a teacher-mentor who helped her see the brilliance inside her. She then went to a four year University for her undergraduate work. She described a very supportive program in her teacher

education/Master's degree when she was able to serve as a student, student-teacher, teacher, and a parent. Her first role in District B was as an Educational Assistant in District B. She described the day she was hired by her White Principal as, "the first time I ever felt a hint of security in my entire life." The participant had five jobs the days she was hired as a teacher. Despite ongoing financial and emotional challenges that sometimes persist for her, Raven now successfully and passionately teaches at a school where she was once a student. She feels the strength of her authentic community and expresses pride in her love of teaching and her chance to give back. Raven is now teaching full-time, supporting her family, and working on additional advanced degrees.

Raven teaches on a team with all White teachers. Despite the fact that the school is majority minority, the staff is predominantly White. She describes her team as positive but that they live in a completely different existence than her. Raven stated, "They don't really understand or know where I've been." Raven sees the systemic racism that has been built up over time as a point of frustration each day. She sees double standards around her and this fuels her energy, "I understand I have to sometimes work twice as hard to get half the recognition. However, life challenges have made me better. No one will ever outwork me." At a previous school, Raven felt her voice was stifled by administrators and other staff who did not see her positive attributes. She cited the absence of relationships with her leaders as a reason for leaving her previous position. Raven believes in relationships and communities. At her current school, she feels she has support from her administration and that they see what she can do. Raven stated, "When I hear positive comments and true support from my leaders it helps motivate me to do the same for my students and families. I don't give up because I know that [Principal] loves me. I know he believes in me." The students and families at her school gives her fulfillment and

69

inspiration no matter what barriers move in front her. This gives her fuels to move past the stereotypes, assumptions, and systemic oppression that exists for her students and families. In addition to the battles she sees her Black students, families, and staff face on a daily basis in the current system, she does not give up hope. Another barrier she faces has to do with systemic licensure expectations that have plagued her over time. Despite her advanced degrees and ongoing learning, some content based licensure expectations continue to hold up Raven's time and financial stability as she continues in her teaching career. Despite the barriers and potential frustrations, Raven does not change her perspective. She stated, "I appreciate the hands up and not the handouts. I always appreciate what I have and where I'm going."
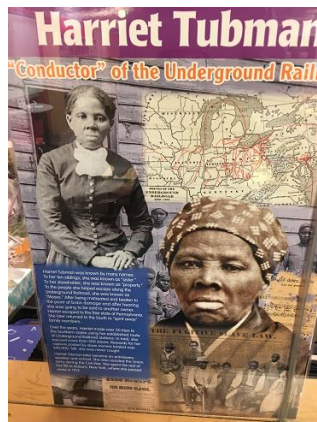
Figure 4.8. The conductor

Raven felt that much of her work with students involves helping people understand and navigate the difference between 'Fair' vs. 'Right'. She wants to make things right for her students. Harriet Tubman's image is living in her classroom and is omnipresent in the daily instructional lives of her students. Raven stated, "Harriet Tubman's bravery gives me so much strength. I am encouraged to continue this journey even though it hurts."

Carol. Carol was one of 10 children who grew up with a strong, inspirational, single mother in a small town. Carol grew up out of state and permanently moved to Minnesota after

serving in the Armed Forces. Carol's mother was a strong advocate for education, family involvement, and community activism. Carol recalls growing up in a highly segregated community where the Black people and White people were literally divided by a road in town. Carol worked in several Minnesota school systems, including 15 years teaching and leading in District B. Carol was charged with building relationships with the Black community and engaging the school system with the families.

Carol recalls years of being empowered and supported to create authentic change for students and families. She has had leadership who said to her, "Carol, I have your back. Whatever you need we will get you. You are creating true change." The participant, Carol, spoke in strong, positive tones about a particular administrator who broke down barriers for her to help engage hundreds of families in the school community. This administrator would empower her with language of activism, change, and eliminating barriers of systemic oppression for students. The administrator would publicly and privately acknowledge her efforts and outcomes. She stated about the leader, "He just believed in me and it was never about himself. Instead, it was about the students and families. He motivated me to do better, encouraged me." In turn, the participant had other leaders who were unwilling to embrace a lens of equity or social justice. Carol has experienced micro-aggressions, overt racism, and a general lack of any type of support from leaders in her career. On one occasion, Carol was concerned about a potential misalignment of resources with the equity and community engagement they were intended to be used for. Upon her questioning, the school leader said, "Just do what you are told." Carol resigned shortly afterwards and, after more than 20 years in education, moved to the higher education sector for the remainder of her career. Under the support of positive leadership, she said fears and biases for both White and Black people in the organization began to disappear.

She hopes that people in schools and districts will find ways to work together in order to understand and appreciate differences, rather than find ways to perpetuate division.

Figure 4.9. Always wrapped up in disguise

Figure 4.9 represents the feeling Carol has when she moves through predominantly White spaces. The challenge of having to code shift at all moments. In schools that are nearly completely controlled by White educators, she feels she has to alter the way she speaks, the way her hair is kept, the way she dresses. She has to change who she is to survive. Carol stated, "No one knows who you are behind the wrap. You can walk around like you exist, but no one knows that you are someone completely different inside. You are not as engaged as you could be. You are not really living."

Cross-Case Data Analysis

Lived Experiences. Research Question #1 asks how the lived experiences of Black educators might be unique and therefore contribute to an increase in turnover or retention in relation to White teachers. Studies strongly that Black teachers, as a whole, are less likely to stay in teaching positions than compared to their White counterparts (Cherng & Halpren, 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Table 4 helps identify micro-level impacts for the participants in a cross-case view. The participant pseudonyms are listed along the vertical access of the table. The top, cross case, theme reports are listed horizontally on the top of the table. Along the

bottom row lists the overall percentage of reports for each trend. For example, Lauren reported to receiving positive support from at least one administrator during her career. Miguel reported feeling isolated on a regular basis as a Black man in at least one workplace setting. Raven reported receiving positive support from at least one administrator in her workplace. Carol reported vacating a position with feelings of significant frustration.

Table 4

Lived Experiences of Participants

Participant/ Pseudonym	Non-Native to Minnesota	Isolated/Loss of Identity	Experiencing or Witnessing Micro-Aggressions	Regular Access to White Allies	Strong Support from at least one Administrator	Encounters with technical/systemic barriers	Vacated a position with frustration
Lauren	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Patricia		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Miguel		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Darius		✓			✓	✓	
Ryan		✓	✓		✓		✓
Jaclyn		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Elliot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Raven		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Carol	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
TOTALS	3/9 (33%)	9/9 (100%)	8/9 (89%)	3/9 (33%)	8/9 (89%)	6/9 (67%)	5/9 (56%)

Organizational Support. Research question #2 asks if there are differences in school

districts within the Minnesota Metropolitan Area for how Black teachers are supported. Table 5

attempts to analyze the three districts featured in this study in terms of reported structures of

specific supports for Black teachers within the system. The district pseudonym is listed on the

vertical axis with literature reviewed practices along the top horizontal row. Data obtained from

the participants are coded by low implementation, moderate implementation, or high

implementation. Low implementation suggests that the strategy is either non-existent as gleaned

from the research subjects or is being discussed at the organizational level. The designation of

emerging suggests that the school/district has begun early action steps in this area. Moderate

implementation suggests that the school/district has taken significant steps to implement and

high implementation suggests that the school/district has made the practice standard, with

consistent access for the research subjects.

Table 5

Organizational Support

Pseudonym	Teacher force matching student demographics	Intentional affinity/mentor access for teachers of color	Commitment to regular social justice/equity practices
District A	Low	Emerging	Emerging
District B	Low	Emerging	Moderate
District C	Low	Low	Emerging

The first cross-case data trend to emerge was that all three observed organizations

included in the study had a teacher force that demographically did not come statistically close to

mirroring the students they were serving. In Appendix F, the data for many Minneapolis-St. Paul

metropolitan area public school districts suggests that recruitment and retention for minority teachers continues to be a challenge. Students of color enrolling in schools appear to be outpacing the teaching force. This is confirmed nationally through multiple studies that served as a basis for this research study (Cherng & Halpren, 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011). In comparing the data gathered from the interviews and field observations, it seems the districts in this participating study are in alignment with trend data in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, as a whole, when it comes to teacher demographics related to that of the students.

Second, in examining the topic of teacher mentoring and relationship building, two of the districts had engaged the Black research subjects in early phases of some type of affinity and/or mentoring support, with minimal significant impact at the time the interviews and observations were completed. Affinity grouping is an attempt to provide supportive space and structure for teachers of color to connect and train together (Mosely, 2018). Affinity grouping professional development experiences have been proven to reduce isolation and increase retention for Black teachers (Mosely, 2018). Interview data suggests that all three participating districts have begun early practices for teachers to participate in regular dialogue about social justice and equity practices. The opportunity of affinity grouping also enables space for Black teachers to share a counter story, therefore being able to tell their own story and not that of the dominant (White) experience (Mosely, 2018). Participant Ryan in District A, for example, had experienced an invitation to new teacher affinity programming in the several week time period between the first and second interviews. District B has appeared to have gone further in the commitment to equity work by having some curriculum, tools and systems in place to support teachers. Participant Lauren was able to directly connect work at the organizational level in District B to her daily

experiences as a Black educator. District B had not, however, demonstrated standard, significant systems of equity work across the system, therefore receiving a moderate designation.

A third point of observed feedback collected on the participating districts centered around opportunities for teachers to engage in social justice or equity work in their current roles. Black teachers who are given the opportunity to lead and engage in meaningful and accessible social justice work for students with White colleagues has been proven increase their likelihood of retention (Kohli, 2014). This strategy, similar to the work of affinity grouping, appears to be a relatively new implementation strategy in most Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area school districts. Darius' school in District C, for example, had recently instituted equity work in this school year. Teachers in Darius' school were beginning to examine implicit and explicit bias within an identity framework. Examples like Darius' story suggests District C is in the emerging stage of implementation of equity practices. Jaclyn and Raven, in District B, were able to recount significant equity professional development within their time in the organization. Jaclyn was able to share a longer history of social justice and equity work within District B. What was not apparent in District B, however, was evidence that the social justice and equity work was pervasive in the school culture. Raven was able to point out a number of data points in the interviews and field observations suggesting many of the White teachers in the school setting had not been able to apply the equity training into meaningful action. Because of the longstanding commitment with mixed implementation results, District B was classified as moderate for this strategy for potentially retaining Black teachers.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, and Findings

Introduction

The phenomenological case study sought to tell the lived experiences of Black teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The literature review reveled significant and noticeable gaps in the amount of minority teachers leaving a school or district in comparison to White educators (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Black teachers are even more likely to leave a position than most minority teachers (Beeler, et. al, 2004). A report from the Albert Shanker Institute (2015) found that the number of Black teachers in nine major urban areas actually decreased from 2003. The information is particularly concerning when the research also points to minority teachers as critical factors in the development for both minority and White students (Cherng & Halpin, 2014). This study attempted to explain this phenomenon through the revelation of counter stories. A counter story sought to capture the experiences and lens of marginalized groups in order to better reveal trends and phenomenon creating inequitable outcomes. This study sought to dig deep into the stories of nine Black educators from three different school districts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Through these lived experiences schools and districts might be better informed to implement specific steps to create better outcomes for minority teachers working on behalf of all students.

Study Overview

Through a series of two interviews, field observations, and photo-elicitation data collection, the researcher was able to collect multiple data points for analysis in relationship to the research questions. Transcription of recordings and descriptive analysis revealed information both within the case study as well as trends across cases. Through authentic and respectful relationship building, the researcher and the participants were able to dive into deep and

meaningful information production that produced over 35 hours of recorded interviews and 18

artifacts in the form of visual representations from the participants of their lived experiences as

Black educators. Photographs were identified by the participants in between the first and second

interviews to help visually represent their lived experiences as Black educators. These

photographs provided a visual synthesis of the data collected from the interviews and

observations, often providing another level of reflection and meaning. In reference to the second

research question, field observation notes, along with demographic and interview data, were

instrumental in examining the participating districts in relation the lived experiences of the nine

Black teacher participants. What follows the information collection and data analysis are key

findings and recommendations for schools and districts to create better working environments for

Black teachers, thus increasing the possibility for retention.

Research Findings

Research Question 1: What are the lived experiences of Black teachers in the Minneapolis-St.

Paul metropolitan area?

Participants were asked to provide narratives, insights, and photographic examples

representing their lived experiences as Black educators. Through in-study and cross-study

analysis the following themes five themes emerged:

(1) Black educators interviewed are all experiencing various degrees of isolation. This

feeling of being on a metaphoric island took on various forms and contexts and was a factor for

all participants. For some, the isolation is simply a demographic reality of being one or one of

only a few Black educators in the school or district. Take, for example, the illustrated story from

Ryan of finding himself in the Principal's office with four Black educators and the group

realizing they were essentially the sole representation for the middle and high school setting.

Miguel stated, "I would literally go all week without seeing another colleague who was Black. We would have to seek each other out or it never happened." The feeling of isolation was not just reported at a staff or organizational level. The participants were often on all White teaching teams. Teaching teams for all participants were reported as a big part of their day, therefore ensuring consistent and regular racial isolation for the participants. The feeling being disconnected from one's race and within the school culture in general was prevalent.

(2) Black teachers experience at least some loss of identity when they work in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area schools. Teachers report that the need to survive and function within the predominantly White school staff settings can create a loss of knowing one's true self. All of the participants discussed experience in relation to belonging to a community and feeling empowered and supported within it. This seems to be made easier when the teacher's identity is affirmed in daily practice. Ryan spoke about the powerful difference in energy and consciousness in his previous district that happened to have a very diverse staff setting. Elliot spoke of the bridge that he felt in moving from the urban area to the suburban one. Many of the respondents spoke of a need to constantly re-connect in spaces where they could be themselves without having to shift their identity. Carol said, "We get to the point where we are so used to changing for them that it becomes almost unconscious. We then realize this is no way to live and we find ways to stay true."

(3) Black teachers are exposed to overt experiences of discrimination and/or micro-aggressions that appear through their lived experiences and in their student's lives. Daily encounters with structural or local instances of racism can have long term, negative implications for minority students and adults (Ladsen-Billings, 2009). Micro-aggressions, while subtler forms of racism and discrimination, appear to be more prevalent than overt forms of discrimination.

Black teachers are asked to prove their worth on a daily basis when their White counterparts are not (Kohli, 2014). Patricia stated, "I feel I can never be the voice in the room because I am always trying to prove I am good enough while others automatically receive it." Many of the participants described a frustration that occurred for them when seeing what was happening for students of color. The teachers would take on the micro-aggressions imposed on the students and would feel powerless because of the relational and power structures in the school setting. One of the participants, Raven, pointed to a classroom where student names were written on pictures of cartoon images of monkeys. These had been on display all year for the predominantly Black students, parents, and community members. Raven was still working out a pathway to confront the White colleague over this image facing her students each day. Miguel had an occasion where he was asked to 'iron out' something for White students and families after they were caught on social media using racist terminology. The frustration of being caught in the middle within a racially unbalanced and inequitable system was a common reality for the majority participants in this study. Another area of significant stress for Black teachers is the systemic forms of oppression that lead to further feelings of being disenfranchised. Some identified barriers included being generational poverty, state licensing requirements, or inability to obtain promotions because of organizational systems that disproportionately impact teachers of color. These factors increased the reported stress levels of participants and further created a feeling of being significantly disadvantaged compared to their predominantly White teaching counterparts.

(4) Black teachers working in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area are more likely to experience benefits when they are engaged with supportive White leaders and allies within the systems they work in. Many of the participants described White mentors and teachers who have

helped create feelings of energy and empowerment in sustaining the work of creating better circumstances for all students. These White allies sought out the Black teachers and became regular points of encouragement for them. Carol spoke of a leader who told her, "I have your back and that will not change. I support you and will do whatever it takes to get you what you need." Elliot spoke of a teacher ally at his school who had him over to his house, "[The administrator] is authentic. He is real. He gets me more than most and he is an older White guy." Positive, bonding experiences with White allies were not something that was experienced by all subjects and at each school. However, the marked occasions of these positive relationships with White allies were both powerful and noteworthy for the participants as they recounted their professional journeys.

(5) Black teachers see a significant need to engage in anti-racist, social justice, and/or equity work at the school and district level as part of being a teacher in multi-cultural school settings. In turn, Black teachers feel empowered and hopeful for their students and families when they see their White colleagues and leaders authentically engage in this work. Darius stated. "I am seeing my White colleagues in a different light for the first time in my career. They are starting to engage in deep and meaningful work to change outcomes for our students. I believe it will help our students in the long run." Because of their experiences from childhood to adulthood, the Black participants were able to point to momentous points in their journey where they were exposed to the very real and consistent reality of difference, bias, and inequities. Through these experiences, participants felt both a connection to the students of color in their schools and a desire to engage others in a mission for change. Raven highlighted the need by saying, "You will never get me to stop. I believe in what we need to do to change the circumstances for the students in my school. It has been generational and it is not right. The

time to do something about it is now." On various levels and through a variety of anecdotes, the participating teachers spoke about the desire to create change through relationships, trust, and understanding.

Figure 5.1. The problem we live with

This picture is from research participant Lauren. It is from an artistic creation by Norman Rockwell (1960) entitled "The problem we all live with". The image depicts Ruby Bridges entering a predominantly White school at the time of de-segregation. The image speaks to the feeling of isolation and 'other' faced by many Black teachers. Lauren stated, "We are still navigating different mindsets from this time. It is not easy but we are trying learn from our mistakes of the past."

Figure 5.2. Acting as a puppet

This picture is from research participant Carol. It symbolizes the need to do what the systems demands. Carol stated, "We move around like a puppet. We want to change but the system won't let us. So when we are able to leave, it is the greatest feeling in the world. We no longer feel controlled."

Figure 5.3. Time together

This photograph is from the research participant Miguel. Miguel felt that there must be White allies to support the work of successful integration in schools. "This photo demonstrates that we need people to show love from all angles even when it is unpopular. Relationships matter."

Research Question 2: What organizational factors influence a Black Teacher's likelihood to stay within a Minnesota metropolitan area school?

Schools and districts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul are compelled, now more than ever, to create conditions for Black teachers to succeed. Cherng and Halpin (2016) point out that the divide between students and teachers is widening. The concern is growing from nearly every angle. In Minnesota, where 11% of the students identify as Black, less than 3% of the teachers identify as the same (Minnesota Department of Education, 2019). The discrepancy for minority student groups in comparison to teachers is an issue being discussed in realms from school leadership to state and local city government. Based on the research findings in the three

participating Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area school districts, three emerging trends were significantly observed:

(1) Organizations featured in this study are all making some attempts to provide better conditions for Black teachers. All participating districts have made some systemic and informal attempts to create spaces for Black teachers to receive some identified support. The format for this support ranged in type and intensity. One approach that was evident is mentoring or peer affinity opportunities for teachers of color. Patricia and Ryan experienced various versions of affinity and mentoring while working in District A. Jaclyn and Lauren both had experiences being mentored and mentoring other teachers of color within District B. Miguel spoke of a supportive, yet very informal, affinity group he had access to in District C. It should be pointed out that a formal, standard, system was not reported for the respondents. Another attempt that the examined schools and districts are seeking to provide for Black teachers is implementation of social justice and equity work for all teachers within the system. Participants frequently stated a desire to engage their staff in discussions surrounding race, difference, and systemic oppression. Raven spoke to this saying, "I would like my White teacher colleagues to understand the reasons some of our families face the difficulties they do. These differences and hardships did not develop overnight."

Respondents demonstrated a hope and need to see their White colleagues engage in intrinsic, deeper reflection on racial equity and how it translates into the school systems. It should be noted, in several cases, the conversations and dialogue around race were initiated by the Black participants themselves. With that being said, though cultivated organically by Black teachers within the system, the equity work did appear supported by the organization itself. As the only Black teacher on staff, Patricia worked to model and initiate work around the topic of

Black History month. She stated, "I will keep finding ways to show that we can teach students about their identity all the time. Students are needing this and we must respond. Some people are now noticing and thinking that our students might need something different than what we are doing."

(2) Support for Black teachers in the examined schools and districts are currently dependent on the individual school leaders and supportive teacher allies in the Black teacher's immediate, day-to-day work role. Participants reported a wide range of complex, meaningful needs that some people in their professional life were supporting them. For some of the reporting educators, it was a simple gesture they received from a school leader. Elliot described candid conversation with his administrator where he heard words of encouragement and validation. Elliot said of his school leader, "He is cool. He gets what I am trying to do here. I wish he would be willing to take more risks on things, but I do feel supported." Raven shared that her administrator helped her navigate a difficult, personal, financial situation that happened for her when she was just starting teaching. Raven said, "He knew my situation was different from other teachers who grew up with generational poverty. He told me he understood and found ways to help through the challenges." While there were many reported instances of school leaders or other allies within the schools and districts involved, there was no evidence of any systemic development of the leaders themselves to support Black teachers. Patricia encountered a lot of informal mentoring from other Black leaders in District A. The support continues to be accessible for Patricia, however, it appeared to be organically created and maintained by the individuals themselves.

(3) Schools and districts in this study continue to be unable to build momentum in hiring enough teachers of color to maintain pace with student populations.   Jaclyn was recruited into

District B three decades ago under an umbrella of diversifying the teaching force to match the changing student demographics. The data suggests that the discrepancy between teachers and students of color has maintained, or even grown, in that time since. All of the respondents reported some type of isolation. The types of isolation were all surrounded, in some way or form, by a case of racial segregation in the participating districts. The segregation, based on the reports and observational data, came from a shortage of representation of Black teachers in the system. Raven pointed out, "We have a whole bunch of Black teacher's assistants. And there is nothing wrong with that. But we have very few teachers. This is what our students and families see." Statistical and reporting data supports a general shortage of Black teachers in the participating distorts.

In summation, there appear to be some known tangible and productive strategies schools and districts are seeking to implement in order to support teachers. While all participating districts and schools appear to be taking steps to better recruit and retain Black teachers, levels of implementation are fragmented and not yet refined. Additionally, there are clear examples of school leaders and other educators making attempts to help Black teachers better navigate the, often times, complicated realities of being a Black teacher. Therefore, it is the conclusion of this study that there were no identified districts yet leading a strategic, systemic, and sustainable approach to supporting Black teachers to succeed in a differentiated and strategic way.

Academic Recommendations. There are five recommendations for future academic contributions based on this study.

(1) Future research could support the findings of this study by exploring the lived experience of White teachers. Researchers might further identify, explain, and articulate the differences facing minority teachers in comparison to White colleagues.

(2) Extended research could explore the best types of supportive practices and professional development for schools and systems. This professional development analysis might identify approaches to development that vary depending on the educator. For example, the Black teacher may participate in certain supportive practices and then White teachers would benefit from a differentiated approach to development. A study could also identify specific development approaches for leadership in order to cultivate a culture that retains Black teachers while improving systemic educational structures as a whole.

(3) A future study could dive into technical and adaptive responses schools and leaders could implement to alter the realities of limited staff diversity and teacher of color retention. This study would add meaning and depth to the strategies schools and organizations can take to create more equitable experiences for its workforce.

(4) A more in depth study is needed to explore lived experiences for Black teachers who are working in predominantly majority-minority staff settings. Given the current demographics in Minnesota, this study would likely need to take place in a different geographical location. The comparison data from a study of lived experiences of teachers in relative isolation to relative inclusion would be relevant and meaningful.

(5) A study of lived minority teachers who identify as differently than Black or African American might be valuable. This study could identify a cross correlation of cultural trends, identities, and attributes and how these effect results involving teacher retention.

There were five different academic recommendations following the information produced from this case study.

Practitioner Recommendations. The data overwhelmingly suggests that Black teachers are likely to have needs that the organization can respond (or not respond) to that are not

currently being met. All of the Black teachers reported the feeling of isolation. Black teachers reported an increasing need to engage I authentic, trusting, relationship with both Black people and White allies. Lauren stated, "When a Black teacher knows there is real trust, that I or someone else will have their backs, we can move forward. I believe this is different for White teachers because the trust is usually always there." The experience of having the benefit of the doubt is not readily believed for many Black educators. The trust, support, clarity and belonging need to be strategically built and nurtured at both a systemic and personal level. Black teachers feel like they are supported when they are supported and empowered in an authentic, consistent way. The reality of a trusting, impervious relationship for the participants is both elusive to find and difficult to maintain for the majority of the participants. This communicated impact requires the organization and individuals within the system to adapt and act differently.

The data produced four different recommendations for practitioners seeking to create more positive conditions for Black teachers within their schools and systems they serve:

(1) It is recommended that individual schools and district leadership establish strategic, supported spaces for Black teachers to engage in affinity groups. Affinity grouping is an opportunity for teachers of the same identity to share common experiences, especially as it relates to marginalization and system navigation (Mosely, 2018). This system should be supported and structured. The affinity system should be created in partnership with the participants and should include opportunities for engagement on all types of district approaches. The group should be led by a district or school leader of the same affinity group as its members. The group should be elevated by top district and school officials with regular opportunities to inform and, when necessary, change the system. The district and site supported affinity groups

should include perception data collection to ensure that the system is empowering, inspiring, and effectively supporting Black teachers.

(2) School and district leaders should undergo ongoing training in supporting minority teachers. Specific practices and protocols should be used to adapt to the diversity in the teaching force. School administrators should create regular, strategic times for connecting with Black teachers in their schools and districts. These times should not be transactional, evaluative, or negative at all costs. Black teachers should be genuinely encouraged, by their leadership, into roles of supported, yet meaningful, power within the organization. School leaders should enter into these experiences with positive intent, an openness to learn, and a willingness to support the teacher at all costs. School leaders, in turn, should depend on district leadership to have a clear vision and expectations for supporting Black teachers within their sphere of influence. Leaders should have the opportunity to discuss, collaboratively and practically, ways to support the teachers of color in their schools. These can be hypothetical table tops based on research based, real life instances. Both the Black teachers and their leadership should have tools, resources, and guidance provided by the organization to navigate existing and impending barriers. Research is clear that the lived experiences for Black teachers is different than that of White teachers. Therefore, the response should also be created and implemented with a differentiated approach.

(3) School and district leaders must commit to creating partnership pathways of White allies for Black teachers whenever possible. Black teachers must be provided the opportunity to have access to other teachers who are seeking to make the school a more just and equitable place. Placing Black teachers in teams that are potentially and increasingly isolating and hostile is not the answer to retention. Black teachers understand that, in the absence of authentic and meaningful relationships, stereotypes win. Black teachers need to be surrounded by people

likely to eliminate the feeling of isolation and frustration. Black teachers can be empowered to help create positive change for White educators.

(4) School and district leaders must commit to an authentic and relentless approach to social justice and equity. They should seek out and intentionally include conversations and actions that seek to eliminate racist practices and policies within the system. Leaders should create and sustain a culture where all staff is examining the role of bias and its impact on students within the system. Our teachers of color will subsequently feel there is a stronger sense of change in school than just continuing to participate within the inequitable structures that have pervaded in American schools. Black teachers will be able to engage White educators around creating more just and equitable schools if there is strong, concerted, systemic efforts. During training and professional development opportunities, school leaders should find ways to highlight the non-dominant perspective whenever possible. The opportunity of creating a framework and tools to increase equity will enhance the entire organization and lead to a stronger likelihood of retaining Black teachers within the system.

Limitations and Cautions. The small sample size remains the one prominent limitation for this study. Although clear and compelling trends emerged from the data, the nine research participants from three school districts remains relatively small in comparison with all of the Black educators and districts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. A second caution in the study is the focus exclusively on Black or African American teachers. The study did not seek to include the perspectives of various other teachers who identify with another demographic group. A third caution for the study is the limited scope of the interview timelines of the interviews, observational field notes, and photo elicitation artifacts. The study took place within

one calendar school year. A potential concern is the data produced was limited to a relatively small period of time within the teacher's experience.

Conclusion

The story of American schools is synonymous with race relations. It includes landmark cases like *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) when segregation in schools along racial lines was deemed constitutional. From there, it evolved to *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) when schools were then attempted to be constitutionally integrated with, at best, uneven results. *No Child Left Behind legislation* (2001) officially called out the racial disparities in learning outcomes that exist for students of color. Navigating the significant ramifications of generations of racial segregation and missteps is at the forefront of our increasingly diversified American schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). As research becomes more clear regarding the significant benefits for teachers of color on all students in the system, schools and districts have scrambled in recent years to recruit and retain minority educators (Cherng & Halpin, 2014). While significant attempts have been made to get teachers of color into the schools, many schools and districts have stopped short in finding ways to support teachers of color in their environments (Kohli, 2016).

School districts have a tremendous opportunity to create and sustain environments where Black teachers will be less likely to leave. There are tangible, low cost, and effective steps that can be made in short order to better support minority teachers navigating lived experiences that differ from those of White educators. A differentiated, authentic, and sustained approach towards empowerment and spaces of strategic will provide better circumstances and change the predictable outcomes.

References

Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R. T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for "hard-to-staff" schools. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(1), 71-107.

Ashiedu, J. A., & Scott-Ladd, B. (2012). Understanding teacher attraction and retention drivers: Addressing teacher shortages. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(11).

Bagley, C., & Castro-Salazar, R. (2012). Critical arts-based research in education: Performing undocumented historias. *British Educational Research Journal*, *38*(2), 239-260.

Beeler, L., Hayes, C., Lewis, F., Russell, A., & Moss, G. (2004). African American new teachers' critical stories: Learning to teach, becoming certified, and teaching. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 17*(4), 19-26.

Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism.* New York, NY: BasicBooks.

Bell McKenzie, K., Christman, C., Hernandez, F., Fierro, E., Capper, C., Dantley, & M., Gonzalez (2008). From the field: A proposal for educating leaders in social justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(1), 111-138.

Bensimon, E. M., & Malcom-Piqueux, L. E. (2012). *Confronting equity issues on campus: Implementing the equity scorecard in theory and practice.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Blanchard, K. H., Zigarmi, P., & Zigarmi, D. (1985). *Leadership and the one-minute manager: Increasing effectiveness through situational leadership*. New York, NY: Morrow.

Boykin, A., & Noguera, P. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Brown, A. (2012, October 21). Where are all the teachers of color in Minneapolis and St. Paul schools? *Twin Cities Daily Planet.* Retrieved from http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/news/2012/10/21/where-are-all-teachers-color-minneapolis-and-st-paul-schools

Brown, K. M. (2010). Schools of excellence and equity? using equity audits as a tool to expose a flawed system of recognition. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, 5*(5), 1-12.

Browne, John Robert,II. (2012). *Walking the equity talk: A guide for culturally courageous leadership in school communities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Bryson, B. S. (2017). "They were constantly on the losing side of things": The pedagogical power of an African-American teacher candidate bearing witness in teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 20*(4), 527-545.

Buffman, A., Mattos, M., & Weber, C. (2008). *Pyramid response to intervention.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Burns, J.P. (2011). "I guess it was pretty embarrassing when I couldn't do a pull- up:" How Six Young Men Experience and Understand Their Masculinities. Doctoral Dissertation. Retrieved from PDQT Open: Open Access Dissertations and Theses. UMI 3466487.

Chang, M.J., Eagan, M.K., Lin, M.H., and Hurtado, S. (2011). Considering the impact of racial stigmas and science identity: Persistence among biomedical and behavioral science aspirants. *Journal of Higher Education, 82*(5), 564–596.

Chenoweth, K., & Theokas, C. (2013). How high-poverty schools are getting it
done. *Educational Leadership, 70*(7), 56-59.

Cherng, H. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions
of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher, 45*(7), 407-420.

Chorba, K. (2013). Relational learning: A study of peer mentoring experiences among
undergraduate teacher education majors. (Order No. 3618904, Kent State University).
ProQuest dissertations and theses, 277. Retrieved from
http://search.proquest.com/docview/151327947?accountid=8593

Coxbill, E., Chamberlin, S., & Weatherford, J. (2013). Mathematically creative students
using model-eliciting activities as a tool to identify and develop. Journal of the
education of the gifted. Retrieved from
http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav?countrytabs=0

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods
approaches.* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Berry, B. (1999). Recruiting teachers for the 21st century: The
foundation for educational equity. *Journal of Negro Education, 68*(3), 254-79.

Decosta, M. (2012). *Moving towards a race-conscious English classroom.* Retrieved from
https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/93427/content//tmp/package-
bFA4Vm/DeCosta_asu_0010E_11420.pdf

Delpit, L. (2006). Lessons from teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 220-231.

Dichele, A. M. (2006). Academic achievement in an age of irresponsibility. *Taboo: The Journal
of Culture and Education, 10*(1), 29-33.

Dingus, J. E. (2008). "I'm learning the trade": Mentoring networks of Black teachers. *Urban Education*, *43*(3), 361-377.

Dinkins, E., & Thomas, K. (2016). Black teachers matter: Qualitative study of factors influencing African American candidates success in a teacher preparation program. *AILACTE Journal, 13*(1), 23-40.

Donnor, J. K., & Shockley, K. G. (2010). Leaving us behind: A political economic interpretation of NCLB and the miseducation of African American males. *Educational Foundations*, *24*(3-4), 43-54.

Du Chatenier, E., Verstegen, J., Biemans, H., Mulder, M., & Omta, O. (2010). *Identification of competencies for professionals in open innovation teams*. R&D Management. Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

DuFour, R. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Dweck, C. (2012). *Mindset*. London, ENG: Robinson.

Ehrenberg, R., Goldhaber, D., & Brewer, D. (1994). Do teachers' race, gender, and ethnicity matter? *National Bureau of Economic Research, 4699*. Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/papers/w4669.pdf

Farinde, A. A., Allen, A., & Lewis, C. W. (2016). Retaining Black teachers: An examination of black female teachers' intentions to remain in K-12 classrooms. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*(1), 115-127.

Frankenberg, E. (2008). The segregation of American teachers. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *17* (1).

Frazier, K. N. (2011). Academic bullying: A barrier to tenure and promotion for African-American faculty. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration & Policy, 5*(1), 1-13.

Gagnon, D. J., & Mattingly, M. J. (2015). Rates of beginning teachers: Examining one indicator of school quality in an equity context. *Journal of Educational Research, 108*(3), 226-235.

Gasman, M., Samayoa, A. C., & Ginsberg, A. (2017). Minority serving institutions: Incubators for teachers of color. *Teacher Educator, 52*(2), 84-98.

Gillborn, D. (2005). Education policy as an act of White supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and education reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, *20*(4), 485-505.

Giorgi, A., & Giorgi, B. (2008). Phenomenology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 26-52). London, ENG: Sage Publications.

Gooty, J., Gavin, M., Johnson, P., Frazier, M., & Snow, D. (2009). In the eyes of the beholder. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 15*(4), 353-367.

Hall, Edward T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2012). The distribution of teacher quality and implications for policy. *Annual Review of Economics*, 4131-157.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation, *Visual Studies*, 17:1, 13-26. doi: 10.1080/14725860220137345

Hattie, J. (2013). *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hattie, J., Masters, D., & Birch, K. (2016). *Visible learning into action international case studies of impact*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Heer, K. (2015). I thought you were one of us! Triumphs and crisis when teaching your

    own. *Review of Education, Pedagogy & Cultural Studies, 37*(4), 359-372.

Hines, M. T., III. (2016). The embeddedness of White fragility within white pre-service

    principals' reflections on white privilege. *Critical Questions in Education*, *7*(2), 130-

    145.

Hughes, S. A., & Berry, T. R. (2012). *The evolving significance of race: Living, learning, and*

    teaching. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tell us. *Phi Delta*

    Kappan, *93*(8), 47-51.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2002). The teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong

    prescription. *NASSP Bulletin*, *86*(631), 16-31.

Ingersoll, R.M. and May, H. (2011). Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage.

    Consortium for policy research in education. *CPRE Research Report* #RR-69.

Ingersoll R., Strong M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring for beginning teachers: A

    critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, *81*(2), 201–233.

Ketelle, D. (2010). The ground they walk on: Photography and narrative inquiry. *Qualitative*

    Report, *15*(3), 547-568.

Khalifa, M., Dunbar, C., & Douglasb, T. (2013). Derrick Bell, CRT, and educational leadership

    1995-present. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 16*(4), 489-513.

Kohli, R. (2009). Critical race reflections: Valuing the experiences of teachers of color in teacher

    education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 12*(2), 235-251.

Kohli, R. (2014). Unpacking internalized racism: Teachers of color striving for racially just

    classrooms. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 17*(3), 367-387.

Kholi, R. (2016). Behind school doors: The impact of hostile racial climates on urban teachers of color. *Urban Education, 53*(3), 307-333. doi:10.1177/0042085916636653

Kraehe, A. M. (2015). Sounds of silence: Race and emergent counter-narratives of art teacher identity. *A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education, 56*(3), 199-213.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2003). *Critical race theory perspectives on the social studies the profession, policies, and curriculum.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age Pub.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2005). *Beyond the big house: African American educators on teacher education.* New York, NY: Teacher College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: successful teachers of African American children.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lively, K., & Powell, B. (2006). Emotional expression at work and at home: Domain, status, of individual characteristics? *Social Psychology Quarterly, 69*(1), 17-38.

Lochmiller, C. R., Adachi, E., Chesnut, C. E., Johnson, J. (2016). Retention, attrition, and mobility among teachers and administrators in West Virginia. REL 2016-161. *Regional Educational Laboratory.* Retrieved from

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/pdf/REL_2016161.pdf

Lyndsey, D., Jungwirth, L., Pahl, J., Lindsey, R. (2009) *Culturally proficient learning communities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Lynn, M. (2002). *Critical race theory and qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Magan, C. (2013, December 28). Can Minnesota's achievement gap be closed by diversifying teachers. *Pioneer Press.* Retrieved from

http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_24808352/can-minnesotas-achievement-gap-be-closed-by-diversifying

Martinez, A. Y. (2014). A plea for critical race theory counterstory: Stock story versus counterstory dialogues concerning alejandra's "fit" in the academy. *Composition Studies, 42*(2), 33-55.

Matias, C. E., & DiAngelo, R. (2013). Beyond the face of race: Emo-cognitive explorations of white neurosis and racial cray-cray. *Educational Foundations, 27*(3-4), 3-20.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossy-Bass.

McCollum, D. (2011). A mixed methods study identifying reoccurring themes in policies and processes in grow your own teacher recruitment and retention programs. doi: 10.32469/10355/14437

Minnesota Department of Education (2017). Retrieved from http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp

Minnesota Department of Education Report Card (2019). Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/pdf/REL_2016161.pdf

Minnesota State Demographic Center (2017). Retrieved from https://mn.gov/admin/demography/

Moore, E., & Llompart, J. (2017). Collecting, transcribing, analyzing and presenting plurilingual interactional data. *Qualitative approaches to research on plurilingual education / Enfocaments qualitatius per a la recerca en educació plurilingüe / Enfoques cualitativos para la investigación en educación plurilingüe, 403-417.* doi:10.14705/rpnet.2017.emmd2016.638

Mosely, M. (2018). The Black teacher project: How racial affinity professional development

    sustains Black teachers. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 50*(2),

    267–283. Retrieved from https://search-ebscohost-

    com.ezproxy.bethel.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1179243&site=ehost-

    live&scope=site

Muijs, D. (2004). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS.* Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage.

Nauert, R. (2011). 'Racial battle fatigue' seems to fuel anxiety disorder among African-

    Americans. *Psych Central.* Retrieved from

    http://psychcentral.com/news/2011/03/04/racial-battle-fatigue-seems-to-fuel-anxiety-

    disorder-among-african-americans/24132.html

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2002)

Noguera, P. (2008). *The trouble with Black boys: And other reflections on race, equity, and the

    future of public education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Nowlin, T. (2008). Social justice and endarkened school leadership: the battle wombs and belly

    fires of black women leading for social justice. *Carolina Digital Repository.* Retrieved

    from https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/record/uuid:31fc9f6f-e654-4c1b-a2f7-29b7b2dc956d

Nunez, M., & Fernandez, M. R. (2006). Collaborative recruitment of diverse teachers for the

    long haul--TEAMS: Teacher education for the advancement of a multicultural

    society. *Multicultural Education, 14*(2), 50-56.

Pabon, A. (2016). Waiting for black superman: A look at a problematic assumption. *Urban

    Education, 51*(8), 915-939.

Pabon, A. J., Anderson, N. S., & Kharem, H. (2011). Minding the gap: Cultivating black male teachers in a time of crisis in urban schools. *Journal of Negro Education, 80*(3), 358-367.

Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896)

Punch, K.F. (2005). Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative approaches. (2nd ed.) London, ENG: Sage.

Roberts, M. A. (2010). Toward a theory of culturally relevant critical teacher care: African American teachers' definitions and perceptions of care for African American students. *Journal of Moral Education, 39*(4), 449-467.

Rogers-Ard, R., Knaus, C. B., Epstein, K. K., & Mayfield, K. (2013). Racial diversity sounds nice; systems transformation? not so much: Developing urban teachers of color. *Urban Education, 48*(3), 451-479.

Smith, D., Turner, C., Osei-Kofi, N. ,Richards, S., (2004). Interrupting the usual: successful strategies for hiring diverse faculty. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(2), 133.

Smith, W., Yosso, T., & Solorzano, D. (2006). *Challenging racial battle fatigue on historically white campuses: a critical race examination of race-related stress.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

Solorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308-42.

Style, E. (1996). Curriculum as window & mirror. *National Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity Project, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. Social Science Record*: 21-28. Retrieved from https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/curriculum-as-window-and-mirror

Torre, D., & Murphy, J. (2015). A different lens: Changing perspectives using photo-elicitation interviews. *Education policy analysis archives, 23, 111*. doi:10.14507/epaa.v23.2051

Torres, J., Santos, J., & Peck, N. &. (2004). Minority Teacher Recruitment, Development & Retention. *The Education Alliance at Brown University*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED484676.pdf

Turner, C. S. V., Myers, S. L., Jr., & Creswell, J. W. (1999). Exploring underrepresentation: The case of faculty of color in the Midwest. *Journal of Higher Education, 70*(1), 27-59.

Ulrich, B. (2014). Teacher diversity revisited. *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/TeacherDiversity.pdf

U.S. Department of Education (2019). Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools. *National Center for Education Statistics*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp

Verstegen, D. A. (2015). On Doing an Analysis of Equity and Closing the Opportunity Gap. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. doi:10.14507/epaa.v23.1809

Vogt, W. P. (2007). *Quantitative research methods for professionals.* Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Zambrana, R. E., Ray, R., Espino, M. M., Castro, C., Douthirt Cohen, B., & Eliason, J. (2015). "Don't leave us behind": The importance of mentoring for underrepresented minority faculty. *American Educational Research Journal, 52*(1), 40-72.

Appendix A: Message to confirm Institutional Review Board permission

July 15, 2018

Christopher Bellmont
Bethel University St. Paul, MN 55112

Re: Project SP-33-18 Contributing causes for retention or turnover of Black teachers in Minnesota public schools

Dear Christopher,

On July 15, 2018, the Bethel University Institutional Review Board completed the review of your proposed study and approved the above referenced study.
Please note that this approval is limited to the project as described on the most recent Human Subjects Review Form, including email correspondence. Also, please be reminded that it is the responsibility of the investigator(s) to bring to the attention of the IRB any proposed changes in the project or activity plans, and to report to the IRB any unanticipated problems that may affect the welfare of human subjects. Last, the approval is valid until July 14, 2019.

Sincerely,

Peter Jankowski, Ph.D. Chair, Bethel University IRB

Institutional Review Board 3900 Bethel Drive PO2322 St. Paul, MN 55112

Appendix B: Email message to solicit participation

Greetings,

My name is Chris Bellmont and I am a doctoral candidate with Bethel University (St. Paul, MN) in the field of Educational Leadership, K-12.

I am conducting a study on contributing causes for retention or turnover of Black teachers in Minnesota public schools. My goal is to understand a Black teacher's lived experience in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area public schools. By learning more about the lived experience of Black teachers in Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area public schools, it is my hope to identify systems and steps districts can enact to increase retention of Black teachers. Participation in this study includes the completion of two interview experiences of 30-45 minutes each. Participation also includes a photo-elicitation study where participants will capture images that speak to their experiences as Black teachers.

If you are interested in participating in this study, I can be reached at cb62854@bethel.edu and/or 612-790-6687.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and for considering your participation.

Sincerely,

Chris Bellmont

Bethel University Doctoral Candidate

chb62854@bethel.edu

Appendix C: First Interview Questions

Verbal Instructions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Please feel free to expand on your responses, ask clarifying questions of the interviewer, or seek to explore any new ways of thinking from the question base.

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your racial identity?

2. What traits go into a school community to be welcoming or inclusive of people from various cultural backgrounds?

3. What reasons might cause a Black teacher to leave a particular school/district?

4. What would you change about your school to improve its retention of minority teachers? Why do you feel this way?

5. What barriers have you found in creating a collegial feeling amongst teams?

6. What have you found to be helpful in creating a collegial feeling amongst teams?

7. Discuss a time you felt marginalized at your workplace.

8. Discuss a time you have felt honored at your workplace.

9. Some people would say that students and adults need the same things within a school to feel included. What are your thoughts on this?

10. Have you ever left a position within a school or district? If so, what were the circumstances for this departure? What, if anything, would be some suggested improvements about the departed school?

11. Do you feel teacher retention and recruitment of minority teachers a challenge? Please expand your answer as you see fit.

12. Is there anything you would like to say about this topic that I have not specifically asked about?

Appendix D: Consent Form for Study

You are invited to participate in a study of Black educators who have or are currently working in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. I hope to learn about the contributing causes for retention or turnover of Black teachers in Minnesota public schools. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because colleagues (former or present) have indicated you may have experiential knowledge related to the topic. This research is being conducted for the researcher (Chris Bellmont) as a dissertation study through Bethel University, St. Paul, MN.

I understand the following:

- I will be one of 12 subjects interviewed in this study. The study will include two rounds of interviews with 10-15 questions each. The study will also include 30-40 minutes of field observation and a photo-elicitation process where subjects will capture 3-5 photos that reflect their experiences in their work setting.
- I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from the study and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.
- My participation is voluntary. I understand I will not be paid for my participation and may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
- I understand that the nature of the interviews may be thought-provoking and could feel emotional. I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end an interview without affecting any future relations.
- This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research related injury, please call
- I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- I have been given a copy of this consent form.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix E: Photo Elicitation Instructions

       As part of this study, please capture 1-3 digital photos from your current working environment. The purpose of the photo-elicitation is to provide you, the participant, to describe your lived experience through visual representation. Please capture photographs that relate to your lived experience as a Black educator. The photographs used for the study must be non-identifiable. Please do not take any pictures of people. Please refrain from taking pictures of names or other features or locations that might connect your actual identity or the identity of others to the photograph. Please plan to bring these photographs to our second interview scheduled for _____.

Thank you for your participation. Please reach out to me at chb62854@bethel.edu or 612-790-6687 with any questions you might have.

                                                                _____

Chris Bellmont - Investigator   Date

Appendix F: Second Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1.   Tell me about the photographs you chose to take.

2.   How might the photographs connect with your lived experience as a Black educator?

3.   What words come to mind as you process the photographs that you took?

4.   When you examine the photograph you captured, what feelings or emotions rise to the surface?

5.   How might the connections you have made to these photographs influence schools and organizations to more effectively engage and support Black educators working within them?

6.   Is there anything else you would like to say on this topic that I have not specifically asked you?

Appendix G: School District Demographics

District Name	% of Students of Color	% of Teachers of Color
Anoka-Hennepin	29%	3.30%
Bloomington	49%	2.74%
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage	57%	3.18%
Eden Prairie	39%	9.01%
Hopkins	46%	6.70%
Minneapolis	66%	13.80%
North St Paul-Maplewood	57%	4.67%
Richfield	72%	1.70%
Robbinsdale	59%	5.89%
Rosemount-Eagan-Apple Valley	35%	3.24%
Roseville	54%	9.33%
Shakopee	41%	2.30%
South St. Paul	42%	2.69%
South Washington County	31%	3.58%
Spring Lake Park	40%	8.07%
St. Louis Park	45%	9.58%
St. Paul	79%	18.02%
West St Paul - Mendota Heights	48%	6.05%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education July 2017