"Okay Boys and Girls, We're Going to Talk About Race Today":
Exploring the Relationship Between Teachers' Racial Attitudes and School Discipline at
Schools Utilizing Restorative Practices

by

Christopher Thomas Thyberg

Bachelor of Social Work, Calvin University, 2014

Master of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, 2015

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Social Work in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2023

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

This dissertation was presented

by

Christopher Thomas Thyberg

It was defended on

April 11, 2023

and approved by

James Huguley, Ed.D, Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Victor Figuereo, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work

Lori Delale O'Connor, Ed.D, Associate Professor, School of Education

Dissertation Director: Sara Goodkind, PhD, Professor, School of Social Work

"Okay Boys and Girls, We're Going to Talk About Race Today":
Exploring the Relationship Between Teachers' Racial Attitudes and School Discipline at
Schools Utilizing Restorative Practices

Christopher T. Thyberg, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2023

Suspensions and expulsions from school often result in deleterious outcomes for students and contribute to the broader phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline, wherein children are funneled out of systems of learning and into the criminal legal system. Students of color, particularly Black students, are disproportionately excluded from school compared to their white peers. Numerous districts across the country are now using restorative practices, an intervention focused on relationship building, to reform school discipline policy and address this disparity. Research has demonstrated that a school's use of restorative practices often reduces the total number of suspensions; however, the racial disparities in school discipline outcomes typically remain. Teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of restorative practices and in school discipline and thus have the capacity to mitigate or exacerbate inequitable school discipline outcomes. This mixed-methods study examines how teacher racial attitudes relate to discipline practices in schools that are utilizing restorative practices. Data are drawn from surveys and in-depth interviews conducted with in-service teachers working in schools using restorative practices. Racial attitudes among teachers ranged from color-blind to color-conscious, with some teachers displaying what I have labeled color-cautious racial attitudes, an in-between category wherein teachers recognize the societal significance of race but not in their schools. Analyses of survey data reveal that teachers with color-conscious attitudes use fewer office discipline referrals and have more positive perceptions of their students, their school's safety, and the effectiveness of

restorative practices. Through qualitative analysis, I discovered that teachers' racial attitudes actively inform how they approach discipline. Professional development (PD) has been identified as a primary mechanism for building a color-conscious attitude. I explored teachers' interest in color-conscious PD and perceived barriers and facilitators. I found that teachers are generally interested in training but also identified numerous barriers. I conclude this dissertation with implications for practice, policy, and research. Findings suggest that interventions to address racial disparities should not be race neutral and that restorative practices are enhanced when they are done in conjunction with anti-racist interventions.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Preface

We often conceptualize accomplishments such as completing a doctorate as individual achievements, yet this could not be further from the truth. This moment is a shared triumph for me and my village. I received wisdom, support, encouragement, and love from so many family members, friends, colleagues, and mentors. I want to thank the people in my life who have supported my journey and made this achievement possible.

To my committee members, thank you for your time and outstanding effort during this process. Dr. Delale-O'Connor, you taught me how to engage in qualitative research with purpose, integrity, and love. Thank you for igniting my passion. Dr. Figuereo, it is rare to find someone who contains such profound depths of kindness and intelligence. Thank you for providing a calm and uplifting presence that helped keep me steady. Dr. Huguley, none of this work would be possible without you. Your commitment to schools, youth development, and education equity inspires me. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to join in this important work. Dr. Goodkind, my advisor and chair, words feel insufficient to describe my gratitude for everything you have done for me. Thank you for your years of mentorship and intellectual development during both my MSW and PhD. You are one of the most remarkable educators and scholars I have ever had the fortune of knowing.

Thank you to the community partners and dedicated staff on the research team who made this possible. Rachelle, thank you for your willingness to take time from your busy schedule to talk through whatever I was struggling with. To the staff and faculty at the School of Social Work, thank you for all your encouragement and energy. To my fellow students in the program, particularly my cohort, thank you for your solidarity and friendship. Obtaining a PhD is a grueling

process and one that is hard to explain to those who are not currently in it. I am thankful that we got to share our triumphs, failures, hopes, and fears together.

To the many professors, teachers, and mentors who have supported my educational journey thank you. While my K-12 education had plenty of challenges, I was also surrounded by numerous incredible teachers who have inspired the work I am doing today. Dr. Kuilema, it has been one of the great pleasures of my life to develop from your student to your friend and colleague in the field. I wrote on my mortarboard in 2014, "Future Joe Kuilema." It is still my hope that I will extend the same passion, expertise, and empathy to my own students.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family and friends. To my mother, Leslie, you were my first teacher, my first editor, and my first champion. None of this could have ever happened without you. To my father, Chris, I learned what hard work and dedication looks like from you. Hannah and David, I am grateful that we are more than siblings, we are friends who have deep and lasting love for each other. Finally, I must thank my amazing wife, Daniela. You have seen me through so many stages of life. While this season has been the most rewarding, it has also been the most challenging. You have demonstrated patience, love, and strength to guide us both through. You have my eternal thanks and love.

I would like to end by acknowledging the children and families who inspired me to engage in this work. As a social worker, I have had the chance to work alongside remarkable people who society has often failed. The bonds formed during our time together continue to motivate my work today. I hope that this dissertation and the work that follows it will contribute in some small way to making a positive difference in people's lives. As Richard Shaull says in the introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* "There's no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom."

Funding

1.0 Introduction

Racial disparities within school discipline practices, namely office referrals, detention, suspension, and expulsion, have been a longstanding and thoroughly documented problem within the U.S. K-12 educational system (USDOE, 2016). Specifically, research has demonstrated that Black students are disciplined more often and more severely starting as early as pre-school (Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Snellings, 2018), even when engaging in the same behaviors as white students (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009). This punishment is often for subjective behaviors that involve teacher perceptions, such as disorderly conduct, defiance, or disrespect (Gregory et al., 2010). Anyon and colleagues (2014) assert that racial bias informs differential selection and processing for discipline because stereotypes impact how young people's behaviors are defined, interpreted, and disciplined. Of course, the impact of racism cannot be understood without considering how racial biases interact with perceptions of gender, social class, disability, sexuality, language, immigration status, and other aspects of identity and social location, as oppression across these axes intersect and inform how discipline is enacted.

The negative impact of exclusionary discipline (i.e., suspension, expulsion, and other forms of discipline that remove children from the classroom) is well documented (Welsh & Little, 2018; Skiba et al., 2014). The harm caused by exclusionary school discipline can be categorized into proximal (e.g., reduced learning time, declining academic outcomes, and declining emotional and social health) and distal (e.g., increased risk of dropping out, increased risk of incarceration and interactions with the criminal legal system) effects. Evidence suggests that exclusionary discipline negatively affects students' relationships in school, limits their supervision and support, promotes academic disengagement, creates stigma and reintegration difficulties, decreases academic

achievement, impedes attendance, lowers graduation rates, increases the risk of dropping out, is correlated with future misbehavior, and significantly increases contact with the juvenile and criminal legal systems (Welsh & Little, 2018). Research shows that excessive discipline is deleterious for all students, not just those being disciplined, particularly as excessive discipline harms school climate and safety (Losen & Martinez, 2013). In addition to the social, academic, and emotional damage done to students through this process, it is estimated that through a loss of potential tax revenue from those who drop out of high school and the added financial costs of incarceration, billions of taxpayer dollars are lost each year from disparate and excessive school discipline (Selvaggi, 2016). The process by which school policies and practices remove students from spaces of learning and increase their risk of entering into the criminal and juvenile legal systems has been labelled the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) or schoolhouse to jailhouse nexus.

1.1 The Role of Teachers

Teachers and teacher discipline practices play a primary role in the schoolhouse to jailhouse nexus since teachers are typically in charge of office discipline referrals in their classrooms, and therefore operate as one of the primary gatekeepers of school discipline practices. As such, teachers play a fundamental role in determining which students are deemed deserving of discipline (Ferguson, 2000). Although most teachers enter their profession with the best of intentions to treat all students fairly, pro-white explicit and implicit biases are prevalent in the field and found at near equal levels between teachers and other adults within the broader United States (Starck et al., 2020). Research suggests that teachers tend to perceive students of color, particularly Black students, negatively and are more likely to anticipate misbehavior as well as (incorrectly)

2

interpret the behaviors of Black children as more problematic and in greater need of discipline than those of white children (Carter et al., 2017; Gilliam et al., 2016). Hirschfield (2008) asserts that "owing to a dominant image of Black males as criminals and prisoners, many school authorities view … Black boys as 'bound for jail' and 'unsalvageable'" (p. 92). Therefore, teacher racial attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, likely play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining the racial disparities in exclusionary school discipline (Allen & White-Smith, 2014; Bryan, 2017; Ferguson, 2000).

Despite the growing racial diversity in U.S. schools' student populations, the teaching workforce has remained primarily white over the past two decades—hovering around 80% of all teachers in public elementary and secondary schools (NCES, 2018). This raises concerns, as research suggests that a racial/ethnic mismatch between a teacher and student can activate or exacerbate a teacher's implicit bias, directly contributing to discipline disparities (Staats, 2014). Further, white teachers tend to have significantly lower expectations of their Black students compared to Black teachers (Gershenson et al., 2016). This focus on white teachers is not to suggest that teachers of other races cannot sustain school-based racial disparities or hold their own biased beliefs (Gilliam et al., 2016). Instead, it is a recognition that in this current moment in time, it is common for many students of color to be taught primarily by white teachers, and that power coupled with bias has the potential to create serious negative outcomes for students (Bryan, 2017).

1.2 The Spectrum of Color-Blind to Color-Conscious Racial Attitudes

An essential component of teacher racial attitudes in school discipline is the spectrum between racial critical consciousness, also referred to throughout this dissertation as color-

consciousness, and color-blind racial attitudes. Critical consciousness describes the process of learning about social, political, and economic injustices and contradictions followed by taking action to dismantle those oppressive realities (Freire, 1971, p. 35). Color-consciousness in schools manifests in the process of identifying racist educational policies, practices, and procedures and opposing them through race-conscious interventions (Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Color-consciousness opposes and challenges color-blind attitudes, or the belief that race does not and should not affect people's lived experiences (Neville et al., 2000). Color-blind attitudes focus on individualism and merit while diminishing the realities of privilege and access that occur based on race (Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Color-blind attitudes are quite prevalent in schools (Stoll, 2014) and impact how teachers interact with their students (Alvarez & Milner, 2018). Troublingly, color-blind ideology (i.e., meritocracy and individualism) erases the role of teachers' implicit bias and systemic racism in school policy and instead places the blame for racial disparities in discipline solely on students' behavior, despite the fact that research has thoroughly demonstrated that these disparities in discipline persist even when accounting for student behavior and other relevant demographic information (Rocque, 2010).

Critical consciousness can create effective opportunities for social change in education, particularly in addressing racist policies and procedures. Research has demonstrated that intentional work by teachers to address race and racism can lead to powerful outcomes of solidarity with students in multicultural and multiracial classrooms (Boucher, 2016). Indeed, there is preliminary evidence that teacher discipline practices grounded in critical consciousness have the potential to mitigate the disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline experienced by Black students (Marcucci & Elmesky, 2020). Growing calls for internal interrogation and identity

development, particularly for white teachers, have emerged as a means towards developing anti-racist and effective pedagogy (Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

1.3 Restorative Justice and Considerations of Racism

While teachers' racial biases are an important contributor to racially disproportionate, high levels of exclusionary school discipline, consideration of race and racism are often neglected when developing solutions. One of the most promising and popular interventions for reducing exclusionary school discipline is restorative justice practices. Restorative justice (RJ), also commonly referred to as restorative practices, is an approach that uses communication, community, relationship, and accountability to amend harm done rather than solely punishing the act itself (Fronius et al., 2019). In schools, restorative practices are often used as an alternative to traditional forms of exclusionary discipline such as out of school suspension (Fronius et al., 2019). However, professional development focused on anti-racism, racial critical consciousness, or social justice is uncommon among restorative justice interventions (Fronius et al., 2019; Song et al., 2020).

Limited research has examined teacher racial attitudes within restorative justice frameworks. Moreover, the literature remains inconclusive on the efficacy of restorative justice in addressing racial disparities in school discipline. At this time, evidence regarding an overall reduction in exclusionary school discipline through restorative justice interventions is strong; however, studies have conflicting findings regarding the efficacy of restorative justice in mitigating the racial discipline gap (Fronius et al., 2019; Joseph, 2018). As such, there is an urgent need for a better understanding of the role of teacher racial attitudes on the racial disparities in

exclusionary school discipline practices within schools implementing restorative justice interventions.

1.4 Significance to Social Work

Although the primary focus of this dissertation is on teacher racial attitudes, social workers have a direct role to play in addressing the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP), exclusionary school discipline, and racial discrimination in schools (Dutil, 2020; McCarter, 2017; Joseph et al., 2020; Mallett, 2016). Indeed, our profession has much to answer for as a carceral discipline due to our ties to the juvenile legal system and other institutions focused on social control (Jacobs et al., 2021; Washington et al., 2021). We have a duty to ameliorate the harm caused by these punitive systems, as our profession helped establish them.

Social work has existed in a paradoxical state as both a contributor to and critic of carceral institutions. Indeed, despite social work's carceral history, our professional and educational regulatory bodies all agree that the harm caused by current school discipline practices are diametrically opposed to the values upheld within social work practice, research, and education (CSWE EPAS, 2015; NASW, 2017). Four of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare's Grand Challenges of Social Work have direct pertinence to addressing the racial school discipline gap: (1) the elimination of racism, (2) the promotion of smart decarceration, (3) achieving equal opportunity and justice, and (4) ensuring the healthy development of all youth (Grand Challenges of Social Work, 2020). However, social work has much more to offer than just our statements on ethics and values regarding social justice. The School Social Work Association of America (2012) argues that social workers "bring unique knowledge and skills to the school

system and student support service team .... They are instrumental in furthering the mission of the schools which is to provide a setting for teaching, learning, and for the attainment of competence and confidence" (para. 1).

Perhaps the most important role social workers can take in the context of this study is to lead the way in facilitating open and honest conversations on race and racism among community partners (e.g., parents, teachers, students) in schools and to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators that prioritize race-inclusive solutions for strengthening school climate (McCarter, 2017; Joseph et al., 2020). Acknowledging the prevalence of racism within structures allows for social workers to ask and explore important questions with students and teachers as well as question internalized racism to challenge dominant perspectives (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020; Joseph et al., 2020). Because of our education and professional skills, social workers are well situated to contribute to these conversations with expertise and care.

Further, social workers have the necessary skillset and practice frameworks to implement interventions such as restorative practices effectively (Gumz & Grant, 2009). In many schools, the restorative justice practitioner holds a master's in social work, collaborates with—or indeed is the school social worker. As such, school social workers have a direct relevance to this study as they will likely be central figures in the work done to promote anti-racist professional development and restorative justice within their schools.

1.5 Study Purpose and Research Plan

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of teachers' racial attitudes on discipline outcomes in the context of a restorative justice intervention. Specifically, this study explores three research questions: (1) In schools utilizing restorative practices, what are teacher racial attitudes, and do they vary by social location? (2) In schools utilizing restorative practices, how do teachers' racial attitudes relate to teachers' perceptions of student behavior, school safety, restorative practices, racial disparities in discipline outcomes, and their implementation of discipline practices? (3) Are teachers in schools that use restorative practices interested in professional development focused on increasing awareness of implicit bias and anti-racist teaching practices and what are the perceived barriers and facilitators to these trainings?

To answer these questions, I partnered with a research-to-practice restorative justice program to conduct in-depth interviews and disseminate a survey to a group of teachers working in K-8 schools already implementing restorative practices in a mid-sized city in the Mid-Atlantic United States. I used teacher interviews to assess teacher racial attitudes, teacher perceptions of racial disparities in school discipline outcomes, and teacher perceptions of professional development. Using qualitative analysis, I created and applied a codebook of themes to observe how teachers of different social groups discuss race, racism, and racial disparities in school discipline. I used survey data to conduct descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses to explore trends in teacher racial attitudes and to what extent endorsements of racial critical consciousness relates with office discipline referrals and teacher perceptions of school safety, student behavior, and restorative practice effectiveness.

1.6 Summary of Dissertation Chapters

In Chapter 2 of this work, I discuss the relevant literature and background for this study. This includes key terms and definitions, historical background, current trends and statistics of school discipline, intersectional considerations regarding school discipline disparities, the impact of school discipline on student outcomes, comparisons between zero-tolerance and restorative practices in school discipline policies and outcomes, and a review of how teacher racial attitudes interact with student outcomes. Additionally, critical race theory and ecological systems theory are explained and used to frame the importance of teacher racial attitudes in school discipline outcomes.

In Chapter 3, I describe my research methods. I present a detailed plan of the project design and data analysis for each of the research questions in this study. I provide a description of the restorative justice research-to-practice program with which I partnered, as well as an overview of the schools included in this study. I describe details of data collection and data analysis. I also provide initial information such as descriptive statistics for the interview and survey samples used in this study. I close this chapter with considerations of my positionality which informed the design and implementation of this study.

In Chapter 4, I describe study results from both quantitative and qualitative analyses. I present the primary findings to my three research questions. In the beginning of the chapter, I describe my findings related to teacher racial attitudes using descriptive and bivariate statistics and qualitative analysis. Using qualitative methods, I developed a codebook in which I categorize teacher racial attitudes into three categories: (1) color-blind, (2) color-conscious, and a new category I created during analysis that I refer to as (3) color-cautious. I describe how I defined and coded for these three themes and discuss their prevalence and variation based on teachers' social

location. Teachers' tenure and race emerged as important factors in teachers' racial attitudes, as newer teachers and teachers of color were found to endorse color-conscious beliefs more often.

In Chapter 4, I answer my second research question by describing how teacher racial attitudes associate with their (1) discipline practices and perceptions of (2) school safety, (3) student behavior, and (4) the effectiveness of restorative practices. I present findings from four multivariate linear regression models exploring each of the four identified dependent variables. All four models found significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables, suggesting that teachers' racial attitudes play an important role in how teachers discipline and perceive their students. In the final section of the chapter, I present findings from my qualitative analysis exploring teachers' perceptions of training on implicit bias and anti-racism as well as their identified barriers and facilitators to such trainings. Ultimately, teachers were quite interested in these training courses but also identified numerous challenges that impact their success.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I discuss these results within the context of the literature and consider implications for future research, policy, and social work practice. I summarize the conclusions and suggest points for future inquiry. I conclude with my final thoughts and a call to action for the field to continue engaging in brave conversations about racism. School discipline outcomes are impacted by implicit bias and systemic racism. Therefore, solutions cannot be race neutral. Restorative practices must be coupled with race conscious interventions focused on equity.

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Key Terms and Definitions

This study utilizes language on race and racism through a critical race theory (CRT) perspective. The use of *race* in this study operates from the understanding that social and political influences, both historical and contemporary, create sociopolitical realities from which socially constructed racial categories emerge (Omi & Winant, 2007). Racial categories are not static or fixed, as categories are often driven by sociopolitical agendas which can be used by people for oppression, empowerment, or resistance. While race is a social construct, it has profound impacts on how students experience their daily life (Lewis, 2017). In this study I focus particularly on the experiences of Black students, as research has consistently demonstrated that Black students are by far the most likely to experience exclusionary discipline and its consequences.

Racism is defined as a "system of advantage based on race" which is designed to uphold white supremacy through systematic operations (Tatum, 2004, p. 124). As Bonilla-Silva (2018) argues, this racialized social system was designed by Europeans to provide systemic privileges to Europeans (those who would become labelled as white) over non-Europeans (those who would be labelled as non-white) and has been maintained because those who are racialized as white receive financial, material, and social benefits from the existing racial order. Racism is distinct from prejudice, discrimination, bias, or other forms of interpersonal action, talk, or thoughts because it is specific to how power and systemic oppression inform experience rather than relating only to individual acts of hatred or mistreatment (Hoyt, 2012). This is an important distinction because many definitions of racism ignore how structural barriers built through policy, procedures, and

systemic practices impact communities and individuals. Students of color experience numerous systemic injustices including housing discrimination, historical and current acts of redlining, gentrification, de facto school segregation, over-policing of Black and brown schools, police brutality, racial profiling, and more which impact their educational experiences. The clear distinction between structural racism and acts of personal prejudice and bias is important when considering how teachers conceptualize race, racial socialization, color-blind attitudes, and critical consciousness.

Color-blind racial ideology is the belief that race should not and does not impact people's experiences (Neville et al., 2000). While the desire for equality is laudable, color-blind attitudes deny and obfuscate the reality that systemic racism does privilege some at the expense of others. Color-blind racial ideology combines color-evasion, a denial of racial differences through an emphasis on sameness, and power-evasion, the denial of racism through a focus on meritocracy and equal opportunity (Neville et al., 2013). Bonilla-Silva (2018), a leading scholar on the subject, argues that color-blind racism has four pillars from which race and racism are interpreted and justified: 1) abstract liberalism (political and economic liberalism to justify decisions under the guise of "choice"), 2) naturalization (explaining racial phenomena as natural occurrences), 3) cultural racism (using culture to explain racial inequity), and 4) minimization of racism (arguing that discrimination and prejudice are no longer widespread and do not limit opportunities for people of color). These pillars combine to form a "common sense" argument to justify current racial inequalities and allow for the status quo of privilege for white people to continue.

Color-consciousness (also referred to as racial critical consciousness) stands in stark opposition to color-blind racial ideology. Critical consciousness describes an iterative process of learning about the social, political, and economic injustices that create the oppressive realities

12

within each of our lives (Freire, 1971). Racial critical consciousness therefore describes the process

of learning how systemic racism, intertwined with other social, political, and economic structures,

has shaped the context of the world, and impacted each person's lived experience. In the context

of this study, critical consciousness necessitates the understanding of the broader social context of

the educational system in the U.S. and a willingness to engage in the undoing of oppressive social

systems. Color-consciousness is a framework which asserts the necessity of self-awareness and

acknowledgement that teachers hold social identities which inform their perceptions, beliefs, and

behaviors (Ullucci & Battey, 2011). In this study, racial critical consciousness and color-

consciousness are used interchangeably.

2.2 Historical Background

Much of the literature on the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) is ahistorical or uncritical

in its analysis of past educational policies (McGrew, 2016; Sojoyner, 2013). However, the United

States' formulation of education created a distinction between schooling for those in a position of

power and those relegated to a second-class status since its outset (Anderson, 1988). As such, I

present several examples of how education has functioned as a mechanism of social control,

particularly over people of color, to provide the context necessary to better understand the STPP

and the role of teachers in school discipline disparities. Importantly, many current critical race

theorists argue that the oppressive goals described throughout these examples of historical

oppression remain very active in education today (Dutil, 2020).

The Black community has persistently fought for educational equity in the U.S. since

slavery. During the over 200-year period of slavery in this country, white men in positions of legal

power passed laws that forbade literacy for enslaved people and sanctioned the use of brutal punishments such as physical mutilation or whippings to those who dared to disobey (Anderson, 1988). After the Civil War, opposition to Black education was rampant and resistance to universal education abounded (Anderson, 1988). During Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan burned schools that taught Black students, attacked or murdered teachers who worked in schools with Black students, and lynched Black parents who tried to send their children to school (Jones, 2012). Later, the formal laws and procedures ushered in under Jim Crow codified segregation and economic disenfranchisement, which ensured ongoing barriers to Black education for decades to come. Scholars have documented how Black men and women, despite generations of violence and opposition, sought education as a means towards liberation and resistance to oppression (Morris, 2016).

Another example of the contentious nature of education within the U.S. is the cultural genocide of Native Americans through boarding schools beginning in the late 19th century. Indian boarding schools were an intentional approach to enforce assimilation, epitomized through the phrase, "Kill the Indian and save the man" (Little, 2017). These schools utilized brutality and violence to achieve their aims. Thousands of indigenous children's remains have been found across numerous schools in recent years (Austen, 2021). Education within this system was highly political in nature and designed around the central goal of altering behavior and culture to conform to standards of white ideology in a process of cultural genocide (Little, 2017).

A watershed moment in the history of the education system was the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which ended *de jure* acts of racial segregation. While elements of this decision are laudable, the U.S. struggled with enforcement and has largely failed to fully integrate schools (Strauss, 2014). Moreover, the process of integration was neither

quick nor peaceful. Consider the Little Rock Nine, who in 1957 were attacked, cursed, spit on, and intimidated by white teachers, parents, and students all opposed to interracial learning. Scholars argue that the history of zero-tolerance policies (mandatory discipline practices for certain behaviors in schools) can be traced back to the 1960s as a direct response to the Black liberation movement, political protests, and the false claims that integrated schools were seeing higher rates of crime (Sojoyner, 2013).

The 1980s and 1990s ushered in an era of tough-on-crime attitudes which massively altered the landscape of school discipline. Increased police presence, greater surveillance, harsher punishments for smaller crimes, and tactics such as stop-and-frisk emerged in response to prevailing societal beliefs that crime and deviance must be dealt with swiftly and severely (Alexander, 2012). Schools implemented this theory via a shift in school policy to provide tougher punishments such as suspension for a new variety of offenses that had never previously warranted such drastic measures (Nelson & Lind, 2015). Both the criminal legal system and the school system legislated new policies such as the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1994 Gun Free School Act, which mandated specific punishments in their respective settings. Zero-tolerance policies (ZTP) around discipline began to proliferate in schools and quickly expanded beyond possession of a weapon or illegal substance.

Racism played and continues to be a vital element of how ZTP and broader issues of school safety are implemented today. For example, as rising fears over gun violence emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s, the swift implementation of ZTP and increased presence of police in schools did not correspond with where threats of gun violence were most prevalent. In a study of school shootings from 1990-2011, Triplett and colleagues (2014) found that despite more gun violence

taking place in predominantly white suburban and rural communities, it was urban and minority students who more often experienced ZTP and over-policing in their schools.

These examples of the racism present in and around schools are offered because they demonstrate how education has always been a violent struggle for people of color in America. Education has never been apolitical. Thus, it is a misrepresentation of the facts to suggest that disproportionate punishment, school exclusion, or the STPP began only after the introduction of zero-tolerance discipline strategies of the 1990s. Instead, it is important to take a broader view which connects the past to the present and understands the current phenomenon of the STPP as intricately related to slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation. This review only scratches the surface of the ideological battles fought within educational spaces throughout the four-hundred-year history of the U.S., but it serves as a primer for understanding the social and political realities that contribute to the STPP and contextualizes the environment that teachers and students navigate today.

2.3 Zero-Tolerance Policies and Inequitable Discipline Outcomes

Zero-tolerance policies (ZTP) within schools mandate specific consequences for perceived deviance "without consideration of offense severity, mitigating circumstances, or context" (McCarter, 2017, p. 54). Mirroring some aspects of mandatory minimum sentencing in the justice system and tactics developed during the War on Drugs, ZTP require punishments such as out of school suspension (OSS) or expulsion for specific offenses. These policies can be related to drug and weapon violations but have been increasingly used in other circumstances (Martinez, 2009; Roberge, 2012). This approach to discipline emerged in part as a response to public fears of

violence in schools (Brady, 2002). One of the most significant laws that contributed to the rise of zero-tolerance is the 1994 Gun Free Schools Act, which was the first federal mandate for mandatory expulsion of any student found in the possession of a weapon on school grounds (Hanson, 2005). This act compelled each state receiving federal funds to have a state law that required any student found in the possession of a weapon be expelled from the school for one year (Brady, 2002; Hanson, 2005). Notably, there was not a contingency within this law requiring the school to provide access to educational services such as alternative schooling for expelled students, effectively leaving these students to their own devices to find a suitable educational environment once expelled (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2002). After the 1994 legislation, many schools expanded the policy to apply mandatory punishments for the possession of drugs and alcohol (Na & Gottfredson, 2013), violent behavior (Hanson, 2005), and even the possession of objects that looked like weapons (Villarruel & Dunbar, 2006).

There are numerous issues with how ZTP were initially defined and applied. There have been documented cases of students being punished under zero-tolerance for having a Swiss army knife, a plastic axe for a Halloween costume, a pocket watch, a plastic knife, and a water gun (Martinez, 2009). Even more absurd, the use of a snowball and kicking have been labelled as deadly weapons to enforce ZTP punishments (Wald, 2001). In an extreme case, an 11-year-old child was deprived of his asthma inhaler under this policy, resulting in his death (Building Blocks for Youth, 2006). In Pittsburgh, a 10th grade Black female student was expelled after defending herself with a pencil from a boy who was sexually harassing her (Goodkind, 2019). Once again in this instance, a ZTP for weapons was used as the justification for her expulsion.

However, the issue is more insidious and widespread than even these examples indicate. School administrators have increasingly used ZTP for minor, non-violent infractions that are not

17

connected to any concerns of safety for staff or students (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Wald, 2001; Essex, 2001; Martinez, 2009; Huguley et al., 2018). Most exclusionary discipline, which for many schools is enacted under the guidelines of ZTP, is no longer related to safety. For example, recent research found that 70% of suspensions in Allegheny County in Pennsylvania were related to conduct (defiance, insubordination, dress code) rather than school safety (Huguley et al., 2018). These trends have been found nationwide and present a growing concern with harsh exclusionary discipline being used for minor misconduct (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018).

2.3.1 Current Trends and Statistics of School Discipline

Educators, activists, and scholars have done significant work in the last decade to reduce the use of suspension, expulsion, and other traditional forms of discipline which remove students from the classroom (Harper et al., 2019). Numerous states have enacted individual laws to increase transparency in the use of discipline, limit exclusionary discipline for young children or nonviolent behaviors, and worked to reduce racial disparities in discipline (Harper et al., 2019). National school-level discipline data reported by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (USDOE) from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) reveals current trends to assess the effectiveness of these emergent strategies. Currently, data from the 2011-2012, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016 school years are available to provide a snapshot of recent trends.

In the 2015-2016 school year, roughly 2.7 million students (about 6%) in K-12 education received one or more OSS (USDOE, 2018). While this number warrants significant concern, it should be noted that this was a 17% decrease in OSS overall, and a 21% decrease specifically within secondary schools between the 2011-2012 and 2015-2016 school years (Harper et al., 2019). Most states have reported reductions in OSS since 2011, however rates have increased in

several states, particularly in the southeast. The issue of persistent and increasing OSS when aggregated to state data is intricately connected to racial disparities within school discipline. In a 2015 report, Smith and Harper (2015) found that 1.2 million Black K-12 students were suspended within one academic year and that 55% of those suspensions were accounted for by only 13 Southern states. Further, they found that specific districts in the South contributed to 50% of all expulsions of Black students from public schools in the United States (Smith & Harper, 2015).

2.3.2 Intersectional Oppression and School Discipline

The risk of experiencing exclusionary discipline is present for all students. However, the intersections of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression coalesce to create unique risks related to the increased experience and disparate impact of exclusionary discipline for some students that demands specific attention. It is important to consider how these dynamics interact with one another and create unique experiences of power, social inequality, social environment, complexity, relationships, and social justice (Collins, 2019).

2.3.2.1 Racial Disproportionality

In a systematic review of racial disparities in school discipline, Welsh and Little (2018) argued that race is one of the most significant predictors of OSS, regardless of student behavior and remains a significant predictor even when controlling for relevant factors such as socioeconomic status. These disparities occur across settings, grades, and school-level, suggesting that a systemic problem is taking place as early as preschool (Skiba, 2015). A 2014 report by the Office of Civil Rights found that Black students were 3.8 times more likely to receive an OSS compared to white students (USDOE, 2016). Other studies have found that Native American and

Latinx youth also experience higher rates of school discipline compared to their white peers (Wallace et al., 2008). While efforts have been made to reduce OSS racial disparities, these inequities have continued and remain a significant issue for many schools today (Harper et al., 2019).

Although some have queried as to whether or not racial disparities can be attributed to other causes such as behavior severity and frequency or the SES of the child in question, the research has found that these are insufficient answers as to why these disparities persist. Even when focused on purportedly objective issues such as drug and weapon possession, it has been found that enforcement of ZTP has been highly subjective and informed by racial prejudice (Keleher, 2000). Moreover, research has shown that students of color are more likely to be disciplined for subjective and minor offenses such as defiance, dress code, and talking back to staff (Ayers et al., 2001; Girvan et al., 2017; Hanson, 2005). Research has demonstrated that Black and Latinx students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline such as OSS compared to their white peers even when demonstrating the same behaviors (Anyon et al., 2014; Skiba et al., 2011). In short, racial disparities in discipline cannot be explained by a significant difference in students' behavior (Anyon et al., 2014; Wallace et al., 2008).

2.3.2.2 Intersections of Race and Gender

Racism and sexism intersect to produce differential experiences of school discipline, which can lead to unique and disparate outcomes for students based on their social identities (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Prejudice, misperceptions, biases, and stereotypes related to gender and race intersect and create unique manifestations of discrimination that cannot be summarized simply through the sum of their parts. That is to say, the experience of racism is fundamentally changed when it intersects with sexism and gendered biases. While great attention is often paid to Black boys as

20

the most frequently disciplined children, research has indicated the racial disparities for girls is a particularly salient issue (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020; Winn, 2011). In a study that examined 15 years of data on school discipline among U.S. high school students, researchers found that while Black boys experienced the highest rates of discipline overall, Black girls experienced a larger gap in discipline compared to white girls (Wallace et al., 2008). In another study, researchers found that while Black boys were twice as likely as white boys to receive an office referral for a Class I violation (categorized as least severe behaviors and frequently more subjective behaviors such as classroom disruption), Black girls were three times more likely than white girls to receive an office referral for a Class I violation (Morris & Perry, 2017).

Connie Wun (2016a; 2016b) provides a vivid description of the experiences of Black girls within schools by amplifying student voices throughout her work. Through in-depth interviews, Wun describes the physical and emotional burden of ZTP and the anti-Black racism that is experienced by Black girls in schools. In these narratives, girls shared that their behaviors in school are often a method of processing, responding to, and coping with exposures to community and interpersonal violence, most often manifested in acts of disobedience or defiance, that are then punished severely (Wun, 2016a). Systems hyper-focused on surveillance, regulation, and control devalue students, and anti-Black racism and sexism create punishing environments for students. Wun concludes that, "the dominant discourses on school discipline disparities obscure a structural condition that characteristically positions Black girls within a social order where their lives are illegible and inconsequential, rendering them perpetually susceptible to discipline and punishment" (2016b, p. 748). That is to say, Black girls are structurally vulnerable to violence inside and out of schools (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020).

2.3.2.3 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Some research has suggested that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students are also particularly susceptible to the STPP and school discipline policies. Kosciw and colleagues (2012) found that LGBTQ and gender nonconforming students were overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions. Similarly, a national, longitudinal study found that non-heterosexual students were suspended, expelled, and arrested at higher rates than their heterosexual peers, despite no significant differences in academic achievement, behavioral conduct, or participation in illegal activities (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011). LGBTQ students are also more likely to experience discipline for issues related to clothing and gender norms (Russell et al., 2013). Finally, bullying presents a salient concern to many LGBTQ students, who are often punished when they defend themselves against the students who are harassing them (Russell et al., 2013).

2.3.2.4 Disability

Students with disabilities also experience disproportional rates of exclusionary discipline (Fabelo et al., 2011). In the report on national school discipline rates issued by the CRDC, students with a disability represented only 12% of all students enrolled in public schools but constituted 26% of all students receiving one or more OSS (USDOE, 2016). A study led by Rausch and Skiba (2006) found that students with a disability received double the suspensions and were 75% more likely to be expelled compared to students without a disability. This issue also intersects directly with race, creating additional risks for students. Rausch and Skiba (2006) found that Black students with disabilities were 3 times more likely to receive exclusionary discipline compared to other students with a disability. White male students with disabilities represented 1 of every 10 students who received one or more OSS; meanwhile, male students of color accounted for 1 of every 5 (USDOE, 2016). Relatedly, Black and Latinx children with developmental disabilities were found

to receive poorer quality of care in their services (Magaña et al., 2012). The culmination of differential responses in services and punishment place youth of color with disabilities in structurally vulnerable positions in the schoolhouse to jailhouse nexus.

2.3.3 The Impact of Exclusionary Discipline

Advocates of exclusionary discipline practices have historically justified traditional punishments as a way to ensure student and staff safety, eliminate distractions from the classroom, and provide a better learning environment for the remaining students (Losen et al., 2015; Mallet, 2016). Indeed, large societal concerns over school shootings and gun violence in addition to smaller concerns related to misbehaving children who may distract others have consistently been used to justify draconian school policy. However, numerous studies have repeatedly demonstrated that exclusionary discipline creates harmful effects across a variety of metrics. The harm caused by exclusionary discipline in the context of this literature review can be thought of in two categories: 1) distal and 2) proximal effects of exclusionary discipline which contribute to the STPP. That is to say, some of the harm caused by OSS relates to student school achievement, attitudes, and behaviors which increases the risk of dropping out of school and interactions with the criminal legal system later in life, while other consequences have more immediate impact in pushing students out of school and into carceral systems.

2.3.3.1 Academic and Social Impacts

Traditional forms of exclusionary discipline have been shown to have detrimental consequences on students' academic outcomes. Numerous studies have found the use of suspension fails to improve school climate or academic outcomes, and, in fact, this practice has

been found to be deleterious to both the students suspended and even those who remain in the classroom (Skiba et al., 2014; Fabelo et al., 2011; Perry & Morris, 2014). Harsh exclusionary discipline within a school has been found to undermine teacher-student relationships and trust, which has negative impacts for all students not just those suspended (Losen & Martinez, 2013). For students who are suspended, this relates directly to time out of the classroom away from learning and correlates with lower proficiency in reading, writing, science, and math standardized test scores (Lewis et al., 2010). Suspension and other forms of discipline have also been linked to greater likelihood of dropping out of school (Gregory et al., 2010). Balfanz and colleagues (2015) found that when controlling for relevant demographic factors, students suspended even just one time were twice as likely to drop out of school.

These academic impacts have severe consequences for later life outcomes, particularly around incarceration. As education increases, the chances of becoming incarcerated decrease. Conversely, dropping out of school drastically increases one's chances for becoming incarcerated in their lifetime. This argument is well summarized by Smith (2009) who reported that nearly 70% of all incarcerated adults have not graduated high school, 75% of juveniles in adult prisons have not completed 10th grade, 33% of all juveniles incarcerated lack a fourth grade reading level, and high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than those with a high school diploma.

Punitive school discipline has also been linked with declining social and emotional health for students. The American Psychiatric Association Zero Tolerance Task force (2008) reported that punitive discipline may impede normative social growth in adolescents. School discipline has also been linked with depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and aggressive behavior both in and out of school (Cameron & Shepard, 2006). Moreover, suspensions have been shown

to increase risky and anti-social behavior rather than decrease them (Hemphill et al., 2006). These various risks culminate in an increase in risky or deviant behavior, which results in increased exposure to the juvenile and criminal legal systems later in life (Losen et al., 2015).

2.3.3.2 Mediated Pathways Between School Discipline and Adulthood Arrest

Numerous scholars have argued that elements of the racial inequities that exist in our current criminal legal system are at least partially caused by the racial inequalities entrenched within school-based punishments (Barnes & Motz, 2018; Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Welch & Payne, 2010). Fabelo and colleagues (2011) found that of students who were suspended or expelled at least once, roughly one in seven had later contact with the juvenile legal system. They also found that, controlling for campus and individual student characteristics, students who were suspended or expelled for discretionary reasons were three times as likely to become involved in the juvenile legal system in the next year compared to students who did not receive a suspension or expulsion.

Shollenberger (2015) utilized the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and found that more than 33% of boys who were suspended for 10 or more days were later incarcerated. In a longitudinal study examining the correlation between school discipline and incarceration, Clifford (2019) found that for an average student, both in-school and out-of-school suspensions were associated with an increased likelihood of conviction for both a misdemeanor and felony. In a study analyzing nationally representative data reviewing adolescence-to-adulthood development over the course of a decade, Barnes and Motz (2018) argue that if racial bias in school-based punishment could be curtailed, it could reduce racial inequalities in adulthood arrests by 16%.

2.3.3.3 Immediate Interaction with the Criminal Legal System

While mediated pathways through dropout and shifting behavioral and social outcomes produce a great deal of concern within the STPP, there are also more immediate impacts caused by suspension and expulsion. Students are significantly more likely to be arrested during the time they are suspended or expelled compared to the hours they are under the school's supervision (Monahan et al., 2014). Students who are suspended are more likely to be unsupervised and potentially interact with other out-of-school youth, which can increase risk of interaction with the legal system (Wallace et al., 2008).

ZTP are also intricately connected with students being forced into interaction with the criminal legal system (Morris, 2016). Between mandated charges enforced by ZTP and the increasing presence of police in schools (Na & Gottfredson, 2013), many school-based incidents now require students be charged, fined, sent to court, or otherwise entangled within the criminal legal system (Connery, 2020; Petteruti, 2011). For example, in 2013 Kiera Wilmot, a Black female student, was suspended and charged with a felony offense for an explosion on school grounds after an incident which she described as a science experiment gone wrong (Lush, 2013). These trends hold true even for young children. There has been more than one documented case of children of color as young as six being arrested for tantrums in a kindergarten classroom (Morris, 2016). As such, ZTP not only places children at risk for engaging in behaviors outside of school supervision that can result in arrest, but the school itself uses the criminal legal system as a method of punishment attached to zero-tolerance practices.

2.4 Restorative Justice Practices

One of the most popular interventions designed to curtail punitive discipline strategies that uphold the STPP is restorative justice (RJ). Indigenous tribes in New Zealand originated the use of RJ practices as a way of repairing the relationship and addressing the harm caused between an offender and the individual or community that was wronged (Gumz & Grant, 2009). RJ is focused on fostering relationships, accountability for the harm caused, and an emphasis on the reparation of the harm done rather than the Western societal practice of punitive retribution and punishment (Fronius et al., 2019). These goals have often been achieved from a framework of reintegrative shaming which incorporates an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, potential actions, and a reacceptance of the offender back into the community (Fronius et al., 2019; Gumz & Grant, 2009). Collective mediation is a staple of restorative practices and is exemplified in group meetings known as restorative conferences or circles.

RJ has grown from its origins in the Māori and other indigenous tribes in New Zealand and Australia and has become popularized globally with implementation emerging in parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and later in the United States (Joseph, 2018). RJ practices were first popularized within dominant U.S. society in the criminal justice system during the 1970s as a method of addressing harm through reconciliation between victim and offender rather than utilizing harsh punishment (Fronius et al., 2019). RJ has been a growing movement within social work practice as it aligns well with the ethics and values of the profession (Gumz & Grant, 2009). The implementation of RJ in schools first began in Australia before being operationalized in the United States (Fronius et al., 2019). In the U.S., RJ was implemented as a method of countering the rising rate of suspensions and expulsions occurring from zero-tolerance policies in the 1990s and 2000s (Teasley, 2014). Scholars have also used the terms restorative approaches or restorative practices

27

to refer to RJ (Welsh & Little, 2018). For the purposes of this dissertation, restorative justice (RJ), restorative practices, and restorative approaches are used interchangeably.

Because RJ has become a popular approach towards discipline practices within schools, it has also begun to have diverse methods of application within various settings, school districts, and states. RJ is therefore better understood as a framework or a philosophy rather than a strict set of rules and procedures (Vaandering, 2013; Joseph, 2018). Despite these discrepancies and room for location-based variability, RJ can best be described as "a broad term that encompasses a growing social movement to institutionalize peaceful and non-punitive approaches for addressing harm, responding to violations of legal and human rights, and problem solving" (Fronius et al., 2016, p.1).

Many restorative practices are used in different settings and with unique styles at different schools. There is no official body of regulation or oversight although there are organizations that offer comprehensive intervention services and supports. As such, RJ can look very different depending on where it is being used. The Advancement Project (2014) provides a list of many of the activities and techniques utilized within RJ to foster positive school climate and address conflict as it arises. Interventions include but are not limited to: community conferences to build communal climate inside and outside the school, programs focused on relationships and climate, community service as a form of punishment, peer juries to discuss how and why an issue could be resolved, programs to build problem-solving and self-control skills for students, peer mediation, youth leadership programs, circle processing to bring stakeholders together to respond to conflicts as well as develop plans to mitigate issues before they occur, and services focused on social-emotional learning. RJ often necessitates the inclusion of a practitioner, frequently a social worker or school counselor, though not every school utilizes this approach. Current evidence indicates

that irrespective of programmatic nuances of how these practices are utilized, for a RJ model to be most efficacious it should be embedded within the school culture or ethos (González, 2012; Beckman et al., 2012).

To date, research has indicated several positive effects associated with restorative practices (Darling-Hammond, 2020). In several studies, RJ has been shown to reduce expulsion and suspension (Armour, 2013), increase academic outcomes (Jain et al., 2014), decrease absenteeism (Baker, 2009), and enhance school climate (McMorris et al., 2013). However, while RJ has emerged as a leading practice for addressing the STPP, scholars have noted that important gaps in the literature remain and that early studies on RJ have lacked the appropriate designs to demonstrate causality or replicability, suggesting that there is an important need for more research (Song & Swearer, 2016; Fronius et al., 2019; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2020).

Three randomized controlled trials have been conducted to date (Song et al., 2020). In a randomized controlled trial conducted by the RAND Corporation in the Pittsburgh Public Schools District, Augustine and colleagues (2018) found a significant reduction in exclusionary discipline, students being placed in alternative school environments, and racial disparities in discipline practices between Black and white students. They also reported an improvement in teachers' assessments of the school climate, school safety, and leadership. However, it is worth noting that middle schoolers in the RJ schools saw declining academic performance, with math scores worsening to a statistically significant degree for Black students. Moreover, the difference in students arrested between RJ and non-RJ schools was null, suggesting that perhaps RJ as it was implemented in this study was not mitigating the criminal legal side of the process (Augustine et al., 2018). Research has not yet fully demonstrated that RJ effectively addresses racial disparities in discipline. Joseph (2018) reported that while discipline reduced for all students in a school using

RJ practices, racial disparities persisted for Black boys and girls. Despite some of these limitations, the early indication from these controlled trials is generally positive and warrants continued implementation and research (Song et al., 2020).

2.5 Teachers' Racialized Perception of Behaviors and Role in Exclusionary Discipline

Administrators, teachers, and staff hold tremendous power within schools and are essential participants in the effective implementation of school-based interventions such as RJ or trauma-informed care. To date, several studies have found that one of the most significant predictors of restorative practices success is principal supervision and engagement with the intervention (Payne & Welch, 2013; Sumner et al., 2010). Similarly, compelling arguments have been made that teachers, white teachers particularly, play a fundamental role in sustaining the STPP (Bryan, 2017). Given the high rates of explicit and implicit biases found among teachers (Starck et al., 2020) and findings which suggest that teachers are important figures in implementing RJ practices (Mayworm et al., 2016), there is a clear need to further examine the role of teachers' racial attitudes as a mediating factor of school discipline outcomes.

Teachers' perceptions, expectations, and biases play a crucial role in the disciplinary process (McNeal, 2016; Santiago-Rosario et al., 2021). Education research has provided thorough documentation of the differential treatment of students depending on the child's race, as well as illuminated how teachers' treatment contributes to racial disparities in achievement, discipline, and other racial stratification in schools (Warikoo et al., 2016). It is essential to note that both explicit and implicit bias play a pivotal role in these outcomes (Starck et al., 2020). This dispels the notion that only direct and intentional forms of prejudice negatively impact students and

instead recognizes that implicit biases can also have profound implications for students' achievement and discipline (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2018).

Research indicates that teachers are more likely to anticipate misconduct from Black students and misconstrue the behaviors of Black students as more serious and in need of discipline (Gilliam et al., 2016; Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Often this results in teachers interpreting the subjective behaviors (e.g., defiance, classroom disruption, disrespect) of Black students as more intentional and malicious and therefore as more deserving of punishment. For example, Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) provided teachers with hypothetical vignettes describing a student misbehaving which included a name meant to signal if the student was white or Black. The description of the misconduct was left ambiguous, subjective, and non-violent. They found that for students with traditionally Black names in the vignettes, teachers were more likely to indicate they would suspend the student, recommend harsher discipline, predict future misbehavior from the student, and believe that the misbehavior suggested other more serious implications.

Similar to the research done by Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015), Kunesh and Noltemeyer (2019) also used vignettes depicting misbehavior with teachers using student names meant to indicate the student's race. In this study, it was found that when a teacher identified the student as Black, they were more likely to believe that classroom misbehavior would occur again. The researchers suggest that "some teachers attribute the misbehavior of Black male students to more stable causes, which may lead them to alter their behavior toward these student" (Kunesh & Noltemeyer, 2019, p. 471). The idea of behavioral stability can cause behavioral reputations for students, which in turn may impact teacher discipline decision making. To elaborate, when a student is seen as "troubled" or lacking "impulse control" they are frequently punished for their

misbehaviors, whereas students who do not have reputations can have their actions viewed as "uncharacteristic" and go unpunished for the same behavior (Rueda, 2015, p. 280). Therefore, a teacher's racial bias can inform a student's behavioral reputation, or whether or not the teacher believes the student will engage in a behavior again, and subsequently impact discipline outcomes.

A particular area of focus within the research has examined how teachers' perceptions, informed by racial beliefs and stereotypes, of Black students' language, tone of voice, and communication can contribute to inequitable discipline outcomes (Ferguson, 2000; Morris, 2007; Godley, 2012). Scholarship has documented ways in which teachers misidentify Black students talk as disruptive to the learning environment, disrespectful, and rude (Koonce, 2012; Morris, 2005; Rex, 2006). Teachers are also more likely to view Black students as being more deliberate in their behaviors and as such are more likely to assume that the student is acting with malicious intent to disrupt the class or give the teacher attitude (Ferguson, 2000; Morris, 2007).

In a recent study, Santiago-Rosario and colleagues (2021) found correlational evidence that although Black students received disproportionate office discipline referrals compared to white peers, an increase in teacher expectations for student outcomes reduced the disparity between Black, Latinx, and white students. In fact, they reported that teacher expectations of student outcomes accounted for approximately 21% of the disparities seen in office discipline referrals between Black and white peers. This exploratory research provides a key insight into the potential mechanisms of implicit bias, teacher expectations, and school discipline outcomes. However, more research is needed to illuminate if there is indeed a causal relationship between these factors.

This experience of teachers' racialized attitudes and school discipline occurs in similar but unique manifestations for both Black boys and girls. Ferguson (2000) offered a groundbreaking insight into the experiences of Black boys in schools, discussing how Black boys were often

negatively labelled by educators. She argued that for Black boys, their language was construed as combative, hostile, and distracting because racial biases informed teachers' perceptions of the children as more adult and threatening. Conversely, for youth of other races who engaged in verbal disagreements with teachers, these same behaviors were viewed as normal forms of boundary testing. For Black girls, one of the most common themes to emerge in the literature is that teachers perceive Black girls to be too loud, aggressive, and "talking with an attitude" (Koonce, 2012, p. 26; Morris, 2005, 2007; Morris & Perry, 2017; Lei, 2003). This social construction of how language is deemed appropriate or inappropriate structurally positions Black girls to be at greater risk of exclusionary discipline (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020).

Several studies have evaluated teachers' color-blind racial attitudes. For example, one study used Bonilla-Silva's (2018) four frames of color-blind racial ideology when interviewing urban teachers located in the Chicago area (Stoll, 2014). In this study, Stoll (2014) found that teachers frequently used abstract liberalism, cultural racism, and minimization of race when discussing education policy and race-based policy. Further, she reported that teachers often defined a color-conscious teacher as someone who held no preconceptions about race, who treated all students equally based on race, and actively worked to foster a classroom environment that is not influenced by race. Stoll concluded that teachers' definitions of color-consciousness were closer to the study's definition of color-blind ideologies. Similarly, more recent work has found that despite teachers endorsing the importance of race, teachers often held views around topics such as police violence that reflected a color-blind approach (Alvarez & Milner, 2018). However, despite the growing literature base examining the prevalence of color-blind attitudes among teachers, there is a dearth of empirical research examining teachers' color-blind attitudes (Castro-Atwater, 2008), and even less research examining how these beliefs relate to discipline.

It is important to draw connections between the biases research has demonstrated among teachers and the disparate outcomes in punishment that take place in schools. Teachers function as essential gatekeepers into school discipline as they are often responsible for giving office discipline referrals in their classroom. In other words, teachers have tremendous power in deciding which behaviors are punished (Ferguson, 2000). Based on the evidence that documents how teachers negatively perceive Black students, the power teachers hold in disciplinary decisions, and the disparate outcomes that dominate exclusionary discipline, there is much reason to be concerned with teacher racial bias and school discipline (McNeal, 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). However, limited research has specifically examined how psychological measurements of bias associate with disciplinary outcomes (Chin et al., 2020). One of the few studies to specifically examine this phenomenon found that counties with higher rates of racial bias, measured through the Project Implicit website, had higher rates of racial disciplinary disparities (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). As such, while much is known about the challenges of racial bias in education, crucial gaps remain to be explored to better identify how bias and discipline outcomes are associated.

2.5.1 Positive Impacts of Teacher Racial Critical Consciousness and Anti-Racist Professional Development

While significant concerns around teacher biases exist, there is also promising evidence that these issues can be mitigated through training, empathy, and cross-cultural socialization. A study focused on providing an empathetic mindset to teachers via online exercises found that year-long student suspension rates were halved from 9.6% to 4.8% after intervention (Okonofua et al., 2016). Cook and colleagues (2018) detail promising evidence in addressing discipline disparities through an intervention focused on relationship building and intentional elimination of biases.

Boucher (2016) describes a process of self-interrogation to identify manifestations of whiteness in the classroom which led to an increase in solidarity across racial, ethnic, and cultural divides. Godley and Loretto (2013) detail how critical pedagogies can be used to develop counternarratives that combat racist language ideologies and disrupt essentialized notions of racial identity. Critical consciousness has been identified as a means of achieving culturally relevant discipline, a form of discipline that utilizes teachers' self-reflection to challenge ethnocentrism and bias in order to use culturally appropriate classroom management strategies, to bolster the learning process and mitigate racial disparities in school discipline (Marcucci & Elmesky, 2020). Indeed, as the evidence continues to mount supporting the necessity of racial socialization and critical consciousness, there are growing calls for the continued infusion of anti-racism principles, praxis, and racial identity development within schools (Utt & Tochluk, 2020; Escayg, 2020). However, despite the promising evidence of anti-racist professional development, it remains largely isolated from one of the most prominent forms of discipline reform, restorative justice.

2.6 Bridging Anti-Racism, Professional Development, and Restorative Justice

There is a growing movement that teachers and school personnel should be trained in culturally relevant and socially just practices around race, racial privilege, identity, and multiculturalism in the classroom (Anderson et al., 2019; Escayg, 2020; Utt & Tochluk, 2020; Allen & White-Smith, 2015). Some have recently argued that this knowledge should be coupled with other school interventions related to discipline and mental health to create a comprehensive interprofessional framework for interventions (Song et al., 2020; Joseph et al., 2020). This stands to challenge the current norm, as many of the interventions offered in school (i.e., RJ) are

frequently implemented as race-neutral, color-blind, and ahistorical. Moreover, teacher professional development is often an unexamined component of RJ intervention research (Mayworm et al., 2016), and when professional development does occur, it typically does not include a specific focus on race or the racial discipline gap (Dhaliwal et al., 2023).

Some interventionists have argued that RJ addresses racial inequity inherently and as such, does not require an explicit racial justice component to improve its effects on racial disparities on school discipline (Song et al., 2020). However, strong evidence suggests that RJ practices alone do not mitigate racial disparities (Romano & Almengor, 2021; Joseph, 2018), and an unexamined use of RJ can in fact perpetuate disparities and school-based oppression (Meiners, 2011, 2016). A recent study conducted in California found that nearly half of educators trained in restorative practices believed that closing the racial discipline gap is a high priority for their school district (Dhaliwal et al., 2023). However, this study also found that teacher beliefs around what factors are driving the racial discipline gap (i.e., student behavior, parenting, community factors, income level, implicit bias, teacher/administrator discretion) were far more scattered and inconsistent. Because teachers are essential figures in implementing RJ (Mayworm et al., 2016) and evidence suggests that teacher racial biases have the potential to impede social justice in schools (Starck et al., 2020), there is a compelling argument to implement RJ using anti-racist professional development (Song et al., 2020).

2.6.1 Challenges of Anti-Racist Professional Development

While there are numerous organizations providing racial bias training, the efficacy of these endeavors remains an issue of some doubt and ongoing examination. Concerns range from a lack of empirically validated methods among interventions (Paluck & Green, 2009), to a growing

evidence-base that suggests the benefits of these trainings are temporary and do little to address explicit forms of racism (Lai et al., 2016), and, most concerning, some interventions have gone on to strengthen racial bias rather than diminish them (McIntosh et al., 2014). Conversely, some research has indicated that training can reduce implicit bias levels for more than two months (Devine et al., 2012).

McIntosh and colleagues (2014) argue that part of the issue with current professional development on bias is their overreliance on a unidimensional conceptualization of racial bias and disproportionate discipline. As such, they argue that efforts to curtail bias provided by professional development training should be accompanied by structural policy and practices. For example, they recommend the use of "regular collection and reporting of discipline data disaggregated by race and district policies that support equity and have accountability" (McIntosh et al., 2014, p. 14). They argue that school policy and practices function as malleable moderators of explicit and implicit bias, which can improve proximal outcomes related to disproportionate discipline. Therefore, while professional development and training can be beneficial, it is essential that it is implemented within a contextual framework that requires altered behavior to help enforce change among teachers' racial attitudes.

The historical and political context that surrounds this study also holds significant implications and presents challenges to the work of color-conscious professional development. While efforts to dismantle white supremacy, systemic racism, and racial disparities in education (and numerous other institutions) have been led by critical scholars, abolitionists, and social justice activists for some time (Sojoyner, 2013; Morris, 2016; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), a pivotal inflection point in the journey towards racial justice within this country has emerged in recent years. The protests, marches, and demonstrations as a response to the abhorrent violence against Black people that

37

have occurred, especially since the murder of George Floyd, signify the potential for an emerging critical consciousness of the racial inequities that exist in our society. Some steps have been made to begin to respond to this growing awareness. For example, the Centers for Disease Control director has officially labeled racism a serious public health threat (Wamsley, 2021).

However, a great deal of work remains to be done in order to see fundamental change occur in our society, and many are unsure if substantial gains are being made (Burch et al., 2021). Indeed, a national sample of white Americans found that while many agree with small private actions such as educating yourself about racism, fewer agreed to things such as living in a racially diverse community or having racial issues addressed by elected officials and policymakers (Burch et al. 2021). Moreover, despite the growing calls for anti-racist work, debiasing, and intentionality in dismantling racial disparities in schools, there are also escalating forms of resistance that oppose these goals. First, there is a dissonance between a general endorsement of social justice values and tangible steps towards actively addressing systemic racism within institutions such as education or policing (Alvarez & Milner, 2018; Bonilla-Silva, 2018). This means that teachers may agree with general rhetoric around anti-racism but fail to enact any action within their classroom to support these ideas. Second, in more direct opposition to the work around anti-racist education—various school districts and state legislatures have passed laws regarding the prohibition of critical race theory, limited how teachers can discuss certain topics around race and racism, and banned books from schools (Schwartz, 2022). As such, there is a clear tension emerging as we enter this crossroad as a society, and teachers will play a fundamental role in determining what path is taken within education.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory (CRT) and ecological systems theory (EST) are the theoretical frameworks used in this study to understand the role that teachers' racial attitudes play in school discipline. Both theories emphasize the importance of multilevel systemic influences on individual beliefs and actions, which contextualize the importance of racism, power, and policy within school discipline. In particular, CRT offers a means of understanding how color-blind ideologies, purportedly race-neutral policies, and assumptions/norms of whiteness in education contribute to teacher development and subsequently the racial discipline gap. Moreover, sub-theories such as CRT in Education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016) provide incisive and specific examinations into the problem. EST complements CRT as it situates individual actors (teachers, students) within dynamic and reciprocal frameworks of power, policy, and culture—elucidating internal and external pressures on teacher decision making (Rothery, 2016). EST promotes a comprehensive approach to systems while acknowledging the importance of individual actors and key leverage points within the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) (Kalvesmaki & Tulman, 2017). This approach ensures a viewpoint that acknowledges the historical and contemporary systemic injustices Black students navigate in schools while acknowledging the agency, resistance, and joy that coexist within oppressive structures.

2.7.1 Critical Race Theory in Education

This study understands U.S. education through a CRT perspective, which contends that racism is an inherent, endemic, normalized, frequent, and central element within societal functions, institutions, and laws (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT emerged out of critical legal studies and

rapidly expanded into other disciplines such as education, criminal legal studies, literature, and public health. CRT has informed aspects of the #BlackLivesMatter movement (Dixson et al., 2016), played an important role in shaping national discussions on class, wealth, crime, immigration, voting rights, and affirmative action, and has inspired the creation of new critical movements for LatCrit, queer-crit studies, TribalCrit, and Muslim civil rights (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). For the purposes of this study, CRT in Education (Ladson-Billings 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2005) is the most pertinent sub-theory that elucidates how racial inequities manifest in the school environment (Solorzano, 1998), particularly around intersections of race with other aspects of students' identities such as gender (Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020), class, and ability (Zweifler, 2009; Joseph, 2020). While CRT has numerous principles, several are highlighted as they most clearly shape the perspective of this study: 1) the ordinariness and endemic nature of racism, 2) the social construction of race, 3) intersectionality, and (4) the importance of narrative and subjective ways of knowing.

The first core tenet, the endemic and ordinary nature of racism, posits that racism is pervasive throughout societal institutions and legal structures. The ubiquity of racism makes it difficult to address or even simply acknowledge at times because the manifestations of racism appear neutral or lack a visible demonstration of malicious racial prejudice by an individual actor. Moreover, color-blind strategies to confront racism are shallow and insufficient because they focus on the most obvious and explicit forms of racism (e.g., individual actions) while leaving the more subtle and ultimately more dangerous forms of racial bias and discrimination (e.g., racist institutional policy and legal proceedings) unaddressed.

A strong example of the endemic nature of racism within seemingly race-neutral policy is zero-tolerance practices (ZTP) in schools. CRT suggests that systems focused on meritocracy and

neutrality within policies often instead replicate oppression through a guise of impartiality (Crenshaw, 1995). While ZTP purport to be race-neutral, the data makes it clear that racialized discipline is taking place within our schools. National school suspension rates have nearly doubled since the 1970s, from 3.7% to 7.4% of public-school students suspended at least once in an academic year (Koon, 2013). White students have experienced a modest increase from 3% to 5% since the 1970s. Conversely, Latinx and Black students have seen their suspension rates increased drastically from 3% to 7% and from 6% to 16% respectively (Koon, 2013). Significantly, scholars have reported that Black students are not acting out more often than their white peers but that they are nevertheless significantly more likely to be disciplined and for longer periods of times, even for small violations (Rudd, 2014). Schools with higher percentages of Black and Latinx students are more likely to use discipline to exclude students from academic spaces compared to schools with majority white student-bodies, which are more inclined to provide medical or psychological interventions (Swayne, 2015).

Despite the rampant racial disparities found in discipline practices, color-blind rhetoric that denies the role of racism is prevalent (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and little is done by teachers (or administrators) to meaningfully discuss the impacts of racism in education (Milner, 2015; Alvarez, 2018; Delale O'Connor & Graham, 2018). In fact, research suggests that white teachers may specifically avoid talking about race and racism, particularly when the topic is perceived to be about teacher-student dynamics such as conflict and discipline (Deckman, 2017). The tendency to manage, overlook, tone down, or otherwise ignore race, racism, and school conflict has been found to exacerbate the harm in these situations for students (Lewis, 2017). CRT contends conversations about race and racism must enter the school in an effort to mitigate racial disparities in discipline and other academic outcomes (Milner, 2017; Carter et al., 2017).

41

Second, CRT's embrace of social construction allows for a more nuanced understanding of both race and how behavior is defined as normal or deviant. This tenet argues that even though there is a consistent scientific refutation of race as a true biological construct that creates meaningful difference between races, race does constitute a compelling social construct that impacts people's lived experience (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lewis, 2017). Within schools, Lei (2003) presented research that exhibited how Black girls were perceived as loud, aggressive, and oppositional which made them structurally positioned to be vulnerable to disciplinary action and the subjects of frequent and harsh school discipline. Comparably, Hines-Datiri and Cater Andrews (2020) argue that cultural definitions of white femininity make Black girls acutely vulnerable to ZTPs through socially constructed definitions of what constitutes proper "feminine behavior." In that spirit, the social construction of deviance, normalcy, and educational goals are all scrutinized within this framework. Dutil (2020) argues that CRT contextualizes educational policies as a function of social control and oppression based on white supremacy. In other words, how misbehavior, deviance, and conduct are defined within schools is also a part of a socially constructed set of norms, which emerge out of a desire for social control.

Third, this study utilizes intersectionality as a guiding paradigm to examine the ways in which oppression, power, and social identity can cross to generate unique experiences (Crenshaw, 1994). As was previously discussed, racism, sexism, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression create extreme risks for students (Zweifler, 2009). However, through an intersectional lens these forms of oppression are recognized as interrelated, compounding, and dynamic. Students occupy numerous social identities, each with the constructs of, power, social context, complexities, inequality, and social justice (Collins, 2019). For example, sexism intersects with racism to create gendered experiences of school discipline for Black girls and boys (Hines-Datiri & Carter

42

Andrews, 2020) and even impacts the process of how research has been conceptualized and implemented (Annamma et al., 2019). I used an intersectional framework to guide how I conceptualized each stage of this study.

Finally, CRT critiques many of the traditional hallmarks of methodological rigor as co-constructed elements of colonialism and white supremacy (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). An emphasis on quantitative research at the expense of qualitative methods often dismisses important knowledge from marginalized communities because it is deemed subjective, while ignoring ways in which quantitative methods designed by researchers in position of power contain subjectivity as well. CRT highlights the importance of narrative, counter-narratives, and subjective ways of knowing (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). As such, I prioritized mixed methods in my study because I wanted to ensure that teachers' narratives on race, racism, and discipline policy were included in my analysis (Milner & Howard, 2013).

2.7.2 Ecological Systems Theory

Since its development, ecological systems theory (EST) has been used as a way to understand the reciprocal relationships between an individual and their environment in a way that expands beyond the limited confines of individual theories and practice (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Siporin, 1980; Rothery, 2016). EST categorizes five interconnected and nested systems: 1) microsystem, 2) mesosystem, 3) exosystem, 4) macrosystem, and 5) chronosystem (Gray, 2019; Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Using a student as an example, each level in the hierarchy is briefly explained. The microsystem refers to the unique identity of a student such as their biological and genetic makeup, family, friends, and their unique religious/cultural beliefs. The mesosystem examines the interaction between differing locations such as home, school, and neighborhood for

each child. The exosystem refers to the settings that a youth may not directly engage with but has direct implications on their lives such as the school district, local businesses, parental workplace, parent teacher alliances, and other similar networks. The macrosystem is comprised of the broader society. This includes the prevailing beliefs and organizational structures that define customs, policies, and cultural attitudes. Laws, media, political systems, economics, and nationality are examples of the macrosystem. Finally, the chronosystem is used to acknowledge the sociohistorical context that influences people's lives.

Through these interdependent and hierarchical systems students, teachers, administrators, and schools themselves are nested within interlocking structures that inform outcomes. While context can narrow choices, students maintain some level of power and agency to create or modify their educational environment (Rothery, 2016). Moreover, students and teachers are seen as actors who inform their environments while simultaneously being shaped by their context. When seeking to enact change using a systems approach, Kalvesmaki and Tulman (2017) argue that one must identify key leverage points across systems to create coordinated disruptions within the STPP.

Applied to this study, EST provides several key insights that better illuminate the dynamics between teachers, school discipline, and the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP). Indeed, through an excessive focus on behaviors, meritocracy, and individual accountability, the United States' educational apparatus has allowed for a system to emerge that lacks the broader vision and nuance to better situate and understand the complexity of human needs and interventions. As Rothery (2016) argues, "when we try to understand ourselves, our clients, or our work by focusing on one [the person or the environment] at the expense of the other, we become reductionistic and prone to mistakes" (p. 88). As such, EST offers an alternative framework that considers both the role of

the individual as well as broader contributing factors such as school policy, school resources/funding, racial attitudes, and school climate.

First, EST recognizes the role of power in decision making and outcomes. While the agency of a student should not be dismissed outright, EST acknowledges that power and oppression are formidable moderators of a student's environment and therefore play an influential role in determining discipline outcomes (Rothery, 2016; Greene, 2008; Bourdieu, 1984; Houston, 2002). Racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and more function as potent tools of power and oppression which shape interactions between students, staff, and administrators (Kane, 2013; Joseph et al., 2020; Hines-Datiri & Carter Andrews, 2020; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Wun, 2016a, 2016b). EST helps better frame the argument that schools are not neutral spaces, they are social systems informed by our historical and cultural contexts which result in unique experiences for each student informed by their social identity. This helps elucidate the functions that manifest in the subsequent disparities in outcomes such as discipline, dropout, and arrest.

Second, the hierarchical approach to systems, which is a hallmark of EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), helps explain how schools and their subsequent policies are nested within larger social, economic, political, and cultural systems (Greene, 2008; Rothery, 2016; Gray, 2019). As such, schools are susceptible, malleable, and adaptive to external political pressure, economic demands, and cultural norms (Greene, 2008; Rothery, 2016; Gray, 2019). Noguera (2003) explains, "as social institutions charged with the task of preparing and socializing young people for adult roles, schools generally reflect many of the characteristics of the society in which they are located" (p. 343). The STPP can be understood through several forms of external pressure that manifest as differential impacts for students of color. For example, ZTP mirrored tough on crime policies that gained prominence in the 1990s. ZTP were designed to target individuals in the possession of a

weapon or drugs as a reflection of political and social values around crime, violence, and race in America, which ultimately resulted in the unjust criminalization of students of color within schools (Brady, 2002; Hanson, 2005).

Moreover, the hierarchical pressures of the chronosystem, macrosystem, and mesosystem inform the realities of how a teacher operates within their classroom. Expectations around testing, lack of emotional-support resources, limited supplies and funding all shape the realities of how a teacher conceptualizes discipline and pedagogy. Take for example the external forces felt by schools through the federal and state policies related to standardized testing, epitomized by the No Child Left Behind Act, which created immense economic pressures on schools to attain specific academic performances or lose funding. Figlio (2006) reported that students who underperformed academically were more likely to experience longer forms of school exclusion during school testing than students who did not have a history of low academic performance, even when the same behavioral violations took place. Figlio further suggested that while students who underperform tend to be disciplined for longer periods of time overall throughout the academic year, the gap between high-performing and low-performing students grew considerably during the testing window. In other words, schools under economic pressure through federal oversight would exclude specific children during testing in order to meet certain performance thresholds. This phenomenon was described by the Advancement Project (2010) as the "test, punish, and push out" process. Through this external pressure, educators' focus shifts from helping each student reach their potential towards getting as many students as possible to reach a "proficient" level for a test and removing students who impede that progress (Advancement Project, 2010). As such, EST highlights how external elements ranging from school climate to national funding are clear mediators that should be acknowledged when evaluating teacher discipline strategies.

3.0 Methodology

To fill the gaps in the literature identified in the previous chapter, I developed the following research questions:

1. In schools utilizing restorative practices, what are teacher racial attitudes, and do they vary by social location?

2. In schools utilizing restorative practices, how do teachers' racial attitudes relate to teachers' perceptions of student behavior, school safety, restorative practices, racial disparities in discipline outcomes, and their implementation of discipline practices?

3. Are teachers in schools that use restorative practices interested in professional development focused on increasing awareness of implicit bias and anti-racist teaching practices and what are the perceived barriers and facilitators to these trainings?

I engaged in this exploratory study to understand teachers' racial attitudes and the effects of said attitudes on school discipline outcomes at schools that are utilizing restorative practices. This study serves to investigate potential relationships and acknowledge the interconnectedness of teacher racial attitudes and school discipline practices. I chose to answer these research questions using diverse methodologies. As such, this study used a mixed methods approach to triangulate findings across multiple data sources. I viewed this design as a necessary approach because racial attitudes are often difficult to measure due to social desirability bias (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Moreover, as Engel and Schutt (2012) argue, qualitative methods allow for a greater depth of understanding that can augment and enhance quantitative methods.

3.1 Site Description

3.1.1 Restorative School Communities

I conducted this dissertation in coordination with an innovative school-based research-to-practice restorative justice program that is referred to in this study as "Restorative School Communities" (RSC). RSC is located in a metropolitan area in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. This project seeks to help all students in their local schools through the implementation and evaluation of school-based restorative practice and school climate initiatives. The purpose of the program is to support teachers, students, and staff in building relational/communal strengths so that exclusionary discipline is reduced in schools in an effort to build safer schools, improve academic outcomes, and reduce youth involvement with the criminal legal system (Huguley et al., 2020). RSC utilizes a climate model which visualizes an integrative approach to school discipline and the social/relational environment. This model uses a tiered, hierarchical design to the intervention which incorporates community buy-in, relational climate, discipline policies, staff, integrated behavioral systems, a focus on race and social context, and systemic policies/supports.

RSC has an existing infrastructure to study teachers and school discipline outcomes via ongoing data collection across numerous schools in their region. With a team of researchers and restorative practice coordinators, RSC has a strong connection to the educational community in the region and is well-equipped to conduct research across multiple school districts. As such, I collaborated with RSC on data collection. Their team was conducting research connected to broader questions on restorative practices, school climate, and academic outcomes. I joined the

data team at RSC to examine specific items on teacher racial attitudes as an essential factor in discipline outcomes at schools with a commitment to using restorative practices.

3.1.2 School Sites

This study utilized 11 schools, nine public and two charter schools, in its research. While the schools varied in the specific grades they served, the range of grades served by the schools in this sample is K through 8. All schools in this study are located within a metropolitan area in the Mid-Atlantic United States and were partnering with the restorative practice program, Restorative School Communities (RSC), at the start of survey data collection in the fall of 2022. All 11 schools had begun using restorative practices by the 2022-2023 school year; however, the length of each respective partnership does vary, as some had worked with RSC for years while others had only begun in the fall of 2022. All 11 schools participated in the teacher survey. Four of the 11 schools also participated in the in-depth interviewing process in addition to the survey.

3.2 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected in three forms: 1) teacher interviews, 2) teacher survey data, and 3) aggregated school level data regarding demographic information and out-of-school suspension incidents using state-issued reports. Data collection for this study occurred at several intervals and reflects cross-sectional data from both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. First, in-depth interviews were conducted by me and several members of RSC over the summer of 2022. During these interviews, teachers were asked to respond to questions about the prior school

year (i.e., 2021-2022). Next, teacher survey data collection was done primarily by members of RSC over the course of several months during the fall of 2022. I attended several survey collection events but in an observatory role. In their surveys, teachers provided information focused primarily on the 2022-2023 school year. Finally, I compiled and analyzed school-level data on demographics, academic performance, and out-of-school suspension using state-issued reports on the 2021-2022 academic school year. The prior year's discipline data was used because the 2022-2023 discipline statistics are not yet available. While cross-sectional data from different years is not ideal, it is what was available given the constraints of this study.

3.2.1 Recruitment

Teacher survey participants (*N*=357) were recruited from 11 schools using RSC's restorative practices. All in-service teachers in these schools were invited to participate in the survey. Inclusion criteria for the study was in-service teachers working in the 2022-2023 school year at the 11 schools partnering with RSC. These schools varied in ages served but were within the confines of the grades K-8. Recruitment for the survey took place through RSC's existing infrastructure for data collection and was conducted in the fall of 2022 by several members of the RSC research team. While the survey contained items related to color-blind attitudes and discipline practices for this study, it was formed as part of a broader RSC focused project, and as such, included other items related to school environment and restorative practices. The survey was created and disseminated using the online survey tool, Qualtrics. Members of the RSC team went in-person to the school to share the survey with teachers, often during already scheduled all-staff meetings. Teachers completed the survey online on their phone, tablet, or computer during these meetings.

3.2.2 Survey Measures

3.2.2.1 Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale

For the purposes of this study, teacher racial attitudes were measured using the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) developed by Neville and colleagues (2000). The CoBRAS was designed to measure an individual's color-blind beliefs, or to what extent they believe that race "should not and does not matter" in students' lives or experiences (Neville et al., 2000, p. 60). The CoBRAS contains 20 items scored using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (6). The scale contains three factors: 1) racial privilege, 2) institutional discrimination, and 3) blatant racial issues. This measure is validated and has been used in hundreds of studies, including work done on teachers' racial attitudes for teacher candidate development (Parr, 2020).

In the survey administered to teachers in this study, only one factor from the CoBRAS measure, blatant racial issues, was utilized. This choice was made in part due to spatial constraints of the survey and in an effort to reduce dropouts during the survey by not overburdening teachers with too many items. The factor, blatant racial issues, contains 6 items: "(1) Racism is a major problem in the U.S. ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.33$) (2) Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.* ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.21$) (3) Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.* ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.51$) (4) It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems. ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.46$) (5) It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities. ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.29$) (6) Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.* ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.21$)" All items were scored 1-6 wherein a higher score indicated a more color-conscious

response, and a lower score indicates a more color-blind response. Items with an asterisk were reverse coded to keep scoring orientation consistent.

Of the items included in the blatant racial issues factor, one item was used as the independent variable for all regression analyses. "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension." Justification for this variable's selection is provided in the data analysis plan.

3.2.2.2 Dependent Variables

Survey data included several items that were used as dependent variables to understand how teacher racial attitudes relate to a variety of factors related to school discipline practices. Four dependent variables were identified in this study for analysis.

Office discipline referral practices were measured by the question, "Whenever you were in-person last year (2021-2022), how many office referrals did you make in a typical week for student behaviors?" Respondents were given a numerical range of answers between 1-20 or more. This item had 251 respondents ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 2.75$).

Perception of school safety was measured using 5 items. "(1) Students get into physical fights, (2) Students steal things, (3) Students seriously physically threaten each other, (4) Students vandalize others' or school property, (5) Students carry weapons." All items were measured on a scale from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost every day). The dependent variable used in analysis was the total sum score of these five items, with a final range of 5-25, wherein a higher score indicated a greater sense of danger, and a lower score indicated a greater sense of safety for teachers. This item had 349 respondents ($M = 11.62$, $SD = 4.28$).

Perception of student behavior was measured using a ten-item scale related to student-to-student relationships. Items included prompts such as, "Students respectfully listen to each other in class discussions." Each question utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never)

to 5 (almost always). The dependent measure used in analysis was a teacher's total sum across all 10 items. Teacher responses could range from 10 (negative perception of student behavior) to 50 (positive perception of student behavior). This item had 354 respondents ($M = 30.86$, $SD = 5.62$).

Perception of restorative practices was measured using the item, "How effective have you found the Restorative School Communities components (circles, youth leadership programs, etc.)?" and utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective). This item had 353 respondents ($M = 3.6$, $SD = .95$).

3.2.2.3 Control Variables

Regression models were built using the same control variables regardless of the dependent variable used. I wanted to ensure that the importance of a teachers' racial attitudes were clearly demonstrated within each of the models, and as such, I controlled for several individual and school-level variables that past research suggests might have confounding relationships. In this section, I describe each of the control variables used and provide justifications as to why I included them in the model.

The first control variable was teacher tenure, measuring the length of time a teacher had worked in their school district. This ordinal item had 4 categories, (1) 0-2 years, (2) 3-5 years, (3) 6-9 years, and (4) 10 or more years. This item had 356 respondents ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.21$). This control item was selected for several reasons. First, in the correlation matrix I created, I found that teacher tenure was negatively correlated with teacher racial attitude. This suggests that as teacher tenure increased, teachers were less likely to endorse talking about racial issues. Second, qualitative analysis also supported that tenure and color-blind attitudes were closely related. Finally, it was hypothesized that more tenured teachers would have important distinctions between them and their more junior colleagues. For example, I hypothesized that more veteran teachers

53

would be more confident in their classroom management and potentially less likely to use office discipline referrals overall.

Next, grade level was controlled for by dichotomizing elementary (K-5) and middle school (6-8) teachers. The item was dummy-coded so that elementary school was the reference category and middle school was given a value of 1. Elementary school teachers were 66.6% of the sample and middle school teachers represented the remaining 33.4%. This item was included in the model to control for the differences in student behavior, discipline practices, and school climate that are found in elementary schools relative to middle schools. I hypothesized that middle schools would be more likely to use office discipline referrals and that teachers would have reduced views of safety.

I also controlled for teacher classroom efficacy using the item, "I have very effective classroom management skills." This item had a six-point Likert scale response from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) ($n = 356$, $M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.03$). This item was included as an important control variable, as I hypothesized that teachers with greater confidence in their classroom abilities might perceive students more positively, view schools as safer, and make fewer office referrals.

Using state-issued reports from several sources, as described in school level data, I imputed key demographic, disciplinary, and academic outcomes into the dataset as teacher-level variables to control for school-level factors that might affect outcomes. Each of these listed control variables were included at the teacher-level to account for how a school's varying demographics, discipline practices, and academic outcomes might impact teacher behaviors or perceptions.

First, racial composition of each school was measured by the percent of the overall student-body who identified as Black or African American ($N = 357, M = 62.77, SD = 19.34$). Similarly,

the socioeconomic status of each school was included using the percentage of students who were labelled as economically disadvantaged in state-reported data ($N = 357, M = 68.53, SD = 9.31$). These control variables were included because I wanted to demonstrate the role of teachers' racial attitudes in the context of a school's racial composition and socioeconomic status. Prior research has demonstrated that school demographics are important predictors in discipline practices and could likely impact perceptions of students and safety. Moreover, while not the primary focus of the study, I wanted to see if racial composition impacted teacher perceptions across the four models. To do this effectively, I had to control for confounding factors such as SES and academic outcomes, which are discussed later in this section.

Second, total suspensions per 100 students was utilized to approximate overall use of exclusionary discipline ($N = 357, M = 29.26, SD = 30.88$). This item was included to account for the differences in school disciplinary practices. In other words, I wanted to observe teachers' discipline practices, perceptions of students, perceptions of school safety, and perceptions of restorative practices while accounting for the school-level context of how often students were being suspended. Suspension is often an administrative decision and connected to school policy. As such, incorporation of this measure helps control for school discipline practices more broadly and allows for a more accurate examination of teacher-specific discipline practices.

Third, I intended to control for racial disparities in suspensions by examining the ratio of suspensions per 100 students between Black and non-Black students ($N = 357, M = 2.91, SD = .99$). While this was my original plan based on the theoretical construction of the model, when running assumptions of collinearity, I found that the disparity ratio had a high collinearity value and therefore the item was ultimately not included in the final model. More information on this is discussed in the data analysis section of methods.

Finally, I accounted for academic performance by using the percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in their English and Language Arts (ELA) and Math test scores for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, also known as the PSSA. Both Math ($N = 357$, $M = 14.59$, $SD = 8.24$) and ELA ($N = 357$, $M = 29.14$, $SD = 8.03$) scores were used as separate control variables in each model. The inclusion of academic outcomes was intentional to account for how student performance in school might alter teacher perceptions or discipline practices. Because race, SES, and academic outcomes are confounding variables, it was important to ensure that model controlled for each factor.

3.2.2.4 Survey Sample Description

Although the RSC survey was administered at 15 schools to teachers, staff, administrators, and other school professionals, for the purposes of this study, I was only interested in teachers working at schools that were using restorative practices. As such, four of the 15 schools were removed because they were identified as control groups that had not yet begun any restorative practices. This left a total of 11 schools used in the analysis. Additionally, all respondents who identified as staff, administrators, or others were removed from the analysis so that only teachers remained in the dataset. After cleaning the data, there were 357 teacher respondents representing 11 schools all using restorative practices. Teachers were well distributed across schools, as no one school accounted for more than 14% or less than 4.5% of the sample total, and the spread of the sample by school was within acceptable ranges for both skewness and kurtosis.

3.2.3 Teacher Interviews

Teacher interviews (N=18) took place over the summer of 2022. Teachers were identified for interviews through the RSC team, most often through the restorative practice coordinators, at the four participating sites. Participants for interviews were purposively sampled with the help of school leadership and restorative practice coordinators to ensure that a range of races/ethnicities, genders, grades, course specializations, and experience levels were represented. After teachers were identified by the coordinators, they were contacted by me and four other members of the RSC team via a recruitment email script that described the study goals and purposes of the interview. Teachers who participated in the interview were thanked with a $30 gift card.

As a team, we agreed that teachers of color would be interviewed by RSC team members who identified as people of color and white RSC team members were assigned to white teachers. This decision was made consciously in an effort to increase comfort among interviewees when discussing race, racism, and implicit bias. It was believed that both teachers of color and white teachers would be more likely to express their opinions honestly with researchers who shared their racial identity. Restorative practice coordinators who initiated recruitment informed the team of interviewee racial characteristics, and we assigned team members in part based on this information. As such, all but one of the interviews that I personally conducted was with a teacher who identified as white.

The interviews conducted with teachers for this study utilized an in-depth, semi-structured format. Interview length ranged from approximately 45-80 minutes. Interview guides were developed by me and several members of the RSC team. Using an iterative process of development, review, and alterations, a final interview guide was created. While each interviewer followed this guide generally, flexibility was agreed upon to allow for probes and follow-ups

related to unique or intriguing teacher responses. See Appendix A for the full guide used during interviews. I do note that for the purposes of my analysis, only responses specifically related to race, racism, and implicit bias were analyzed.

I conducted eight of the interviews with the remaining ten being conducted by four members of the RSC team. Interviews took place and were recorded via Zoom. Recorded audio from the Zoom interviews were uploaded to the transcription service Happy Scribe by a member of the RSC team. I then reviewed each interview transcript while listening to the audio to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and to include relevant audio cues such as sighs, laughter, pauses, or stuttering.

Because the interviews for this study were being done in conjunction with RSC, the primary focus of the interview was on the efficacy of restorative practices at these various sites. However, the interview protocol was designed to include a section of questions that specifically addressed how teachers talked to students about race, asked about teacher beliefs regarding racial disparities in school discipline outcomes, and elicited information on teacher training regarding implicit bias and anti-racism. Teachers who were recruited for interviews were not prompted that the interview would include a focus specifically on racism in school discipline, and, as such, it is unlikely that the sample is over-represented with teachers who specifically wanted to discuss race and racism in their school. The elements of the interviews not relevant to teacher racial attitudes and school discipline practices were not used in data analysis for this dissertation.

I had two primary goals for these interviews. First, interviews were conducted to better understand teacher racial attitudes and to provide context for the findings from the survey. Because discussions on race and racism can be limited by social desirability, I asked teachers to elaborate on how they discuss race and racism in their classroom, how they explain and understand racial

disparities in discipline outcomes, and to provide examples of each. This format allowed for an open-ended discussion of their beliefs and provided me the opportunity to identify when contradictions or dissonance emerged between a teacher's stated beliefs and their actions.

Second, I wanted to learn to what extent teachers believe that racial critical consciousness and professional development around race-based issues is an important or effective element of school discipline reform. Teacher buy-in is an essential factor for any intervention to be successful. As such, understanding teachers' general attitudes and openness to implicit bias and anti-racist professional development is a central aspect of any future programmatic development. Moreover, I wanted to explore what teachers perceive as the barriers and facilitators to cultivating critical consciousness through professional development within the school environment. Numerous professional development interventions are already in existence both to address school discipline broadly as well as to reduce incidents of implicit bias or prejudice in the classroom. However, teacher feedback on the facilitating and hindering factors of such interventions remains an underexplored but essential feature for future professional development. The use of interviews allowed for an open discussion regarding what teachers liked and what they would change about anti-racist professional development.

3.2.3.1 Sample Description of Teacher Interviews

Of the 18 teachers interviewed, the majority (*n*=13) self-identified as white, four identified as Black or African American, and one identified as another race. To maintain anonymity for this teacher, their race is not provided, and they are instead identified as a teacher of color. The vast majority of the sample identified as women. Due to the limited number of men and teachers of color, gender is not included in this analysis and all teachers are referred to in gender neutral terms.

59

Teachers' tenure varied widely and was categorized into three groups: (1) 0-10 years (*n=6*), (2) 11-20 years (*n=7*), and 21 or more years of experience (*n=5*).

3.2.4 School-level Secondary Data

I examined school-level data using several publicly available state-issued reports. Racial composition of schools, total enrollment, and socioeconomic status of students were all identified through the state-issued report from the Future Ready PA Index. I used the Pennsylvania Department of Education's School Safety report to obtain school discipline outcomes related to out-of-school suspensions. This report provides information on the total number of students enrolled, total number of out-of-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions by race/ethnicity. I calculated the total student suspension rate per 100 students, Black student suspension rate per 100, white student suspension rate per 100, and non-Black student suspension rate per 100 using the data provided by School Safety.

After calculating student suspension rates per 100 by various racial groups, I then calculated racial disparities in discipline practices by comparing the suspension rates of Black and non-Black students as well as Black and white students. The racial disparity between Black and non-Black students was intended to be used in the multivariate analysis, although was not included in the final model due to high collinearity with overall suspensions per 100 students. The racial disparity between Black and white students was used as a framework for interpreting qualitative findings, by comparing and contrasting teachers' perceived discipline outcomes in their specific schools with the actual discipline disparities calculated using data from the state issued reports.

Notably, I could not calculate valid disparity rations for two schools in this study because no non-Black students were suspended during the 2021-2022 school year. Both of these schools

were predominantly Black, having 94% and 97% Black student-bodies respectively. To account for this, I entered 1 white student suspension into the calculation for each school to obtain estimated disparity ratios. The limitations of this design are mentioned in the discussion section.

I retrieved data on academic performance through The Pennsylvania Department of Education's reported PSSA results. Math and ELA scores were calculated using the percentage of students who scored proficient or advanced in each category. Each PSSA result was included as a separate variable during analysis.

School-level data had two key functions in analysis. First, these data were used in quantitative analysis as teacher-level control variables. Second, school-level data was used to help contextualize and frame qualitative analysis. Trends and patterns were looked at to see how factors such as school demographics or disparity ratios impacted teacher racial attitude, beliefs about school discipline, or their interest in professional development.

3.2.4.1 Sample Description of Schools

To ensure confidentiality, schools that participated in this study are not labelled and their school-level characteristics are not directly associated to any given site. As such, I do not present a table on school-level data, but I do provide an overview of school characteristics here as well as discuss school-level data in the results section when relevant for contextualizing teachers' qualitative or quantitative data.

Of the 11 schools used in this study, only one does not have a majority Black student body. Schools ranged from approximately 35 to 97 percent Black. The average student body of the 11 schools was 62% Black. Each of the 11 schools had a majority of students who were identified as economically disadvantaged according to state-issued reports. The average percentage of economically disadvantaged students across the 11 schools was 69%. The percentage of students

who scored proficient or advanced in Math or ELA ranged from 3.7-34.8% and 17.2-46.8% respectively.

Black / non-Black disparity ratios for students given out-of-school suspension (OSS) per 100 ranged from 0.98-4.21. In other words, at one school Black students were nearly at a 1-1 ratio compared to non-Black students, while at one of the other schools, Black students were suspended four times as often as non-Black students. The average disparity ratio of Black and non-Black OSS across the 11 schools was 3.5 to 1. The two schools with low racial disparities in discipline outcomes were both over 90% Black and had estimated disparity ratios, as non-Black suspension data had to be estimated replacing the 0 non-Black students suspended to 1. The disparity ratio typically grew when comparing Black and white student OSS. One school had no white students, so I could not calculate a Black/white disparity ratio for this school. However, in the remaining 10 schools, the average disparity ratio was 5 to 1. Notably, some schools had large differences between the Black/non-Black and Black/white disparity ratios. For example, one school had a 4-1 ratio for Black and non-Black students but a 15-1 ratio for Black and white students. In sum, the only schools where there was a limited racial disparity in OSS were schools that were almost exclusively Black. In schools with more racial diversity between Black and non-Black students, racial disparities were large when comparing Black to non-Black students and particularly when comparing Black to white students. The impact of these school-level characteristics is discussed in greater detail within the results.

3.3 Data Analysis

I used four primary analytic strategies to allow for an integrated and nuanced review of the findings across data sources. Three analytic strategies (descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate) are quantitative, and one is qualitative.

3.3.1 Quantitative

3.3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Using the survey responses provided by teachers at each of the sites, I examined descriptive statistics to understand teacher racial attitudes and discipline practices. Measures of central tendency and variation were examined to describe teachers' endorsement of color-blind racial attitudes and discipline practices. This included statistics for each of the six items from CoBRAS as well as teachers' self-report of their office discipline referral practices. All descriptive statistics were run using SPSS 28.

3.3.1.2 Bivariate Analyses

Using the survey data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the relationship between teacher tenure and teacher color-conscious racial attitudes, comparing teachers with 0-2, 3-5, 6-9, and 10 or more years of experience. This was done to answer my first research question, by understanding how the social location of experience, often a proxy of age, associates with teacher racial attitudes.

I created a correlation matrix to observe bivariate relationships among all independent, dependent, and control variables. This was done to examine the independent relationships between

all variables prior to running any multivariate linear regression models. This analysis was used as one of several analytic steps to answer my second research question by understanding the relationship between teacher racial attitudes and the variables of interest in the model.

3.3.1.3 Multivariate Analyses

Multivariate linear regression was performed using four models to examine how teacher racial attitudes relate to various dimensions of discipline outcomes and teacher perceptions. Next, assumptions of linear regression were examined to ensure that the model met the necessary requirements of multivariate normality, little multicollinearity, auto-correlation, homoscedasticity, and linear relationship. During this testing, I found that the discipline disparity ratio of Black and non-Black students had a VIF value above 5, indicating high collinearity. As such, the variable was removed, and the tests were re-run. After removing this variable from the model, all assumptions were met. As such, Black and non-Black discipline disparity ratios were not used in multivariate analyses.

The independent variable in each model was the item selected from the CoBRAS factor used in the survey, "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension." This item was scored from 1-6, with a higher score indicating a more color-conscious attitude and a lower score indicating a more color-blind attitude. I selected this item for analysis for several reasons. First, this item had the most ideal spread of responses with numerous responses ranging between strongly agreeing and strongly disagreeing. As such, the item had better analytic qualities and appeared to present a more nuanced look at teacher racial attitudes compared to other items in the scale which were relatively homogeneous (e.g., the item "racial problems in the US are rare, isolated situations" was very unified, with the vast majority of teachers disagreeing with this statement). This item had the lowest mean score and the largest standard deviation of any of the

other items in the scale, and as a result appears to be one which presents a more accurate view of teacher racial attitudes, less affected by social desirability bias.

Moreover, during the process of qualitative analysis, it became clear that although no teachers would endorse explicitly racist ideology, many felt uncomfortable discussing race, which appeared to impact their beliefs regarding racism and school discipline outcomes. This qualitative finding in my study supports the assertation made by Alvarez and Milner (2018) that although teachers may endorse the importance of addressing racism, they may engage in color-blind beliefs that impact racial justice in schools. Therefore, the item, "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension" aligns with my qualitative findings and presents an opportunity to quantitatively assess this concept. As a result, I decided to use this specific item, which enabled me to triangulate data on a concept of interest and import from multiple sources.

Finally, when conducting preliminary multivariate analyses, this individual item from the CoBRAS scale proved to be a more powerful predictor variable than a cumulative score of a teacher's CoBRAS battery. As such, "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension" also referred to in this study as "Teacher Color-Conscious Racial Attitude" was selected as the predictor variable in each of the four models analyzed.

The control variables were consistent across all four models. Length of time teaching in the district, classroom efficacy, elementary versus middle school teacher, percent of school student body that is Black, percent of student body that is economically disadvantaged, overall suspensions per 100 students at their school, and academic proficiency at their school were all used.

Four dependent variables were used. The first model examined the relationship between teacher color-conscious racial attitude and teacher office discipline referrals. The dependent variable in this model was teacher discipline practices as measured by their self-reported weekly

office referrals from the 2021-2022 school year. This variable ranged from 1 office referral per week to 20+ referrals per week. Analysis of teacher discipline practices was run because teacher office discipline referrals are one of the main avenues through which students are exposed to exclusionary school discipline. Thus, understanding how teacher color-conscious racial attitudes associates with their use of office discipline referrals presents critical insight into one of the key mechanisms of exclusionary discipline practices, potentially providing information useful for developing future solutions.

Notably, roughly one-third of teachers did not respond to the item on their discipline practices. This was unusual, as the majority of other items had limited missing responses, frequently only between 2 and 6%. One possible reason for this missing data is that the survey question, as presented, did not allow teachers to select "0" for their average number of office referrals per week. While I offer additional discussion of this issue in Chapter 5, for the purposes of analysis it did not reveal any additional complications or need for data transformation. Preliminary analysis using an Independent Samples T Test found no significant difference in racial attitudes between teachers who did not answer this question compared to teachers who provided discipline data. Two additional Independent Samples T Tests between teachers who did not answer and (1) those with low referral practices (1 per week) and (2) those with high referral practices (2 or more per week) also found no significant differences between groups. Additionally, exploratory data imputation was used for analyses, but the imputed models did not create meaningful differences in findings. As such, no additional steps were taken, and the variable was used without any additional computations.

The second model examined the relationship between teacher color-conscious racial attitudes and teacher perceptions of school safety. This item was created using a battery of 5 items

related to student fighting, stealing, threats, vandalism, and weapons. Higher scores indicated a greater sense of danger, and lower scores indicated a greater sense of safety. This item was included to observe how dangerous or safe a teacher perceives their school to be. Safety is often used as a justification for zero-tolerance policies, and existing data has demonstrated that Black students are more likely to be perceived as violent or aggressive compared to their white peers. As such, understanding how teacher racial attitudes relate to perceived safety, particularly when controlling for total suspensions and socioeconomic status, illuminates an important facet of discipline practices.

The third model examined the relationship between teacher color-conscious racial attitudes and teacher perceptions of student behaviors. Higher scores indicated more positive perceptions of student behaviors. This item was used in analysis because prior literature has indicated that teacher perceptions of student behavior can be influenced by racial biases, and a teacher's perception of their students can have a significant impact on their discipline practices. As such, teacher perceptions of student behaviors function as an important factor in their school discipline practices.

Finally, the last model examined teacher perceptions of restorative practices. The item "How effective have you found the Restorative School Communities components (circles, youth leadership programs, etc.)?" Was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective). Teacher buy-in to restorative practices is an essential and understudied component of school discipline reform (Song et al., 2020). This analysis presents an important opportunity to understand how teacher racial attitudes relate to their beliefs on how effective restorative practices are at their school.

3.3.2 Qualitative

I followed both Saldaña's (2021) and Rubin and Rubin's (2005) qualitative interview analysis strategies. As a result, I approached qualitative data collection and analysis through a cyclical pattern intended to (1) recognize broad themes and concepts in transcripts, (2) systematically clarify, synthesize, and elaborate on themes, (3) create codes and coding structures, (4) sort and organize the data by codes, and (5) synthesize codes and themes that align with the purpose of the study.

Eighteen interviews were conducted over Zoom, recorded using Zoom's recording feature and transcribed using the online tool, Happy Scribe. I conducted eight of the 18 interviews, with the remaining ten conducted by other members of RSC. Following Rubin and Rubin's (2005) model, I wrote memos on each of the eight interviews immediately after they occurred, seeking to capture and reflect on initial themes, notable quotes, personal thoughts, impressions, and to produce a summary of the interview as it was relevant to the research questions of this study.

I reviewed all 18 of the transcripts to confirm accuracy as well as to ensure I captured elements such as tone of voice, sighs, pauses, or laughter. I listened to each interview and corrected all errors in transcription line-by-line. Additionally, during this time, I removed portions of the transcript that were focused solely on RSC practices, as they were not relevant to my research questions. In addition to detailing reactions and reflections after conducting interviews, Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest documenting during initial cleaning processes. As such, after each interview transcription was completed, I summarized the interview for analysis and comparison purposes, wrote emerging themes, documented quotes that stood out, and reflected on future directions in research after this study.

3.3.2.1 Coding Process

After cleaning the data, I used initial coding strategies, also referred to as open coding strategies (Saldaña, 2021), and thematic coding to begin addressing the first step of Rubin and Rubin's (2005) analysis process. During initial coding, I used elements of process coding detailed by Saldaña (2021) to identify action and beliefs amongst teachers. For example, I used process coding to obtain initial details on how teachers talked about race with students. Open coding allowed me to create provisional hypotheses about the data, reflect and adapt analytic conceptualizations to better fit the emerging themes in the data, and begin initial reflections on future coding decisions. After initial coding, I themed the data to define and synthesize the patterns and themes that had emerged during open coding (Saldaña, 2021). I created a table to track teacher pseudonym, school information, how they talk about race with their students, their beliefs regarding racial disparities in school, created categories to describe their racial attitudes, and their exposure to professional development, and their reported barriers and facilitators to training on implicit bias and anti-racism. Using this table, I documented each interview to see how and where teachers fit into trends or patterns related to teacher race talk with students, racial attitude, beliefs regarding racial disparities in discipline outcomes, and interest and exposure to professional development.

During this initial round of coding, unexpected findings helped shape the direction of future analysis. Most notably, the nuance and contradictions embedded within teachers' racial attitudes presented a fascinating challenge to my initial coding binary of color-conscious and color-blind racial attitudes. Indeed, several teachers specifically mentioned their rejection of color-blind attitudes, yet through the course of their interviews it was clear that they struggled to describe systemic racism, had limited discussions of race or racism with students, and did not accurately

69

reflect the definition of color-consciousness. As such, during this coding process, I developed a new coding category to capture what I am calling "color-cautious" racial attitudes. This theme was created to help categorize teachers who did not endorse color-blind beliefs but who simultaneously struggled to talk about race, were hesitant or evasive in their language around race, focused on superficial elements of race and racism, or failed to accurately describe or conceptualize racial disparities in discipline outcomes.

After reflecting on these emerging trends, I developed a codebook with both broad themes and specific subthemes which I then used to conduct a final round of coding. During this final round of coding, I made adaptations to the codebook to respond to new and emerging patterns, in an iterative process of re-organizing and restructuring to reflect the data more accurately. In the final round of coding, I used the qualitative data analysis software, NVIVO, to organize my data, codes, and codebook. During this final coding process, I read through each teacher's interview again, applying the codes in the new codebook to understand how teachers talk about race, discipline practices, and professional development. In addition to my coding in NVIVO, I created another chart using Microsoft Excel to organize teachers and examine if patterns were developing among groups. For example, I examined teachers by race, length of time teaching, prior exposure to training, and overall racial disparities in discipline practices at their school to see if any trends emerged among groups.

Table 1 Final Codebook

Theme	Code Name	Definition	Example
	Color-conscious	Teacher race talk that specifically acknowledges race and racism. Exemplified by (1) teacher examples of conversations with students that directly address race and racism, (2) awareness of implicit bias, white privilege, structural racism, and the school-to-prison pipeline, (3) intentional efforts to educate oneself, and (4) endorsement of anti-racist interventions in schools.	"I think if we want to start to repair the school to prison pipeline, if we want to start building equity in our classrooms, things like race, gender identity, sexuality, they need to be things that aren't taboo, they need to be topics that are openly talked about in the classroom and approached and dealt with because they are things that our students are experiencing." (Teacher #1)
Racial attitude	Color-cautious	Rejects color-blind ideology but struggles to describe or conceptualize a fully color-conscious perspective. Often infused with confusion, evasion, hesitance, and fear of saying the wrong thing or presenting a racist opinion. Often aware of racism or implicit bias but either does not see it as relevant in their environment or is unsure what to do about it.	"One other issue that I can speak on just because I sort of saw it firsthand, the [students with refugee status], the males, I guess, in their culture or whatever, they are taught to disrespect women. Like, that's part of it. Or at least maybe I'm being completely ignorant when I say that, and maybe that's not true. You can correct me if I'm wrong. That's just what my colleagues had shared with me. So, then it became an issue of most of the staff here are women. So then as the classroom teacher, like, the kids were not respecting the adult in the room." (Teacher #2)
	Color-blind	Focuses on sameness and ignores components of race and racism that impact student experiences. Emphasis on individualism, meritocracy, and	"And it's like, well, the kid just punched somebody else in the face. I can't control what color they are. And a lot of it's… "my mother said if someone hits me, I'm supposed to hit

		culture as explanations for outcomes. Dismisses claims of racism and rejects responsibility of discussing race with students. Clear discomfort discussing race with interviewer or students.	back." Well, other mothers don't say that. So, there's a lot of parenting and generational things that go on. But I think all in all, yes, they are disciplined fairly, but there's the reality of you did the crime, do the time." (Teacher #13)
Teacher beliefs on racial disparities in school discipline	Believes racial disparities exist at school and nationally	Acknowledges that implicit bias, systemic racism, and structural factors contribute to disproportionate discipline outcomes for students at their school and on a national level.	"I think at our school, I think formally or informally, kids are labeled: bad kids, good kids, smart kids, dumb kids, English language learners, special education students. And I think as a whole, those labels that get imprinted on our kids affect how they're treated … discipline data supports that certain populations of our students are getting punitive consequences or suspensions or anything at different rates than others." (Teacher #1)
	Believes racial disparities exist nationally but not at their school	Acknowledges that implicit bias, systemic racism, and structural factors contribute to disproportionate discipline outcomes for students nationally but believes that discipline outcomes at their school are equitable.	"You have to look at the different school districts. I mean, my district is predominantly Black, so some people would say there is no bias because your population, whereas some schools … who's predominantly white, they might have more bias … I think you have to look at the school district to see where there truly is bias or not bias." (Teacher #14)
	Does not believe racial disparities exist	Rejects, refutes, or doubts that discipline outcomes differ for students based on race.	"I personally don't think [implicit bias] impacts [discipline outcomes] at all." (Teacher #6)

	Past experiences of training	Teachers describe whether or not they have received training and how it was designed.	"Every other Monday we had a training that was targeted at kind of implicit bias and things like that … And it was kind of targeted as getting our teachers to understand implicit bias and understand, like, trauma-informed care and understanding the importance of building relationships." (Teacher #1)
Training	Value and facilitators of training	Teachers note what has helped trainings be effective (strategies or content) or what they specifically value from these experiences (outcomes).	"PDs are absolutely necessary. I don't think that teachers are… especially white teachers who are teaching Black kids, they're not versed in how to deal with and handle and I guess manage students who are different color and then the kind of vice versa." (Teacher #7)
	Barriers and challenges of training	Teachers note the barriers and challenges to trainings as well as what specific elements of training they found to be unhelpful.	"But I know a couple of the teachers that are in it right now as it starts up again this year, they're like, oh, goodness more. They were kind of ready to be done." (Teacher #15)
	Teacher interest in training	Teachers were asked whether or not they thought training on implicit bias or anti-racism should be included in their professional development.	"I think having professional developments that all educators are required to go to that talks about those specific things is a great thing to start, no matter what the demographic of that school system looks like." (Teacher #18)

Completing Rubin and Rubin's (2005) final step of qualitative interview analysis strategy, I synthesized codes and themes for the purposes of this study. That is to say, I reviewed the final coding structure and began to frame these codes in the context of the research questions of this study. Relationships among teachers' racial attitudes, their beliefs regarding discipline outcomes, and their perceptions of training were integrated to create a holistic picture to understand three primary concerns. First, what are teachers' racial attitudes and how do they vary between teachers of different social positionalities? Second, how do teachers' attitudes impact their perceptions of students and school discipline practices? Third, are teachers in schools that use restorative practices interested in professional development focused on increasing awareness of implicit bias and anti-racist teaching practices, what are the perceived barriers and facilitators to these trainings, and how does interest in training vary by social location?

3.3.2.2 Presenting Qualitative Results

Due to the small sample size and limited diversity of race and gender in this sample, I made several decisions about how to present results to ensure respondents' confidentiality. First, while I used a table to track themes and patterns amongst respondents during analysis, I do not provide such a table in my qualitative findings. Second, due to the small number of male teachers in this sample, I refer to all teachers using the gender-neutral pronouns they/them. While the importance of intersecting identities, particularly around race and gender, should continue to be explored in future research, the confidentiality of respondents took priority in this study. Finally, each teacher was randomly assigned an ID number ranging from 1-18. Throughout the results, I refer to teachers using their ID number alongside relevant demographic information such as their tenure and race.

3.4 Researcher Positionality

All research is affected by the positionalities of the researcher(s) conducting the study, whether it be in the questions asked, the methods used to obtain those answers, or how information is interpreted (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). Considerations of positionality extend both for insider and outsider identities, as both present their own unique obstacles and complications. This is particularly salient to this study, as Rubin and Rubin (2005) urge researchers to interrogate personal biases when engaging in in-depth interviews. Milner (2007) further asserts that race and culture are essential elements of positionality in teacher and education research. Milner (2007) identifies common barriers to addressing race and culture within educational spaces and recommends avoiding these obstacles through an iterative process of self-reflection, reflection of self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation (i.e., accounting for multiple perspectives and differences in interpretation), and a shifting of self to system (i.e., grounding work in historic, political, social, economic, and racial realities on a broader scale). As such, I endeavored to engage in a recurring process of critical self-reflection regarding my identity and the paradigm I brought to the design and execution of this study.

I engaged with this work with an array of identities that gave me elements of insider and outsider standing. I am a white man conducting research on a profession that is predominantly white, working in an area with which I am quite familiar because I grew up in the same metropolitan area. I attended urban public schools growing up and have firsthand experiences of many of the challenges they face. For example, I attended a school with limited resources and finances, we had a heavy school resource officer (police)/security presence including police sweeps and metal detectors, and I know numerous peers who have been impacted by exclusionary discipline. Moreover, I have a background in child therapy, with many interactions inside multiple

school districts in the county, providing me with insider knowledge of childhood development and educational systems. I am also quite passionate about this topic because I have witnessed the deleterious impacts of exclusionary discipline as I had many clients who became involved with the criminal legal system because they were charged with criminal offenses by their school. I care deeply about child wellbeing, education, and racial justice.

In these ways, I engaged in this work with elements of common ground with many of the participants, which allowed for rapport and openness during interviews. However, I do not have experience as a K-12 teacher and entered into this study in an academic role. I am well aware of and have witnessed firsthand the hesitance that many teachers have with researchers and their ever-present fear that researchers will seek to blame school failures on teachers, create more responsibilities, and offer no relief to their overburdened workloads. This anecdotal evidence is supported by research which suggests that teachers may distrust researchers (Hendriks et al., 2021).

Additionally, I am a white researcher seeking to research and advocate for equitable disciplinary outcomes for Black youth, a population of which I am not a part. Particularly as this study incorporates critical race theory as a fundamental element of its framework, it has been necessary for me to investigate ways in which my own biases and beliefs impact my work and the research being done. Following Milner's (2007) recommendations on teacher education and race talk, I sought to deconstruct my own biases through community, dialogue, and support from numerous sources such as mentors, peers, and community members. Through this iterative process of communal learning, I continually identified and addressed pitfalls that had the potential to disrupt the goals of justice and equity in this study. I used this process of self-reflection throughout the entire study, and particularly through qualitative data analysis. I sought input from several

mentors, discussed interpretations and findings with community members with distinct social identities from myself, and used an iterative process of self-reflection to guide analysis, interpretation, and implications.

4.0 Results

This chapter presents the results of analyses aimed at addressing each of the research questions in this study. In total, 357 teachers at 11 schools participated in the survey and 18 teachers at 4 schools participated in the interview. Unsurprisingly, study results yield a fascinating and complicated picture of teacher racial attitudes. There are large differences in racial attitudes between teachers and even inconsistencies and contradictions internal to many teachers. When examined using survey data, teacher racial attitudes were presented as relatively color-conscious, although more tenured teachers often endorsed more color-blind responses. However, when speaking to teachers in interviews, it became clear that many teachers struggled with verbalizing color-conscious attitudes, even when rejecting color-blind beliefs.

Despite the wide array of differences found between and within teachers, a clear pattern emerged from multivariate analysis that demonstrates that color-conscious racial attitudes are connected with reduced office discipline referrals and positive perceptions of school safety and student behavior. I also found that color-conscious racial attitude is associated with improved perceptions of restorative practices. Finally, professional development was largely viewed positively by teachers, but there were numerous barriers identified by teachers and its effectiveness in altering teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes has mixed findings.

This chapter is organized into three sections, corresponding to my three research questions. To begin, I discuss teacher racial attitudes and how they vary among teachers by social location. Next, I discuss how teachers' racial attitudes relate to their discipline practices and perceptions of their students and school. I conclude the chapter by discussing teachers' interest in anti-racist professional development as well as their perceived barriers and facilitators for such training.

4.1 Research Question #1: What are Teachers' Racial Attitudes and Do They Vary by

Social Location?

4.1.1 Teachers' Racial Attitudes in Schools Using Restorative Practices

To understand teacher racial attitudes, I used a mixed methods approach. First, I used descriptive statistics to summarize teachers' survey responses to the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) developed by Neville and colleagues (2000). Second, I used qualitative coding strategies proposed by Rubin and Rubin (2005) and Saldaña (2021) to theme teacher responses related to their race talk.

4.1.1.1 Quantitative Findings: Descriptive Statistics

I analyzed descriptive statistics for the survey sample using the CoBRAS factor, blatant racial issues (Neville et al., 2000). While all items from this factor are reported, the primary variable of interest was related to teacher race talk, "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension." All six items ranged from 1-6 wherein a 1 indicated a fully color-blind response and 6 indicated a color-conscious response. Some items were reverse coded to keep the orientation of scoring consistent. That is to say, for the item, "Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension," a color-conscious response would be to completely disagree, which was scored as a six. Comparatively, for "Racism is a major problem in the U.S." a color-conscious response was to completely agree, which was also scored as a six. As such, a higher value score always indicates a more color-conscious response regardless of the verbalized agreeing or disagreeing of the specific item.

Table 2 Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale Descriptive Statistics (*N*=357)

	M	*SD*
*Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	4.25	1.51
Racism is a major problem in the U.S.	4.73	1.33
*Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	5.09	1.21
It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	4.42	1.46
It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.	4.90	1.29
*Racial problems in the US are rare, isolated situations.	5.07	1.21

Note. * Indicates an item was reverse coded.

Each of the six items in the CoBRAS factor had a mean statistic above 4, indicating that the average teacher responded to each item with some level of an endorsement of a color-conscious beliefs. That is to say, a majority of teachers agreed to some degree that racial problems in the US are not rare or isolated situations, and that racism is a major problem in the U.S. today.

Teacher race talk, the item used to indicate a teacher's color-conscious racial attitude, had a mean score of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 1.51. Notably, this was the lowest mean score and the largest standard deviation, suggesting that this item had a broader range of responses compared to other items in the scale. As such, although many teachers indicated their belief that racism is an important problem, many of them also revealed that they may not choose to discuss race or racism, as they believe that talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.

4.1.1.2 Qualitative Findings: Color-Blind, Color-Conscious, and Color-Cautious Racial

   Attitudes

In addition to descriptive statistics, I used qualitative analytic methods to code in-depth teacher interviews (*N*=18) from a group of teachers working at four different schools utilizing restorative justice programming. During interviews, teachers were asked to describe if they thought that race and racism should be discussed in school, were asked to provide examples of race talk with students, and were asked about their beliefs regarding racial disparities in school discipline.

Teachers' racial attitudes varied widely. Some teachers were passionate about social justice, felt that it was essential to discuss racism with students, and were actively seeking ways to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Other teachers denied racism impacting school outcomes, focused on meritocracy and sameness, and had limited or no conversations with students about race. Moreover, distinctions and contradictions were not only found between teachers but within them as well. Individual teachers described challenges, confusion, and contradictions within how they discussed various elements of race or racism. Three primary categories of teacher racial attitudes were identified during theming, (1) color-blind, (2) color-conscious, and (3) color-cautious. In this section of the results, I define the three categories, report on their frequency amongst teachers in the sample, and provide examples of how these belief systems are described and enacted by teachers.

It is worth noting that due to the high levels of contradiction or uncertainty that emerged amongst teachers in their race talk, there is some overlapping and blurring between the different categories of racial attitudes. Indeed, these should not be seen as fully distinct categories with no overlap and should instead be conceptualized as a spectrum wherein a person can potentially

inhabit multiple categories. Several teachers were noted as blending between color-cautious and either color-conscious or color-blind attitudes. However, because the majority of teachers could be clearly placed into one of the three categories, for the purposes of this analysis, teacher racial attitude groups are described independently.

4.1.1.2.1 Color-Blind

Color-blind racial attitudes in this analysis were largely analyzed using Bonilla-Silva's (2018) definition of color-blind racism. Bonilla-Silva (2018) argues that color-blind racism has four pillars from which race and racism are interpreted and justified: 1) abstract liberalism (political and economic liberalism to justify decisions under the guise of "choice"), 2) naturalization (explaining racial phenomena as natural occurrences), 3) cultural racism (using culture to explain racial inequity), and 4) minimization of racism (arguing that discrimination and prejudice are no longer widespread and do not limit opportunities for people of color). These pillars combine to form a "common sense" argument to justify current racial inequalities and allow for the status quo of privilege for white people to continue.

During the analysis, the most prominent pillars I identified were naturalization (explaining racial phenomena as natural occurrences), cultural racism (using culture to explain racial inequity), and minimization of racism (arguing that discrimination and prejudice are no longer widespread and do not limit opportunities for people of color). Using Bonilla-Silva's framework, additional codes for color-blind attitudes were developed. This included items like discomfort or intentional avoidance of talking about race, limited or superficial discussion of race with students, dismissal of student or parent claims of discrimination, and an emphasis on sameness, equality, or family when discussing race or racism. When coding teachers' racial attitudes, I created multiple

subthemes and examples of color-blind attitudes to describe the phenomena from multiple angles.

Table 3 provides several illustrations of color-blind subthemes and interview examples.

Table 3 Color-Blind Racial Attitude Coding Table

Subtheme of Color-Blind Attitude	Example
Naturalization of behavior through meritocracy or individualism	"Yes, I would say definitely Black males were suspended more than their white males. And of course, I didn't control that, but I would see that there would be… [Pause] I think part of it was there's more aggression, and that was like the aggressive behaviors was like, nope, we can't have these." (Teacher #13)
Cultural racism	"I'm not really looking, like, you act this way because you're Black or you act this way because you're white. No, you act this way because it's how you were raised. That's the way I look at it. Whether you were raised [pause] by whomever, whoever raised you, or whatever environment, situation you came from kind of created who you are. I'm sorry, but if a five-year-old comes to school swearing like a truck driver, chances are people in the household are swearing like truck drivers." (Teacher #13)
Focus on sameness, equality, or "family" when talking about race	"The way I talk about it is I try to deflect it, try to change… I don't want to say exactly change the subject but change it in a different way. I also tell the students, we're all here together. You're all part

of, like, for us, our mascot is the [mascot]. You're all the [mascot] family. So, it doesn't matter if you're Black, white, orange, red, green. You're part of the family." (Teacher #8)

Discomfort talking about race or racism	[When asked if they believe implicit bias can impact discipline outcomes] "I guess it can, I just don't… I don't think like that, so I don't know. I'm not sure. Can I pass on that one?" (Teacher #17)
Limited or superficial discussion of race with students	"I just kind of break it down to their level, saying, yes, we're a different color, but we all have the same things, and not everyone's perfect, things have happened in the past, but you always have that. It's just that you have to realize… go beyond… I just always say, you can't judge a book by a cover." (Teacher #17)
Dismissal of student or parent claims of discrimination	"You yelled at me because I'm Black. No, I yelled at you because you're doing whatever you're doing inappropriately. I'm calling you out because you didn't do your work, not because of the color of your skin. But it's often thrown back at the teacher … That's like a white person having to deal with racism. So it's the flip side, too. So I don't know. It's always going to be a debate in school." (Teacher #13)

Color-blind racial attitudes were common but only one-third of interviewees clearly and consistently used color-blind racial attitudes to describe their race talk patterns with students and beliefs regarding discipline outcomes.

4.1.1.2.2 Color-Conscious

The clearest contrast to color-blind racial attitudes were the color-conscious responses provided by numerous teachers. Color-conscious racial attitudes in this analysis were largely defined using frameworks developed by Ullucci and Battey (2011) and Marcucci and Elmesky (2020). As such, I looked for teachers who demonstrated awareness of their own ethnocentrism and bias, knowledge of students' cultural background, understanding of broader social, economic, and political contexts of the educational system, ability and willingness to use culturally relevant classroom management strategies, and awareness and acknowledgement of implicit bias or systemic racism as relevant factors in school outcomes.

Color-conscious beliefs were the most common racial attitude presented by teachers, found among half of the sample. Color-conscious beliefs were defined largely in contrast to color-blind beliefs. Several key markers were used to label color-conscious attitudes during coding. The first subtheme used was, teachers who openly acknowledged implicit bias, systemic racism, the school-to-prison pipeline, or white privilege. The second was, teachers who openly discuss race or racism with their students either by welcoming the topic from students or initiating the conversation themselves. Next was active effort to educate self or students about racism or diversity. The final subtheme was any clear endorsement of anti-racist intervention design for the school-to-prison pipeline, racial disparities, or other facets of school discipline outcomes.

Table 4 Color-Conscious Racial Attitudes Coding Table

Subtheme of Color-Conscious Attitude	Example
Openly acknowledge implicit bias, systemic racism, the school-to-prison pipeline, or white privilege	"Then they're consequencing them like they're adults instead of trying to understand and consequence them as a child that made a mistake. What's that called? Adultification or whatever that's called. … They're Black boys and so they're consequenced more, but I think it's deeper than that. Not just the color of their skin or that they're male, but that people assume that they have to grow up in the home a little bit faster than maybe their white counterparts, so they're treated like that all the time, and I don't think that's right." (Teacher #10)
Openly discuss race or racism with their students	"I think if we want to start to repair the school to prison pipeline, if we want to start building equity in our classrooms, things like race, gender identity, sexuality, they need to be things that aren't taboo, they need to be topics that are openly talked about in the classroom and approached and dealt with because they are things that our students are experiencing." (Teacher #1)
Education on racism or diversity for self or students	[A teacher describing reading African American Realistic Fiction based on real life events to their students] "One of my favorite things to do was … I would sit in my chair at the edge of my desk. They would sit on the carpet, and we would just have these real-life

	conversations about the things that these people went through. … In history, you did have people that discriminated. It still happens. It still occurs. [Teacher's name] deals with that. They're like. Are you serious? I say, yeah, I'm an adult, I deal with it." (Teacher #12)
Support for anti-racist interventions	"I think that's the first step is admitting that there is a disparity and wanting to solve that, because that's a whole other step. Yes, we have a problem, but do you care enough about that problem to solve it? I think a big thing is for students to have teachers that look like them and reflect them. … We have zero homeroom teachers of color. So, in a population that's predominantly Black, they have no homeroom teachers of color. We do have staff members of color, but no homeroom teachers. So, I don't think that we will ever truly be able to solve those problems until we start seeking out talent that reflects our students." (Teacher #1)

Many teachers held color conscious beliefs or made an active effort to endorse them. However, at times it was clear that there were partial disconnects between a teacher's stated beliefs and their examples or ability to articulate their stance. For example, a teacher might describe frustrations with the disparities in how Black students were disciplined but then suggest zero-tolerance strategies as the most effective solution to ameliorate the issue. This disconnect is in part what initiated the process of developing a color-cautious category to better represent teachers who were not color-blind but not fully color-conscious either.

4.1.1.2.3 Color-Cautious

During my initial round of coding, I began with a dichotomous categorization of color-blind or color-conscious racial attitude. However, during the iterative process of reflection and theming, it became apparent that this binary was missing an important component in the data. A teacher's race talk was often complex, nuanced, and at times even contradictory. This finding during the early stages of coding prompted me to alter my codebook for the final round of coding to include color-cautious, a third grouping of teachers who rejected color-blind ideology but struggled with talking about race. These teachers were often nervous, often seeking to say the "right" thing but at times disconnected or unsure of how to embrace a color-conscious attitude. Coding with this category was more complex than the first two because it entailed less of a focus on one existing response and was instead often related to the contradictions, confusions, or nervousness elicited throughout the scope of the entire interview. As such, a coding table is less illustrative here because it only captures a snapshot of a conversation, whereas most color-cautious beliefs were seen over the span of the entire interview.

Several clear patterns emerged from this group of teachers, despite the fluid nature of this category. First, these teachers generally rejected color-blind ideology, recognizing it as antiquated or unhelpful. However, they struggled to describe or conceptualize a fully color-conscious perceptive. Teachers described uncertainty around how to talk about race rather than a color-blind perspective which would suggest that you should not talk about race. For example, one teacher noted that they were not fully opposed to talking to their students about race or racism but were also uncertain about how to initiate such conversations. They said:

Like when am I crossing a line? Like, what am I willing to do or allowed to do? …

Logistically, when do you say "okay, boys and girls, we're going to talk about race today?"

That's obviously not what's going to happen. (Teacher #2)

This level of uncertainty is associated with several other common examples that were used during coding. One theme that emerged from several teachers was the idea that diversity was seen as strength, but when probed about this strength teachers quickly went into sharing about how arduous the burdens of diversity were inside the school. For example, one teacher listed diversity as the first strength that came to mind for their school. However, when asked to expand on diversity as a strength, they stated:

There's a mixture of races. We have a lot of African Americans, white people, obviously. We've just got an influx of Spanish-speaking students, and I'm not sure exactly where they're from, but, like, we're diverse in terms of race. And oftentimes that causes turmoil between the races and within the races. … The diversity makes it interesting because there's a mixture of behaviors and just everything that makes it diverse. I mean, knowing how to try to… you can't make everybody conform, of course, but we all have to kind of be on the same page for a school to be successful, we'll say. (Teacher #13)

Several other teachers echoed this sentiment, highlighting that although race was being acknowledged, there was a hesitation in how to address perceived racial differences.

Similarly, other teachers noted challenges and uncertainty in working with students from diverse backgrounds. One white teacher shared that they were witnessing tension between Black students and students with refugee status. In describing this situation, the teacher stated the following about the refugee children:

89

In their culture or whatever, they are taught to disrespect women. Like, that's part of it. Or at least maybe I'm being completely ignorant when I say that, and maybe that's not true. (Teacher #2)

This conversation illustrated a pattern of color-caution wherein a teacher was unsure how to bridge a gap between cultural competence and humility and how to communicate these ideas to others. Color-cautious teachers were aware of racism and potential cultural differences but did not have color-conscious attitudes that could facilitate an ease in discussing these topics. Indeed, as seen in this last example, this teacher made comments that could reasonably be interpreted as xenophobic, despite it being clear in the broader scope of that conversation that the teacher was trying to talk about the topic in a way that would be perceived as accepting.

Another component of color-cautious attitudes was a deferral to outside authority like data, research, or administrators. As one teacher explained, a reliance on outside confirmation was needed to provide a sense of security in engaging in race talk with students.

Could I get in trouble for these conversations? … When you have that grayish area, like, as an educator, what am I willing to put out there? And I do think that I need more training or research or data to show, yes, I think it's incredibly important, but am I doing a good job at it? And I think there's a disconnect for me. (Teacher #2)

This interview demonstrated that some teachers have an interest in race talk but a hesitance or uncertainty about how to conduct it. Subsequently, they refer to data or administration for legitimacy before making any independent decisions.

Another component of color-cautious attitudes was surface level multiculturalism or celebration of diversity. For example, one teacher shared their approach to celebrating diversity stating:

What we did back in the 90s or whenever that was when we all said, "I don't see color." No, that's not right. But I think it should always be, like, in a celebratory way, especially at my level. I don't get into it too much, but I make sure that my resources include kids with a Hispanic background and kids, obviously lots of African Americans and then Asians, and even kids who we don't have in our population. (Teacher #9)

This quote helps demonstrate color-cautious beliefs, because, although this interviewee verbally rejected color-blind ideology and emphasized a celebration of diversity, throughout their interview they communicate an intentionality in limiting race talk to surface level content. Moreover, this interviewee does not think that racial disparities exist in their school, despite school-level data collected during this study supporting that assertion.

Because a color-cautious attitude was a more flexible construct than color-blind or color-conscious attitudes, the categorization of teachers using this method was more subjective as well. During coding, I labelled three teachers as color-cautious outright. However, two were listed as inhabiting a mixture of color-blind and color-cautious and one was noted as exhibiting elements of color-conscious to cautious beliefs. As such, roughly a third of teachers displayed some level of color-cautious attitude in this sample.

4.1.2 Do Teacher Racial Attitudes Vary by Social Location?

To explore how social location impacts teacher racial attitudes, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine patterns. I used quantitative analysis to examine the relationship between how long a teacher had worked in their district and their belief in talking about race in school. I used qualitative analysis to examine patterns between a teacher's racial

attitudes and their race/ethnicity, tenure working in education, prior training, and school-level characteristics.

4.1.2.1 Quantitative Findings

4.1.2.1.1 Differences in Color-Conscious Racial Attitudes Between Groups Based on Teacher Tenure

Using the survey data, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the relationship between teacher tenure and teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes, comparing teachers with 0-2, 3-5, 6-9, and 10 or more years of experience. There was a significant relationship between teacher tenure and the mean color-conscious racial attitude score at the $p <$ .05 level for the four conditions [$F(3, 348) = 7.83$, $p < .01$].
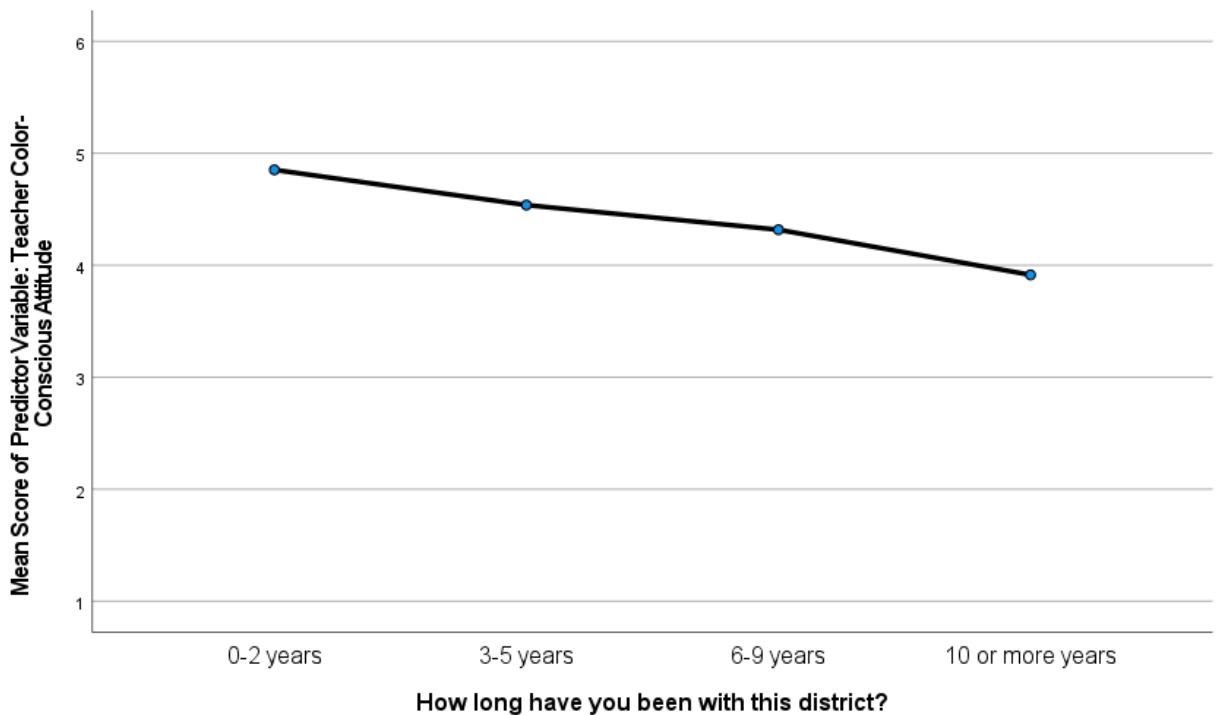
Figure 1 One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA

92

4.1.2.2 Qualitative Findings

4.1.2.2.1 Race and Ethnicity

I identified several important patterns in the interview data related to a teacher's social identity and their racial attitudes. Teachers of color were relatively unified, as four of these respondents were identified as color-conscious and only one teacher of color was noted as holding color-blind beliefs during the coding process.

Teachers of color were often some of the most active supporters of talking about race with their students, and many teachers referred to their own experiences of discrimination and racism as motivating factors to protect and prepare their students. For example, one teacher during their interview shared their own personal experience of racism from a neighbor, which deeply impacted their emotional and mental well-being. After sharing details about this encounter with a racist neighbor, the teacher stated:

> And so [the neighbor] would say all types of things. And so, I used it [in the classroom] as a real-life version of racism. And it was a true story. Obviously, I tried to be developmentally appropriate. I understand that we want to shelter our kids from certain things. But I also feel like realistically these kids see this stuff. I teach in [school]. These kids literally in their neighborhoods have heard of people being shot, have seen racism, have seen these things in their life. And I feel like, yes, to an extent, you want to shelter them from certain things, but at the same time, you have to be willing to have real conversations with them. … It was like it was as a learning point that connected with the book. (Teacher #12)

Another teacher shared during their interview that they felt a responsibility as a Black educator to prepare their students to face racism. They said:

As a Black educator, I can't sugarcoat it because, as I tell anybody, my job is to prepare students for a world that doesn't want them. And they have to be able to show the world that the world needs you. So, for us to not speak about race or about racism is doing a disingenuous job to them because when they get beyond my walls and they step out into this world … that racism is going to meet them at that door. And as much as I can try to create an environment in here that they may not see it or feel it or anything like that, once they go out there, they are going to. So, we have to talk about it. (Teacher #11)

These examples highlight how experiential knowledge of racism can create motivating factors for teachers of color, who then want to ensure that their students are prepared and protected to face these adversities on their own. This experiential knowledge was identified as incredibly powerful both from teachers of color and white teachers. Several teachers made unprompted suggestions related to diversifying the teaching workforce as a solution for racial disparities in schools. As one white mid-career teacher noted:

Well, statistically there are less Black male teachers, so [students] see less people that look like them in the classroom. And they also are around less people in schools that have been through what they have been through. Many teachers are not Black males, and that's statistically. So, I just think that teachers are unable to put themselves in the shoes of a Black male student because they're not a Black male and thus are treating them in a way that they're, I guess, it's systemic racism. (Teacher #3)

In contrast to the near unanimity of color-conscious attitudes held by teachers of color, white teachers (n=13) held a diverse range of racial attitudes. There was no clear majority in attitude as less than half of white teachers openly talked about race with their students and were coded as color-conscious, an equal number had very limited race talk with students and were coded

as color-blind, and the remaining teachers were coded as color-cautious and engaged in limited conversations about race or racism with their students.

Some teachers felt strongly that teachers should talk about race and racism with students directly, as a responsibility to their profession and community. As one white teacher said:

> There are also many people that just think, "Hey, I'm here to teach you math, so we're going to learn math. And if you're stopping us from learning math, that's a problem." And I think that those people need training to understand that you are not just teaching math, but instead planting a seed in a student that will continue to grow throughout their entire life. So, you're not just teaching a brain math, you're teaching a person who has other things going on. …
> So, you have to care more than about the subject that you teach. (Teacher #3)

Another white teacher described their intentionality and comfort discussing race and racism with students, stating:

> I take a very open approach because I use circles so often and because I build relationships, these topics come up very naturally in my classroom. So, for example, one of my students came to school and in the morning meeting he shared that his family was kicked out of a hotel, and he felt that there was a racial component to that. So, we processed through that as a class, and it was amazing to me the number of students who had similar experiences of being removed from or feeling like they weren't welcome. … It's something that I try to ensure that my students are reflected in the materials that we're using in the classroom. So, I make an active effort to include characters of color in the books that we're reading. I make an active effort too when we're reading newspaper articles in social studies to talk about issues that are coming about because of race. (Teacher #1)

Despite the numerous white teachers who engaged in color-conscious race talk with students, more than half of white teachers described ways in which they endorsed color-blind or color-cautious attitudes. Few teachers said that they refused to talk about race completely, but many acknowledged that they did not bring it up, they changed the topic quickly when it arose, or they had limited examples to illustrate how they discussed race with their students. For example, when asked whether teachers should talk about race in schools, a veteran white teacher stated:

That's putting me on the spot. … I mean, if it comes up, I obviously address it and stuff, and we talk just about people. You know, everybody's different, but we're all equal and stuff like that. I guess I don't bring it up, but when it does come up, like, we address it, that it's okay. Everybody's different skin colors and stuff like that. (Teacher #17)

Another example of this hesitance to discuss race comes from a different veteran teacher who, when asked about how they talk about issues related to race or racism in the classroom, stated:

The way I talk about it is I try to deflect it, try to change… I don't want to say exactly change the subject, but change it in a different way. I also tell the students, we're all here together. You're all part of, like, for us, our mascot is the [mascot]. You're all the [mascot] family. So, it doesn't you know, it doesn't matter if you're black, white, orange, red, green. You're part of the family. So, I try to deflect it and say, we're all the same. (Teacher #8)

Notably, experiential knowledge was also an important predictor for white teachers as well. For example, a veteran white teacher described how their lived experience in an interracial marriage with biracial children shaped their perceptions, teaching habits, and values. They explained how exposure to racism shaped their opinions, while also noting that for many of their white colleagues, this experiential knowledge has not occurred. They said:

96

I have a [teenage child], he's half Black. … At some point somebody's going to look at

him as a Black man or a Black teen or whatever. I think about that stuff. Lots of people I

work with, they don't think about anything like that, it doesn't affect them. So, I think that's

the training that we've had, like when you saw light bulbs go off and people said, "Oh, I

never thought of that." Because it doesn't affect you, so you don't think about it. (Teacher

#15)

As I have described, race and ethnicity appear to be related to teachers' racial attitudes,

although not in a uniform way. Color-blind, conscious, and cautious attitudes emerged among

teachers of color and white teachers. A key component of racial attitude development described

by teachers appears to be experiential knowledge as a conduit to understanding and being

passionate about racial justice.

4.1.2.2.2 Length of Time Teaching

Teachers were organized into three categories to examine patterns based on tenure.

Teachers were categorized by 0-10 years of experience (*n=6*), 11-20 years of experience (*n=7*),

and 21+ years of experience (*n=5*). Clear patterns emerged when examining groups by tenure.

First, newer teachers were more likely to be color-conscious, as over half of those with less than

10 years of experience were categorized with this racial attitude. Moreover, the remaining two

newer teachers were coded as color-cautious, as they did acknowledge race, racism, and implicit

bias even if they had difficulty articulating or describing these phenomena fully. The middle group

of teachers with 11-20 years of experience included the most diverse set of responses. The group

was roughly split in half, as four teachers were coded as color-conscious and three were coded as

color-blind. Finally, the most veteran teachers were the most uniformly color-blind group. Of the

five teachers with 21+ years of experience, three were labelled as color-blind during coding, one

was labelled as color-cautious, and the lone teacher in this group labelled as color-conscious was noted as having color-cautious elements as well.

Few teachers explicitly talked about how tenure is connected to their racial attitudes. However, several teachers pointed out how cultural differences between generations might lead to differing racial attitudes or indeed even behaviors in the classroom. As one white veteran teacher stated:

But I thought about some of my colleagues, and I'm thinking, this is what's happening. You know, why… I always wondered, why are they having so many problems with this kid? … And it's a hard thing to talk about because everybody thinks like, "Oh, I've worked in [school] for 20 years. I know about Black culture and all the things, right?" But you really don't. Or if you do, how do you show that? You know? I don't know. So, I think it's a barrier, and I think it's… people realizing their own biases around that, whether intentional or unintentional, because I do think a lot of biases are unintentional, and unless somebody calls you out on them, you don't realize they're even there sometimes. But I do think there are some cultural differences that kind of the older the teacher you are, or I should say more veteran the teacher you are, you learned how to be a teacher, you were in school, whenever a lot of these expectations were in place and you abided by them or you didn't, you know? (Teacher #10)

In conjunction with the quantitative findings assessing teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes with tenure, I identified a clear pattern, whereby newer teachers are more likely to discuss race with their students and exhibit color-conscious attitudes, while more veteran teachers are more likely to endorse color-blind beliefs and avoid talking about race with students.

4.1.2.2.3 Prior Training

I found that prior training had a relatively weak relationship with teacher racial attitudes. In this sample, a majority of teachers (*n*=10) reported recent training on implicit bias or anti-racism, the next largest group had received no school-issued training (*n*=6) although one teacher in this group noted their own self-learning, and two participants noted previous trainings that occurred in the distant past (i.e., over 10 years ago). For the purposes of this analysis, teachers who had received no training or no training recently were examined together.

Of the eight teachers who did not receive training or had not received training within the last ten years, the group was divided, with a few endorsing color-conscious attitudes and a few more endorsing color-blind or color-cautious attitudes. Conversely, of the teachers who reported recent training, more teachers indicated color-conscious beliefs compared to teachers who were coded as having color-blind or color-cautious beliefs. These groups were relatively evenly distributed, as both had near equal reports of color-conscious versus cautious or blind beliefs. However, training was described by several teachers as helpful in shaping their racial attitudes and belief systems. Teachers' perceived benefits and interest in training are discussed in greater detail within the section addressing the third research question.

4.1.2.2.4 Racial Disparities at the School-Level

I identified an interesting trend when comparing teacher racial attitudes based on racial disparities at the school-level. Of the four schools, two had relatively low racial disparities between Black and white students (i.e., lower than a 2-1 rate of out-of-school suspensions). In contrast, the other two schools both had relatively high racial disparities as Black students were suspended at rates of 15-1 and 4-1 compared to white students in their respective schools. As such, I classified

the schools into two groups, high racial disparity and low racial disparity. The sample was close to equally split between teachers in the high racial disparity and the low racial disparity groups.

The majority of teachers in low-disparity schools provided color-conscious attitudes. Conversely, only a small fraction of teachers from high disparity schools expressed color-conscious attitudes. In this sample, the teachers working at schools with lower racial disparities in out-of-school suspension practices were frequently also the teachers who felt that it was important to discuss race and racism with their students. Meanwhile, teachers who did not think race should be talked about in school were often working in schools with high levels of racial disparities in their discipline outcomes. Directionality, causation, and generalizability are all limited through this qualitative analysis; however, this finding suggests that there is a key interaction taking place between a teacher's racial attitudes and their school discipline outcomes.

4.2 Research Question #2: Do Teachers' Racial Attitudes Relate to School Discipline Practices?

4.2.1 Quantitative Findings

4.2.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Teacher office discipline referrals were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Teachers were asked how many office referrals they gave to students per week with scores ranging from 1-20 ($n = 251, M = 2.55, SD = 2.75$). As such, the average number of office referrals per week for teachers was just over 2. Notably, 107 teachers did not answer this item. This is also valuable data as is discussed in more detail in both chapters 3 and 5.

4.2.1.2 Bivariate Analysis

Prior to running multivariate analyses, a correlation table with the variables of interest was created to observe the relationships between all dependent, independent, and control variables. These correlations are presented in Table 5. Several significant relationships were found. While there are numerous significant relationships including some between several of the control variables, I primarily discuss those relevant to the predictor variable, teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes. I make exception for one control variable, out-of-school racial disparities, as this is an intriguing and important relationship in the context of this study.

Teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes was significantly related to four other variables. Results indicate a negative relationship between increased color-conscious attitudes and perceptions of school danger. That is to say, the more a teacher was comfortable talking about race, the safer they rated their school. Color-conscious racial attitude was also positively associated with perceptions of student behaviors, meaning that increased comfort talking about race was associated with more positive perceptions of students. Furthermore, an increase in color-conscious racial attitude was associated with teachers perceiving restorative practices to be more effective. Finally, color-conscious racial attitude was negatively associated with tenure, suggesting that newer teachers are more comfortable with discussing race. Notably, although teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes were not significantly associated with their office referrals per week, the relationship approached significance with a p-value of .07.

While not the primary focus of this study, an intriguing finding emerged from these bivariate analyses. A significant positive relationship between teacher tenure and discipline disparity ratio was identified. Perception of safety was also significantly related to racial disparities, indicating that higher disparity ratios were associated with increased perceptions of

danger. Moreover, racial disparities had a significant relationship with several other school-level factors including: percent of student body that is Black, overall suspensions per 100, and percent of student body that is low-SES. Please note that despite these intriguing findings, due to the limitations of estimated ratios and high collinearity, racial disparities were not included in the final models used for analysis. However, these relationships are important and thus are presented here.

With the correlation among variables observed and all necessary assumptions met after removing racial discipline disparities from the model, I proceeded to run each of the four regression models to observe how teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes associated with each of the four dependent variables: (1) office referrals per week, (2) perception of school safety, (3) perception of student behavior, and (4) perception of the effectiveness of restorative practices.

Table 5 Correlation Among Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Color-Conscious Racial Attitude	-													
2	Office Referrals Per Week	-.11	-												
3	Perception of Safety	-.12*	.19**	-											
4	Perception of Student Behaviors	.16**	-.12	-.49**	-										
5	Perception of the Effectiveness of Restorative Practices	.15**	.01	-.20**	.27**	-									
6	Tenure	-.25**	-.04	.1	.04	.02	-								
7	Classroom Efficacy	-.03	-.06	-.04	.17**	.02	.25**	-							
8	Grade Level	.06	.05	.17**	-.28**	-.19**	-.04	.00	-						
9	Percent of Student Body that is Black	.09	.03	-.20**	.10	.05	-.41**	-.10*	-.16**	-					
10	Overall Suspensions per 100	-.01	-.02	.22**	-.17**	-.23**	.00	-.01	.56**	.02	-				
11	Percent of Student Body that is low-SES	.05	.08	.43**	-.24**	-.09	.18**	-.07	.07	-.39**	.05	-			
12	Math Proficiency	-.05	-.12	-.21**	.33**	.14*	.23**	.07	-.49**	-.12*	-.39**	-.07	-		
13	ELA Proficiency	.01	-.14*	-.22**	.23**	.01	.15**	.1	-.01	-.22**	-.22**	-.25**	.67**	-	
14	Black and non-Black OSS Disparity Ratio	-.02	-.05	.25**	-.09	-.15**	.31**	.05	.29**	-.57**	.56**	.53**	.20**	.19**	-

Note. $N = 357$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

4.2.1.3 Teacher Use of Office Discipline Referrals

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes were significantly associated with their office discipline referral practices when controlling for relevant teacher-level and school-level variables. The model approached significance, but a significant regression equation was not found ($F(9, 232) = 1.67$, $p < .09$, with an R^2 of .06. Color-conscious racial attitude had a significant relationship with teacher's use of office discipline practices when accounting for teacher tenure, classroom efficacy, grade level, or school-level characteristics, $t(232) = -2.07$, $p = .04$. The negative beta value (-.24) indicates a negative relationship between teacher color-conscious racial attitude and weekly office discipline referrals. In other words, teachers who endorse a more color-conscious attitude are less likely to refer students to the office for discipline. While the relationship found is noteworthy, this model failed to explain enough variance in the dependent variable as the only significant relationship was with the predictor variable of interest, color-conscious racial attitude.

Table 6 Linear Regression of the Association Between Color-Conscious Racial Attitude and Office Discipline Referrals

	b	SE	95% CI		β	p
			LL	UL		
Color-Conscious Racial Attitude	-0.24*	0.11	-0.46	-0.01	-0.14	0.04
Tenure	-0.14	0.17	-0.47	0.19	-0.07	0.41
Classroom Efficacy	-0.12	0.17	-0.44	0.21	-0.05	0.49
Grade Level[a]	0.50	0.56	-0.60	1.59	0.09	0.37
Percent of Student Body that is Black	0.01	0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.07	0.40
Overall Suspensions per 100	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.00	-0.11	0.21
Percent of Student Body that is low-SES	0.03	0.02	-0.01	0.07	0.12	0.11
Math Proficiency	-0.02	0.04	-0.10	0.05	-0.07	0.54
ELA Proficiency	-0.02	0.04	-0.09	0.05	-0.05	0.61

4.2.1.4 Teacher Perceptions of School Safety

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes were significantly associated with teachers' perception of school safety when controlling for relevant teacher-level and school-level variables. School safety was measured by summing a battery of five items on teacher perception of school safety wherein higher values indicated a greater sense of danger and lower scores indicated a greater sense of safety. A significant regression equation was found ($F(9,321) = 13.49$, $p < .01$, with an R^2 of .27. Color-conscious racial attitude was significantly related to teachers' perception of school safety, $t(321) = -2.76$, $p < .01$. The negative beta value (-.39) indicates a negative relationship between teacher racial attitude and perception of school safety. This means that the more comfortable a teacher is in discussing racial issues, the safer they find their school.

Table 7 Linear Regression of the Association Between Color-Conscious Racial Attitude and Perception of School Safety

	b	SE	95% CI		β	p
			LL	UL		
Color-Conscious Racial Attitude	-0.39**	0.14	-0.66	-0.11	-0.14	0.01
Tenure	-0.03	0.20	-0.42	0.36	-0.01	0.87
Classroom Efficacy	-0.01	0.20	-0.41	0.39	0.00	0.96
Grade Levelª	-0.25	0.66	-1.55	1.06	-0.03	0.71
Percent of Student Body that is Black	-0.01	0.01	-0.04	0.01	-0.06	0.36
Overall Suspensions per 100	0.02**	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.16	0.01
Percent of Student Body that is low-SES	0.19**	0.03	0.14	0.25	0.42	0.01
Math Proficiency	-0.09*	0.05	-0.18	0.00	-0.18	0.05
ELA Proficiency	0.02	0.04	-0.07	0.11	0.04	0.66

This model also found several significant control variables. The overall suspensions per 100 students was found to have a positive relationship with perceptions of school safety, meaning that as more students were suspended, teachers were more likely to indicate that they perceived danger at their school. Socioeconomic status had a significant positive relationship, and academic proficiency in math had a significant negative relationship.

4.2.1.5 Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine if teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes had a significant relationship with teacher's perception of student's behavior when controlling for relevant teacher-level and school-level variables. Student behavior was measured through the sum of a battery of 10 items wherein higher values indicated a more positive regard for student behaviors and lower scores indicated a lower regard for student behaviors. A significant regression equation was found (F(9,325) = 10.95, $p < .01$, with an R^2 of .23. Teacher racial attitude had a significant association with teachers' perception of student behavior, $t(325) = 4.17, p < .01$. The positive beta value (.79) indicates a positive relationship between a color-conscious teacher racial attitude and perception of student behavior. This means that the more comfortable a teacher is in discussing racial issues, the more positively they regard their students.

Table 8 Linear Regression of the Association Between Color-Conscious Racial Attitude and Perception of

Student Behavior

	b	SE	95% CI		β	p
			LL	UL		
Color-Conscious Racial Attitude	0.79**	0.19	0.42	1.17	0.21	0.01
Tenure	0.28	0.27	-0.25	0.81	0.06	0.29
Classroom Efficacy	0.61*	0.27	0.07	1.15	0.11	0.03
Grade Level[a]	-2.05*	0.89	-3.80	-0.29	-0.17	0.02
Percent of Student Body that is Black	0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.05	0.04	0.52
Overall Suspensions per 100	0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.03	0.03	0.63
Percent of Student Body that is low-SES	-0.13**	0.04	-0.20	-0.06	-0.22	0.01
Math Proficiency	0.15**	0.06	0.03	0.27	0.22	0.01
ELA Proficiency	0.01	0.06	-0.11	0.12	0.01	0.92

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; [a]0 = elementary school, 1 = middle school;

*** p < .05; ** p < .001.**

This model also had several significant control variables. A teacher's classroom efficacy and the math proficiency of students in their school both were found to have a positive association with teachers' perceptions of their students. Conversely, teachers working at the middle school level and teachers working in schools with more students from economically disadvantaged families were found to have more negative perceptions of their students.

4.2.1.6 Teacher Perception of the Effectiveness of Restorative Practices

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine if teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes had a significant relationship with teacher's perception of the effectiveness of restorative practices when controlling for relevant teacher-level and school-level variables. Perception of restorative practices was measured by one item wherein higher scores indicate a more positive perception of the effectiveness of restorative practice. A significant regression equation was found $(F(9,312) = 4.58$, $p < .01$, with an R^2 of .12. Teacher racial attitude had a significant association

107

with teachers' perception of the effectiveness of restorative practice, t (312) = 3.21, $p < .01$. The

positive beta value (.11) indicates a positive relationship between a color-conscious teacher racial

attitude and perception of restorative practices. This means that the more comfortable a teacher is

in discussing racial issues, the more effective they consider restorative practices to be.

Table 9 Linear Regression of the Association Between Color-Conscious Racial Attitude and Perception of

Restorative Practices

	b	SE	95% CI		β	p
			LL	UL		
Color-Conscious Racial Attitude	0.11**	0.04	0.04	0.18	0.18	0.01
Tenure	0.06	0.05	-0.03	0.16	0.08	0.20
Classroom Efficacy	0.01	0.05	-0.09	0.11	0.01	0.92
Grade Level[a]	0.07	0.17	-0.27	0.41	0.04	0.68
Percent of Student Body that is Black	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.02	0.80
Overall Suspensions per 100	-0.01**	0.00	-0.01	0.00	-0.21	0.01
Percent of Student Body that is low-SES	-0.02**	0.01	-0.03	0.00	-0.16	0.01
Math Proficiency	0.03*	0.01	0.00	0.05	0.23	0.03
ELA Proficiency	-0.03**	0.01	-0.05	-0.01	-0.26	0.01

Note. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; [a]0 = elementary school, 1 = middle school;

***$p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.**

Overall use of suspension per 100 students and school composition of students from

economically disadvantaged backgrounds negatively associated with perception of restorative

practices. In other words, teachers in schools with higher use of suspensions and with more

children from low-SES backgrounds reported restorative practices less effective.

4.2.2 Qualitative Findings: Teacher Racial Attitudes and Disciplinary Beliefs

In this section of the results, I discuss how teachers' racial attitudes and social location

interact with their school disciplinary beliefs. I used qualitative analysis of the 18 interviews

conducted with teachers working at schools implementing restorative practices to examine ways in which teacher racial attitudes influenced their disciplinary behaviors or beliefs regarding school discipline outcomes. In addition to the teacher racial attitudes previously discussed, teachers were asked several questions related to racial disparities in school discipline. Teachers were asked if they believed implicit bias or discrimination could potentially impact discipline outcomes, to provide their explanation for racial disparities seen in discipline outcomes at a national level, and if they felt that the discipline outcomes in their school were equitable by race.

During coding, I organized teacher beliefs into three categories: (1) teachers who believed that discipline outcomes were equitable based on race and that implicit bias did not impact outcomes, (2) teachers who believed that implicit bias impacted discipline outcomes and racial disparities existed in discipline outcomes nationally but not at their school, and (3) teachers who believed implicit bias, discrimination, and racial disparities were occurring at a national level and at their school. Each of the three groups will be discussed followed by an examination into what factors appear to contribute to these beliefs most meaningfully.

4.2.2.1 Discipline Outcomes are Equitable by Race

One-third of the teachers interviewed felt that discipline outcomes were equitable by race at the local and national level. This group generally rejected the idea that implicit bias impacted discipline outcomes at any level. This group of teachers generally reported believing that rules were consistently enforced by teachers and that any differences noted by race were generally the result of student behavior rather than any issue related to inequitable discipline enforcement. As one veteran white teacher stated about their school's discipline:

I'm going to say it's completely fair. Usually the [pause] what's the word I want to use? The action that you do usually causes the consequence. So, if you didn't do that action, you

wouldn't get that consequence. It doesn't matter if you're white, Black, red, brown, green, whatever you are. (Teacher #8)

Similarly, another veteran white teacher made comments that identified discipline as fair, suggesting that any disparities that exist are the result of student behavior.

I'm going to say yes, I do think they're disciplined fairly, but I also think some students' behavior is just over the top in terms of, like, how do you discipline this? … Some of the other behaviors, they come with the kid. … Whether you're white or you're Black this is the behavior display, and this is inappropriate. And I know [school] in the past, there was a lot of discipline questions because we were suspending more Black students than white students, and "Why is this?" And "Blacks aren't being treated fairly because of this." And it was more of like, well, this is, like, the reality. It's not like making this behavior up. If I put a video camera here, you can see that the student is acting this way or doing this, and it's not my fault the color of his skin or her skin, you know what I mean? (Teacher #13)

In addition to student behavior, another common explanation for racial disparities was school demographic. For example, a teacher stated:

So, in a building like ours, we do have more Black or African American students. So therefore, it may look as though, man, that's all [they're] doing is disciplining those children. Well, when your class is maybe 90% Black and you have mostly Black or African American students, well, it's going to seem that way. (Teacher #8)

Moreover, more than one teacher shared that they had doubts about the data reporting racial disparities. Some questioned how data was being reported for disparity ratios. After giving an example of how percentages of students disciplined could be reported differently depending on the number of students present in a school, a teacher stated:

110

So, it's all perceived in the numbers. Like you can skew numbers any way you want. So that's the way I'll say it like that. It just depends on how you look at the numbers. (Teacher #8)

Other teachers more generally expressed uncertainty regarding the statement that Black students are disciplined more often and more harshly than white counterparts. One white teacher responded to this question:

Well, [laughs] I don't know. Like I don't… I see what I do, and I know what I'm looking at. … I don't want to say that I don't believe that, but [long pause] I don't know. You really put me on the spot. [Laughs] It's not that… I don't know. I have a hard time believing that. I don't know any teacher, or anyone can do that without cause, you know what I mean? I don't think that going into the classroom… I don't think, oh, well, you're Black, I'm going to be harder on you, or I don't know. I'm very equal, and I try to treat everybody the same. And like I said, I don't see the skin color. That's a hard one for me. (Teacher #17)

Several factors appear to be salient in developing the belief that implicit bias does not impact discipline outcomes. First, teachers in this category were all coded as color-blind with a few voicing some elements of color-cautious beliefs. As such, teachers who doubted that discipline outcomes were impacted by racism were also the teachers who reported the most limited amount of race talk with students. Moreover, these teachers generally did not express any linkages between race talk and school discipline outcomes, meaning, that they themselves did not indicate seeing any connection between the two concepts.

Second, race appears to be a meaningful contributor, as all but one of teachers in this category identified as white. White teachers in this group often emphasized the importance of sameness and meritocracy. As some of the prior quotes demonstrate, several white teachers

111

focused on the idea that race was unimportant in the context of behavior, often using the phrase, "I don't care if you're [list of colors]." A common component amongst this group of white teachers was an emphasis on meritocracy and individualism separated from systemic or historic factors.

Tenure is also related to beliefs regarding discipline outcomes. Every teacher who reported believing discipline outcomes were equitable had at least 20 years of teaching experience. Few teachers drew specific connections between their age or length of service and this belief, but, as is discussed elsewhere in the results, cultural beliefs that vary between generations, and differences in education and training prior to entering the workforce likely contribute to these differences.

Training appeared to have a limited impact on these beliefs as over half of the teachers in this group stated they had received training related to this topic at some point in their career. Indeed, some teachers noted training or direct awareness of disparities existing in their schools but reframed the cause as solely related to student behavior. For example, one teacher responded to the prompt related to data showing that Black students are disciplined more often by stating:

> Yeah, that's been around for a while, and I think our school district actually got in trouble for it because our data showed exactly that. It was showing that the Black males were being suspended. … Yes, I would say definitely Black males were suspended more than their white males. [pause] And of course, I didn't control that, but I would see that there would be… [pause] I think part of it was there's more aggression, and that was like the aggressive behaviors was like, nope, we can't have these. (Teacher #13)

This suggests that awareness of disparities alone is not a meaningful indicator of awareness related to implicit bias or racial prejudice in school discipline outcomes.

Indeed, the actual racial disparities at their respective schools did not seem to provide beneficial insight into differential discipline outcomes. Of the teachers who believed that discipline

112

practices were fair or equitable overall, over half of them were at schools with racial disparity ratios greater than 4-1 when comparing Black and white out-of-school suspensions per 100 students. In other words, teachers who perceived discipline to be fair by race were often at schools wherein state-level data demonstrates that Black students are suspended more often than their white counterparts.

4.2.2.2 Discipline Outcomes are Equitable by Race at Their School but Inequitable

      Nationally

One of the important distinctions that emerged through this coding process was the difference in teacher perception of racial disparities in discipline outcomes when discussing national versus local practices. That is to say, when asked about national data on school discipline outcomes, two-thirds of the teachers interviewed stated that they were aware of racial disparities and believed that implicit bias was playing a role in discipline outcomes. However, when asked about discipline outcomes by race *at their own schools*, only four teachers indicated an awareness that there were racial disparities in discipline outcomes or that implicit bias might be a factor in their school's discipline practices. As such, a fascinating disconnect emerged in the data wherein teachers acknowledged implicit bias, racism, and discrimination as impacting school outcomes in general but did not believe they impacted outcomes in their classroom or school.

By far the most common explanation for this disconnect was the racial composition of their school or classroom. As this teacher explains:

Yeah, I definitely have heard that statistic [that Black boys are disproportionately disciplined] before, that's been shared at some point in my professional career. It's hard for me to talk about it because all of the boys in my class are Black. So, like, you know, if student A does something one day and then student B, so, I mean, it's a pretty consistent.

… So while I hear the statistics, it's sort of hard. When I think about the kids that I service,

I don't really have any other race to compare them to. (Teacher #2)

Each of the 18 teachers interviewed in this analysis work at schools that have a majority Black student body. However, the relative proportions between these schools did vary considerably between schools with a slight majority (i.e., just over 50%) and schools that were almost entirely Black student bodies (i.e., over 90%). This creates an interesting contrast, as multiple teachers described their inability to perceive racial disparities in their student body in the same way despite sizable differences in actual demographic composition.

Teachers who believed that discipline practices in their school discipline were fair but thought that racial disparities were prevalent on a national level were split between color-conscious teachers who openly talked about race with their students and color-cautious teachers who had limited levels of race talk with their students. Similarly, this group was somewhat split between teachers who saw and described a direct connection between talking about race with their students and racial disparities and those who struggled to connect the two ideas as interrelated.

An important distinction that emerged for these teachers was that some schools did have limited racial disparities in their discipline outcomes (under a 2-1 rate when comparing Black and white students) while others had large disparities as Black students were suspended at a rate of 15-1 when compared to white students. As such, some teachers were making accurate assessments of their school discipline outcomes, while others were not. Racial attitude seemed to associate with how accurately teachers recognized these disparities.

I use comments from two teachers to illustrate the contrast in teachers' racial attitudes and how those attitudes affected how they assessed, discussed, and addressed school discipline

disparities. For example, a color-conscious teacher of color who felt that discipline was fair at their school said:

> I think that when teachers look at how they choose to discipline kids, you do have to take racism into account. You have to look at it and say, okay, even as a Black educator, when I look at my kids, okay, how many times has this kid been in detention or been in suspension and looking at if it's a lot because like, okay, so how am I really helping them out? And then looking at the situation saying, okay, so how is this putting them away from that school to prison pipeline? Because if all I'm doing is I'm constantly putting you in detention or suspension and not looking at the root cause and trying to fix that, how am I helping you as a student? How am I getting better as an educator? So, when I look at the interventions that have to be done, yes, of course, racism has to be looked at. (Teacher #11)

Throughout their interview this teacher actively described how they discuss racism in the classroom and was very comfortable and direct in talking about race with their students. However, due to the demographics of the school where they worked and the approach of their colleagues in their school, this teacher felt that there were limited disparities in discipline outcomes. This was largely substantiated by school-level data, as the school where this teacher worked was over 90% Black and had an estimated suspension disparity ratio that was under a 2-1 rate per 100 students when comparing Black and white students.

Conversely, a color-cautious white teacher who also believed their school disciplined students fairly said:

> Oh, yeah, this is a good one. I've done a little bit with implicit bias. Umm… [pause] I think, unfortunately, it's a real thing. I do think that people from different backgrounds have different expectations, and it's hard to bring them all together. I think it's really like, you

have to know that kid, and you kind of have to take the race out of it for a minute, and is this just the way he is? Or you know what I mean? Yeah, I would say that's one instance where you have to remove the racial bias from that and just say, this is the way we expect you to behave at [school]. Like, period, end of story. Just keep it very surface, like, this is what we need. (Teacher #9)

This teacher's racial attitudes were coded as color-cautious, as they did acknowledge and discuss race but often at limited and discrete levels such as celebration of diversity. This teacher taught at a school that was about 50% Black and had a high racial disparity in suspension outcomes.

These two teachers demonstrate an important dynamic wherein teacher racial attitude associated with how accurately a teacher assessed their school discipline outcomes. In other words, teachers with more color-conscious attitudes who described their schools as equitable were largely working in schools that did have equitable discipline outcomes. However, teachers with color-cautious or color-blind views often described their schools as equitable despite school-level data indicating that large disparities are taking place. The inconsistency found among color-cautious teachers is notable, as many of these teachers acknowledged that there are racial disparities in discipline outcomes at a national level, but they did not see it as a relevant problem in their own school, despite data suggesting that such disparities do exist. This creates an interesting challenge in linking a teacher's general knowledge to the specifics of their school. It also suggests that unless a teacher gains this knowledge through a color-conscious lens, teachers' general awareness of racial disparities does not limit the persistence of disparities in discipline outcomes in their school.

4.2.2.3 Discipline Outcomes are Not Equitable by Race

Of the 18 teachers interviewed, only a small fraction (n=4) specifically stated that discipline at their school was unfair when examining discipline outcomes based on race. Teachers

in this group labelled implicit bias and prejudice as key factors in discipline outcomes. As one teacher stated:

> I do not think it's fair at all. Our school is mainly African American, and I just feel like at times, like, there's just certain students that it doesn't matter what they do, like the teacher's going to have a problem, like, with them. (Teacher #16)

Teachers in this group often discussed unconscious labelling as one of the key issues that takes place.

> I think at our school, I think formally or informally, kids are labeled: bad kids, good kids, smart kids, dumb kids, English language learners, special education students. And I think as a whole, those labels that get imprinted on our kids affect how they're treated. (Teacher #1)

Teachers in this group were all identified as color-conscious, and all actively discussed race with their students. Each teacher in this group provided examples of discussing race and racism with their students, and each identified this practice as a priority in their pedagogy.

Indeed, teachers in this group often had strong connections between their beliefs around racial disparities and discussing race and their classroom. Teachers with strong color-conscious beliefs also often had intentional discipline practices that were meant to limit exclusionary discipline practices for their students. One teacher acknowledged how implicit bias may have impacted their discipline outcomes in the past and how they now work intentionally to limit exclusionary discipline for students. They said:

> Like, if I think back, there are definitely times when I've written, like, an office referral for a student that maybe I wouldn't have written an office referral for a different student in a different situation. I think part of that is human nature, but that doesn't make it okay. …

There's the same thing on the other side of that. I can think of referrals that I know that if I write this office referral for this student, he's going to end up suspended for five days, and I don't want that to happen to him. So, I skip out on the office referral, and I just handle it in the classroom, because I know that he's not going to be treated fairly by the administration, and I know he's going to get a consequence worse than what he deserves. (Teacher #1)

Other teachers in this group had similar sentiments. Many of the color-conscious teachers who felt discipline practices were unfair emphasized relationships, restorative practices such as circles, and internal solutions to behavioral issues to ensure that their students were not being suspended. As one teacher said:

I feel like this past year … I tried to do like circles and things like that. I'm trying real big on that and more so, like building relationships with the kids and things like that. So, when we did have like a conflict or things like that, just trying to work it out together, like as a classroom. … So, some teachers go right to [office referrals]. It doesn't matter what it is. They automatically just referral, referral, referral. … For me, like I said, that kid was the only referral I did [the entire year] because any issues, I tried to work the whole classroom. (Teacher #16)

Teachers in this group were generally newer, as three of the four had ten or fewer years of experience. All teachers in this group had received training on implicit biases. Teachers in this group were split between teachers of color and white teachers. Notably, all teachers in this sample who reported issues with racial disparities in school discipline worked at schools that had lower racial disparities in their school-level discipline outcomes relative to the other schools in the sample. That is to say, when comparing Black and white suspensions per 100, all teachers in this

identified category worked at schools with ratios that were under a 2-1 rate. This is a fascinating contrast to the teachers who did not believe racial disparities existed, as those teachers generally taught in schools with disparity ratios of 4-1 and 15-1. Thus, it seems that teachers who are least aware of racial disparities in discipline are those who are most likely to be perpetrating it.

4.3 Research Question #3: Are Teachers Interested in Anti-Racist Professional Development and What are the Perceived Barriers/Facilitators of Training?

The final research question I explored focused on the extent to which teachers were interested in professional development related to racial critical consciousness, alongside their perceived barriers and facilitators to such programming. I answered this question using qualitative in-depth interviews with teachers at four schools using restorative practices. Teachers had a wide range of experiences, opinions, and insights into training. Overall, teachers' interest in training was quite high. However, they identified numerous barriers to successful implementation, with challenges being acknowledged by both those in favor of and against anti-racist professional development. When I examined interview responses across categories, intriguing patterns emerged that suggest that social position is an important factor that influences teacher perceptions and attitudes towards professional development.

4.3.1 Teacher Interest in Implicit Bias and Anti-Racist Professional Development

Most of the teachers interviewed had prior experiences of training related to anti-racist pedagogy or mitigating implicit biases. These teachers taught at four schools, and their answers

were largely consistent by school-site about whether or not they had received training. A majority of teachers (*n*=10) had received recent training, two had received training several years ago, and a minority of teachers (*n*=6) indicated that they had not received any formal training through their school. Teachers working in the same schools reported participation in the same trainings, though several teachers also had additional experiences from other trainings provided at prior schools or conferences.

Teacher interest in professional development focused on implicit bias, anti-racist pedagogy, and multicultural programming was very high. A majority of teachers (*n*=12) supported receiving such training, indicating that they saw it as important or necessary for themselves and others. Several of the teachers were emphatic in their support of training, arguing that it was a necessity for teachers to buy in to these programs and ensure that they were implementing them in their teaching practices. One of the participants who spoke to this most directly was an early-career Black teacher, who argued:

> PDs are absolutely necessary. I don't think that teachers are… especially white teachers who are teaching Black kids, they're not versed in how to deal with and handle and I guess manage students who are a different color. … And teachers … have to be able to understand what they need to do. … But the biggest thing is having teachers who are open and willing to acknowledge that an issue exists and then also being willing to do the work. (Teacher #7)

Other teachers echoed this sentiment. Another teacher of color believed that awareness about racism, discrimination, and implicit bias should play "a big role" in discipline reform, arguing that teachers have a responsibility to address racism within the school-to-prison pipeline (Teacher #11).

Another theme that emerged in support of teacher training was wanting other teachers to have a "lightbulb" or "Aha!" moment. A white veteran teacher said:

I think that all people really need to be reminded to think about what you know and what's going on and apply it to where you're at. Because really, you can think of something that happened like a long time ago and go, "Oh!" Now you have a lightbulb turn on. So if you don't mention it in any of these trainings for the teachers, then they're not going to think about it. … Some people are always thinking about it, some people rarely think about it. Some people have never been told, so they have never thought about it. And those are really the ones you need to reach. If you don't tell them they're going to continue thinking everything's fine and nobody's ever told them to think about it, they're not going to start on their own. (Teacher #15)

In many interviews, white teachers talk about their own "lightbulb" moments where they became more aware of how racism was impacting their students' daily experiences. For example, an early career white teacher stated:

I know I personally am wanting to seek [trainings] out more. Like I said, because of my background and how non-diverse my background is, and through teaching where I'm teaching right now, I have definitely had to kind of approach some things that I learned as a student or as a child that I didn't know were racist and had to kind of overcome those on my own. (Teacher #18)

Teachers reported finding this insight valuable and felt that it was important that this collective knowledge continue to be disseminated to other teachers.

Teachers who supported training typically believed that they should be ongoing rather than discrete incidents that occur once in a teacher's career. Several teachers noted that timing was an

important component that influenced the impact of the training. Moreover, they could identify multiple times in their career that training on implicit bias and multicultural pedagogy would have been helpful. Similarly, teachers could imagine how returning to such training would benefit them in the future as they encountered new experiences. One of the veteran teachers with over 20 years of experience summarized the need for iterative learning, stating:

> I think that's something you have to come back to too, because where I am now is not where I was when I started teaching 23 years ago. I've really changed my thoughts and of course the whole political scene, and the pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement… I mean, all that really shapes a person. I think it's something that needs to be revisited. You can't just say, "Yeah, we did that eight years ago." Well, we need to do it again. (Teacher #9)

Of the teachers that did not explicitly support training on implicit bias and anti-racist pedagogy (*n*=6), their responses were divided between ambivalence and outright rejection. Half of those who did not support training responded with ambivalence, suggesting that training could be valuable for others or that they would participate but only if absolutely necessary. This response pattern is well-exemplified by a white teacher with nearly 30 years of teaching experience (Teacher #13), who stated that trainings could be helpful in addressing racial disparities in discipline outcomes. However, later in the interview when asked if they had participated in any trainings related to race or racism, this teacher stated that although their school offered such trainings, they had personally elected not to participate.

The remaining interviewees who did not support the use of professional development on race and racism explicitly stated that they did not like these trainings, or they did not think they

122

were helpful. One of the common themes that emerged for teachers in this category was that talking about race or implicit bias was perceived as either uncomfortable or unhelpful. One teacher said:

> We talked about the biases and stuff, and I don't know… I honestly remember thinking to myself that sometimes … talking about it, it's like a bias in itself … I remember having a hard time with it because I was feeling like this wasn't even an issue to me … and then I felt like we were making it an issue. (Teacher #17)

Similarly, a white teacher with over 20 years of experience suggested that implicit bias was largely a non-issue that did not impact their early years teaching, but that media and school focus on it in recent years was making it feel like a problem for people now. They stated:

> I do believe in our professional development that if you weren't teaching us this, we wouldn't be worried about that. (Teacher #8).

When asked what role they thought trainings on implicit bias or discrimination should play in professional development, this teacher stated, "I don't think it should at all."

4.3.1.1 Variation by Social Location

During qualitative analysis, patterns in responses based on social location began to emerge. These patterns mirrored much of what was found in teacher racial attitudes and discipline beliefs, as many teachers were relatively consistent across these broader domains. Teachers' race and ethnicity appears to play a role in their attitude toward anti-racist professional development. The majority of the teachers of color interviewed supported training and only one was ambivalent about the process. This teacher did not reject training, rather mentioned that they did not seek training out for themselves personally. Many white teachers were interested in training. Of the 13 white teachers interviewed, over half (n=8) supported the use of anti-racist professional development.

Notably, the only teachers who unequivocally stated that they did not want professional development on implicit bias or racism (*n*=3) were white.

As is discussed in greater detail in the section on facilitators to training and study implications, one potential reason why teachers of color may support anti-racist training with greater uniformity compared to white teachers has to do with their own personal experiences of racism at their schools. Several teachers of color provided stories of microaggressions and acts of discrimination that were committed against them by their colleagues. Many shared that trainings around racism and implicit bias have helped facilitate conversations between them and their colleagues. Teachers of color often referred to experiential knowledge of discrimination in the school as a primary reason for why they thought training was an essential component of discipline reform.

In this sample, a teacher's overall years of experience related to their interest in anti-racist professional development. Teachers' years of experience were broken into three groups (1) 0-10 years (*n*=6), (2) 11-20 years (*n*=7), and (3) 21 or more years (*n*=5). Every teacher in the 0-10 years of experience category supported anti-racist training. This converged with other patterns previously discussed regarding newer teachers, such as their openness to discussing race with students and their awareness of racial disparities in school discipline outcomes. The middle group of teachers with 11-20 years of experience was quite mixed in the opinions offered. Over half of the teachers in this group supported training, whereas two were ambivalent and only one was opposed to training. Finally, the most veteran teachers, with 21 or more years of experience, were the most resistant to training. A minority of teachers in this category supported training while the majority were either opposed to or ambivalent to its use. This pattern once again mirrored other

findings that more veteran teachers were typically more color-blind and likely to dismiss racial disparities in school discipline outcomes.

When examining contextual factors related to the school setting, an interesting pattern emerged as well. Schools with higher racial disparities between Black and white students also had a larger proportion of teachers who did not want trainings on implicit bias or anti-racist pedagogy. From this finding, I posit that there is a potential relationship between teachers' refusal to recognize or train on implicit bias and disparate discipline practices that create racial disparities in discipline outcomes. This consideration is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Prior exposure to training did not appear to influence teacher attitudes regarding future training. The majority of the sample supported the use of training. The smaller portion of teachers who did not support training included both those who had and had not received training. Indeed, in examining elements of social identity I found that prior training had a weaker relationship to support of training than other elements of social identity such as race/ethnicity or tenure.

4.3.2 Barriers, Challenges, and Limitations of Professional Development

Numerous barriers and limitations to anti-racist professional development were identified both by teachers in favor of and opposed to their usage. Barriers could largely be categorized into two broad groups: (1) training design and (2) teacher disposition. Training design was comprised of elements related to the logistics, content, and design of the professional development. Teacher disposition consisted of teacher buy-in or attitude towards the training, defensiveness towards perceived criticism, and lack of relationship between trainers and teachers.

4.3.2.1 Training Design

Many of the teachers who had training courses in the prior year noted that small changes to the design of the training could have made crucial impacts on how teachers responded to the programming. Logistics, timing in career, format, and content were the primary subthemes derived from the broader design category.

Logistics largely focused on the timing of the training in the course of their workweek. One group of teachers received bi-weekly training on Monday mornings before the start of the school day. Many of the teachers from this school noted this as a massive barrier to engaging in the content. Fatigue, concerns about other work for that week, and an apprehension about starting their week with what was perceived as a bleak subject were some of the issues that teachers identified with their training logistics. As one teacher explained:

> I can't tell you the number of times that I thought to myself, like, if this was just on a Wednesday morning instead of a Monday morning, I would be so much more engaged in the training … Monday is a big day to try to get papers around and get ready for my students coming in. It sounds like a silly thing, but it really was a big deal to me and a lot of other people. (Teacher #1)

Several teachers who also received training on Monday morning echoed this sentiment, suggesting that alternative times in the week would improve their ability to focus on the content being presented. Another logistical concern related to how the interventions were disseminated. Most of the teachers received their training via Zoom, and a few felt that this presented some drawbacks as well as that it was more difficult to focus, connect, and engage in meaningful conversation in this format.

Timing in career was noted as a potential challenge or strength depending on how it was experienced and who was talking about it. As a challenge, teachers noted that when training was received too early or too late in their career, the training did not always feel relevant to their current situation or work. For example, a white teacher in the early stages of their career working at a school that is majority Black described receiving training at the beginning of their employment but found its impact limited because they were not familiar with the school or the students yet. This teacher reported:

> Personally, it was too early, I think, in my time at [school] to really understand how to take what they were talking about and apply it, which is partially why I want to seek [training] more out on my own … now that I've been at [school] for a little while and kind of understand where [school] is, to help my own teaching. (Teacher #18)

Format barriers were defined by what pedagogical design was used for training dissemination (i.e., lecture, discussion, etc.). Several teachers reported frustrations with lecture-based formats, suggesting that these lacked interaction, feedback, or opportunities for self-reflection. As one teacher noted:

> I personally didn't think it was very beneficial because there was no discussions and things like that. (Teacher #16)

However, training that incorporated discussion were also identified as potentially challenging depending on the peers in your breakout group. Several teachers noted that teacher comfort in discussing topics of race, racism, and implicit bias could vary significantly and that in the composition of your group could drastically alter the productivity of that conversation. In fact, the same teacher who was disappointed by the lack of discussion noted that when it did occur, it was not always effective. They said:

127

And sometimes they would put us in a breakout room, but, depending on who you were in

the breakout room, like, some teachers didn't really talk and stuff like that. So, I feel like it

wasn't very helpful. (Teacher #16)

This hesitance to open up has many potential causes, however, the main source identified by

interviewees was teacher attitude and comfort. As a teacher described:

It's just a touchy subject. And so sometimes you have people be very open, and you have

some people clam up because they don't want to be perceived in a different light. (Teacher

8)

This comment relates to the second category of barriers, teacher dispositions.

4.3.2.2 Teacher Disposition

Teacher disposition is an overarching theme that focuses less on specific design for

professional development and instead captures how teacher attitude and buy-in impacts the effects

of training. Three specific components of teacher disposition were identified through qualitative

analysis: (1) buy-in, (2) defensiveness, and (3) relationships. These items are related but are

discussed separately so as to ensure that each element is thoroughly examined.

4.3.2.2.1 Teacher Buy-In

Teacher buy-in to training emerged as perhaps one of the most important and common

barriers observed. A Black teacher working in a school district with a faculty that is predominantly

white made the conjecture that "Probably less than 10%" of the teachers at their school wanted to

talk about race as part of their practice and training (Teacher #4). Multiple teachers from several

schools noted that the recent trainings that they participated in lacked buy-in from the staff broadly,

ultimately diminishing the impact of the programming. Buy-in was discussed by many of the

teachers from two primary directions, teachers who themselves were interested in the training but believed that others lacked buy-in and teachers who directly or indirectly indicated that training was not important for them. Although these are unique perspectives, the insights offered by both groups were similar.

When exploring what hindered teacher buy-in, two themes emerged from the data. Either teachers felt that the training did not apply to them for a variety of reasons, or they truly were uninterested in professional development, stating that they did not think these kinds of training had a place in school programming. The former was more prevalent than the latter, as many teachers indicated that they personally felt that they did not need training, or they knew teachers at their school who felt similarly.

There were many reasons why teachers did not think the training applied to them. One of the more common explanations had to do with the racial demographics of their student body. Teachers at schools with predominantly Black students sometimes expressed that trainings were better suited for schools with fewer Black students, as they suspected implicit bias may be more prevalent in those settings. A white veteran working in a majority-Black school summarized this sentiment stating:

> I think a lot of places, especially places that don't have very many minority kids in it, I think those places really do need more training with staff and principals probably about their biases that they have. (Teacher #15)

Another detriment to buy-in was teachers feeling that they had received sufficient exposure to the information around implicit bias and that there was little else for them to learn in future training. A mid-career teacher shared a story about a training they received in years past

that they found to be transformational, making the training they had more recently feel hollow. During their story they shared:

> [Recent training] couldn't compare to what experience I received with [past training]. So, I felt bad … because I almost felt like I wasn't giving them a chance. (Teacher #2)

> A common theme emerged wherein teachers suggested that they had sufficient knowledge and no longer wanted to participate in training that felt repetitive. This sentiment was described by both white and Black teachers. A white teacher stated:

> Just the way some of it comes off, it's like, okay, you're pounding the same thing in over and over again. I already got you on that. [laughs] … I know a couple of the teachers that are in it right now as it starts up again this year, they're like, "Oh, goodness more." They were kind of ready to be done. It's kind of like they've gone over all the topics multiple times, the same things, and it's like beating a dead horse. Like, we've already heard this. Can we move on to something else? (Teacher #15).

Similarly, a Black teacher shared:

> I can tell you now, a lot of people are like, "Oh, we have to go listen to these ladies again and talk about…" They just don't want to hear it. They don't. And I know some Black teachers that said, "I should be exempt" and I'm like, "Because you're Black? … Because we don't know everything." You know what I mean? It's tough. (Teacher #4)

> While some teachers described diminished buy-in due to a sense of expertise or prior knowledge, another subset of teachers lacked buy-in because professional development on race made them uncomfortable or they found it to be unhelpful to consider these topics. This was a small group of the overall sample, and a demonstrably smaller group than those who felt that they had reached saturation on their training. However, several teachers argued that there was no need

130

for anti-racist professional development or that talking about race was creating an issue where none had previously existed.

While several teachers shared this sentiment, one particularly exemplified this lack of buy-in throughout their interview with several notable quotes. First, they shared that they do not see the training as particularly helpful because they focus on treating everyone the same:

> For me, that is hard because I just respect people for who they are, so none of that kind of means anything to me. I don't look at people different because of skin color or race or what they choose to identify by. (Teacher #17)

They then shared that the training they experienced felt as though it was creating an issue where there was not one before.

> I remember having a hard time with it because I was feeling like this wasn't even an issue to me … And then I felt like we were making it an issue.

They closed their interview stating that they did not think that school discipline interventions should include training on racism.

> My answer would be no, you don't need to do that [training]. … I guess I just don't think that that really matters. If you're doing the [restorative justice] program and you're learning how to… does it matter? I don't know. That's just me, I guess. I just don't know. I don't know why that needs to be in it. [laughs] I don't know. (Teacher #17)

4.3.2.2.2 Defensiveness and Relationships

Important but distinct components of teacher buy-in are teacher defensiveness at being critiqued and the importance of relationships. Multiple teachers noted a common complaint against their training that they or their colleagues felt blamed or insulted by trainers who made assumptions about them without having accurate information about a teacher's classroom or homelife.

131

One teacher who enjoyed trainings but recognized reasons why peers felt defensive attempted to describe the experience of their colleagues, sharing:

I think the biggest thing for teachers is, it's really tough for teachers to listen to people that aren't teachers, which I know is tough in this situation. Right? Like, if you want to give a training on implicit bias or trauma-informed care or restorative practices, teachers aren't the expert in that. In a lot of cases, you want to hear from social workers, you want to hear from psychologists, you want to hear from clinicians. But teachers are notoriously bad at "Well, they don't know what it's like to be in my classroom." And so, as tough as it is, I think coming from somebody with classroom experience bolsters the credibility a lot. (Teacher #1)

Other teachers shared similar or related complaints that training felt detached, critical, and uninformed about the cohort that was being taught. A veteran teacher shared about their personal life in an interracial marriage and the process of raising biracial children. This teacher noted that at times when trainers talked to staff without any context or relationship, the trainers made assumptions that felt invalidating to the teachers' lived experience.

And then later on, the more [trainers] had gotten into it, there was more that kind of turns me off because it feels like all the time they're trying to say that the teachers here don't know how to teach kids of different races, which some of us have been doing for a long time. Many of us live in that world, have different races at home, and they don't know us. They don't know us at all. (Teacher #15)

The lack of relationship between trainers and teachers often increased defensiveness and subsequently reduced buy-in. In the next section on facilitators and value, I discuss how teachers identified ways in which improved relationships can benefit the quality of training.

Teacher disposition is a broader category than training design. While training design is important, it is a smaller scope and contains elements that are more easily controlled. For example, logistics or content are more immediate and direct changes that training creators can make. Conversely, disposition incorporates various elements of how and why teachers report limited buy-in to training. Existing confidence in their knowledge, prior experiences, dislike for the material, or a perception of being attacked from an unknown or untrusted source all contribute to this complex process. From the information shared by teachers throughout the interviews, relationships and trust functioned as the most important keys to overcoming issues with buy-in and defensiveness. How to foster trust is discussed in both the facilitators and value of training subsection of the results and implications subsection of the discussion.

4.3.3 Facilitators, Value, and Importance of Professional Development

Teachers had a bit more difficulty naming specific facilitators for successful professional development compared to barriers. Indeed, most of the facilitators were suggested during conversations about barriers and were framed as "what not to do" rather than "what to do." Moreover, when asked about what might make training more successful, many teachers provided answers focused on the overall value and importance of training rather than describing what specific strategies helped facilitate the training experience. This is an interesting and noteworthy finding in its own right, as it suggests that there is a conflict between teacher awareness that training is useful and an inability to articulate what makes these interventions successful. That said, teachers offered key insights into methods to improve results and expressed numerous reasons why they found these trainings valuable. While certain facilitators can be inferred in response to the training design barriers (e.g., if the logistics for Monday morning are a concern,

consider an alternative like Wednesday morning for training), the most substantive reflections provided by teachers focused on two broad components (1) methods to increase teacher buy-in, and (2) the multidimensional importance of trainings.

4.3.3.1 How to Improve Teacher Buy-In

Increasing teacher buy-in was described by many teachers as a daunting, but not impossible, task. Perhaps one of the most important elements of teacher buy-in that was identified as missing was the relational component of training. Numerous teachers shared that feeling judged by an outside person who was not invested in their students' success was difficult. One early career teacher expressed a great deal of interest in the training, acknowledging that the content provided was informative and essential. However, despite their openness to the training, they also shared:

> It was people that I felt like didn't know me. They didn't know my students, they didn't know my school community. So, while they were providing good information, they were speaking in generalities. And I truly didn't feel like they cared about me or my students, and they didn't know anything about me or my students. And I know that's kind of a negative way to approach it, but they're spending all this time telling me how important it is to get to know my students and to get to know my coworkers and to get to know the families in my classroom, but I didn't feel like they were taking the time to do that for us. (Teacher #1)

The insight and clarity provided by this teacher illuminates a common theme that many teachers described; buying in is difficult when you don't feel a connection to the person you are working with. Moreover, several teachers acknowledged the contradiction embedded in using restorative practices and anti-racist trainings, both of which focus on how to build relationships between teachers and students, while not using the professional developments as an opportunity

134

to build relationships between the teachers and trainers. As such, teachers described a high priority assigned to relationship building in training by making sure that they felt known and that care for their community and students was clearly expressed in specifics rather than in generalities.

Moreover, the relationship between teachers was described as an important facilitator of these discussions. As noted in the barriers, the quality of conversation during a training session often depended on the group and how comfortable people felt in opening up. As such, strong teacher relationships and trust amongst coworkers is an essential component for providing successful professional development. As one veteran teacher noted:

We have a very veteran building, so we didn't have a problem opening up because you didn't want to… I don't want to say slip up and say something that would offend somebody. But we've known some people for years, so it's easier to say like, you know, that's not what I meant, I meant this. Whereas if you don't know somebody, you don't have that relationship, they're automatically going to think, "Wow, listen to this person talk." So, I would say your relationships with the people you're in, the amount of years, the amount of trust, or how you know those people. (Teacher #8)

One potential method for improving relationships in trainings was discussed by an early career teacher who described a different professional development they attended that successfully built a sense of bonding and teamwork among a group of fellow teachers. This teacher said that the use of small, consistent teams in the context of this broader training was helpful as they built rapport over time and became resources to one another as they moved through the programming. This teacher also noted that the process of team building should take place throughout the school year and should be supported by administration so that teachers enter into different training courses already primed for interaction. During this portion of the interview the teacher noted, "If I could

135

change one thing about the morale, it would be more team building [activities]." (Teacher #12).

While this is not the only solution possible, it was one of the clearest suggestions brought forth by a teacher on how to improve trust and bonding between teachers during training.

The final suggestions to increase teacher buy-in were not focused on relationship-building but on strategies to help teachers see this issue as relevant to them and their students. First, teachers noted that making content evolve to provide strategies, solutions, and resources for moving forward rather than solely focusing on criticism could help them feel like this was information that they could implement in their classroom. Some teachers felt that this was a natural step that could help progress the training and avoid feelings of redundancy or criticism when experiencing similar professional developments over the course of several years.

Additionally, teachers described the importance of ensuring that staff understood that the issue of racial disparities in school discipline outcomes impacted their school directly. As previously described, a common response from teachers was that although issues of racial disparities in school discipline existed on a national level, they were not present at their school or the teachers themselves were actively managing their biases. One color-conscious teacher stated:

> I don't think there's a single teacher at my school that would tell you they don't know what implicit bias means. And I don't think there's a single teacher at my school that would tell you that they let their implicit bias affect their decision-making process. But I think that's the step that we need to take. (Teacher #1)

One of the most prominent solutions for increasing buy-in and recognizing implicit bias as an active issue in their school was the use of data. As one teacher suggested:

> I think you have to first, maybe if you had some data to show so… and not just national data, because some will say, "Well, that's not us. That doesn't apply to us." So, if you pulled

up the discipline data from the school, if it did show that there was this imbalance with how students are being disciplined according to race, then they may say, "Oh!" Do you know what I mean? (Teacher #4)

As such, data recording, analysis, and dissemination to ensure that teachers understood issues were directly impacting their school was identified as one of the primary methods of improving teacher buy-in for training.

4.3.3.2 Multidimensional Importance of Training

The most common response for teachers when asked about the positives of anti-racist professional development was related to the multidimensional importance of these trainings. That is to say, teachers described training as helpful, important, or indeed necessary for a variety of reasons for how they understood themselves, related to their students, or related to their coworkers. In analysis, these responses were grouped into three categories: (1) increased awareness is helpful, (2) teachers believe these trainings are necessary to work with students, and (3) teachers of color noted how these trainings could address or reduce incidents of prejudice that they had experienced in the workplace.

Most teachers made numerous comments about training being helpful in increasing their awareness. Notably, this was mentioned by teachers across the spectrum of color-blind, conscious, and cautious. For example, a white veteran teacher with color-blind ideology who opposed trainings, commented:

I would say what was most helpful was being aware of [sighs] being aware of… I don't want to say being racist but noticing different things that other people may be noticing. (Teacher #8)

A white teacher with color-cautious beliefs who enjoyed a prior training stated:

I really just think that it brought my own self-awareness, which I never professionally have

had that before. (Teacher #2)

Finally, a white early career teacher with color-conscious beliefs stated that:

Continuing to explore implicit bias for me was most helpful because the more that I explore

my implicit biases and begin to understand what they are, the better I can get at being able

to overcome them when it comes to interactions in my classroom. (Teacher #1)

As these three teachers demonstrate, there is wide variation in the impact and reception of these

trainings. However, across these different responses and beliefs, teachers generally agreed that

increased awareness was beneficial.

As described previously, another theme within the importance of awareness was the

"lightbulb" or "Aha!" moment. Many veteran teachers described having experienced it themselves

in one of their early training courses, and many of them wanted to ensure that newer teachers

received that same experience. One teacher summarized this sentiment, stating,

I've already done this. But again, I'm one of the veterans here, so I didn't have that buy in.

Maybe there was a new teacher that got that same aha moment that I did whenever, you

know, [old training] was a part of our school. (Teacher #2)

Beyond being helpful to increase awareness, several teachers talked about training as being

necessary. A teacher of color shared a story from their school wherein white teachers were

complaining about their upcoming training and asking, "Why do we need to do this?" This teacher

in their interview went on to describe an incident that occurred during Black History Month

wherein after learning about elements of the United States' history a Black student told a white

student, "I forgive you for what you all did to us." The teacher sharing this story stated that their

white colleague who witnessed this exchange said, "I don't know what to do," and came to the

teacher sharing this story for answers. Moreover, this teacher shared that several white teachers have come to them when struggling with how to address topics of race, racism, or colorism in their classroom, which this teacher has found frustrating. During the interview, the teacher shared:

> They did not know what to do with that, and they're looking at me, and I'm looking like, "Why are you looking at me, I am not the spokesperson for how you deal with this issue."
>
> But it just let me see that there's work that needs to be done. (Teacher #4)

This story illustrates how important it is for all teachers to be comfortable discussing race with their students. Training offers one pathway to help ensure that all teachers are prepared to do that work and that it does not become an expectation for teachers of color to carry that weight alone.

Some of the teachers were very passionate about this topic, stating that teachers who were not comfortable working with students from diverse backgrounds should not be in the profession. A Black teacher with strong color-conscious beliefs shared a personal story from their time working at a different school where they had conflict with a colleague who was disproportionately disciplining Black students. When they confronted their colleague, the colleague shared that she was from a majority white community and was unsure how to interact with her students. After sharing that background information, the teacher telling this story said:

> That can't be your excuse of, "Well, I came from somewhere that there wasn't a lot of Black people, so that explains why I treat people the way I do." You don't need to be here then, you need to be somewhere else .... You're hurting somebody's child or you're hurting some adult because of what you're not used to. And to me, these kids don't need to experience that. They need educators that are going to educate them academically, mentally, and I would even say emotionally. And when I look at you treating a child with implicit bias or "These kids are prone to do this or they're going to do this, but I'm not

139

worried about these other kids over there." No, go somewhere else. Don't be around my kids because you're not helping. (Teacher #11)

While this was perhaps one of the most eloquent and passionate descriptions of the sentiment, numerous teachers reported similar attitudes. Ultimately, many teachers felt that there is an obligation to their students that must be upheld and that teachers must engage in the necessary steps to be prepared to do that work.

The final theme described by teachers illuminated how training could improve relationships between coworkers, not just between teachers and their students. This theme was discussed predominantly by teachers of color who reported their own experiences of prejudice, discrimination, or implicit bias during their work. One teacher shared a story from their work at a previous school where they were misidentified by their coworkers and locked out of the building because their colleague was afraid of them. The teacher described the incident:

She was like, well, I didn't know who you guys were, and you guys kind of look scary walking across the parking lot … And I'm like, my colleague here works in your building, so how did you not know it was him? He's been here for, like, two, three months, and you're trying to say you didn't know it was him? (Teacher #11)

Other teachers shared instances of being asked questions they perceived as insensitive, rude, or dismissive of their religious beliefs. For example, teachers described being asked questions that they described as devaluing their religion or insulting their family's traditions. Others felt that they were made responsible to address specific issues around race at their school because of their racial identities. For example, teachers of color noted that white teachers would at times ask them to address conflicts between students if they included discussion about race or skin tone. These

remarks were identified as a strain and stress for teachers. Specific examples are not provided to maintain confidentiality for participants.

Training was identified by some of these teachers as a mechanism for reducing these instances of bias. A newer teacher of color who did not identify as white or Black shared their experiences of discrimination at their school. They also believed that training helped challenge this behavior by facilitating conversations. They shared:

> I think that for me, because, again, I am an anomaly in my building. It kind of hit more home because I dealt with a lot of implicit biases when I first started. Like, people did not know me, and they made some preconceived assumptions about me. And I'm one of those people where I'd rather you ask a question than make an assumption about me. (Teacher number omitted to prevent identification)

As such, training offers a valuable shift for teachers not only in their relationships with their students but in their relationships with their coworkers as well.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated how teacher racial attitudes vary between color-conscious, color-cautious, and color-blind. Color-conscious teachers actively embraced discussing race and racism with their students, believed in the importance of self-education, and explained the role of implicit bias in the school-to-prison pipeline. Color-blind teachers ignored race, focused on sameness, and explained disparities in discipline outcomes using cultural racism and meritocracy that had no acknowledgement of structural factors. Color-cautious teachers occupied a middle

ground between blind and conscious views as they acknowledged race but were often evasive or hesitant in discussing race.

Moreover, I examined the ways in which these racial attitudes relate to elements of teacher discipline practices and beliefs. I found that teachers' racial attitudes are an important component of discipline. Through quantitative analysis, I found that color-conscious racial attitudes associated with reduced use of office referrals, and improved perceptions of student behavior, school safety, and restorative practices. Through qualitative analysis, I found that color-conscious teachers take intentional approaches to discipline often with the explicit intent of curtailing racial disparities or mitigating the school-to-prison pipeline. Additionally, I found that color-blind teachers tend to be less aware of racial disparities in discipline even when school-level data indicates that Black students are disciplined more frequently.

Finally, teachers shared their perceptions of anti-bias training. Numerous teachers supported the use of these trainings, but most teachers also identified significant barriers to implementation. Teacher buy-in, defensiveness, and relationships were some of the most important barriers discussed. However, teachers did identify training as a valuable resource that meaningfully altered their relationships with their students and coworkers.

In sum, my research demonstrates that teachers' racial attitudes are salient elements of school discipline outcomes. As such, an intervention that targets restorative practices alone is likely an insufficient method for altering racial disparities in school discipline. Therefore, I posit that any reform intended to achieve racially equitable discipline outcomes cannot be race neutral. Instead, it must strategically and intentionally include mechanisms that address implicit bias, systemic racism, and culturally relevant programming. Anti-bias training and anti-racist pedagogy professional development are challenging but important elements of this broader framework to

142

disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Teacher racial attitudes must be addressed as a part of school discipline reform. Therefore, interventions that use restorative practices must be race conscious, structurally transformative to shift policy, and explicitly focused on equity. I provide specific recommendations and implications for practice, policy, and research in Chapter 5.

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter, I describe the significance of my findings within the context of the existing literature using ecological systems theory (EST) and critical race theory (CRT) as my theoretical framework. I highlight the primary findings of this study: (1) teachers hold complex, contradictory, and diverse racial attitudes that are influenced by their social location, (2) teacher racial attitudes play a pivotal role in school discipline outcomes, and (3) teachers are generally interested in anti-bias training but face substantial barriers at the logistical and dispositional levels. Based on these findings, I consider implications for practice, policy, and research. Next, I discuss the limitations of this study. I conclude with my final considerations and a call to action for the field.

5.1 Purpose of the Study

The aims of this study were to examine the range of teacher racial attitudes across a network of schools utilizing restorative practices, gain insight into how racial attitudes impact how teachers conceptualize and implement school discipline practices, and develop an understanding of teachers' perceived barriers to and facilitators of anti-bias training. To achieve these aims, I used two primary sources of data, in-depth interviews and a survey administered to in-service teachers working at schools currently utilizing restorative practices. Both of these forms of data were augmented with school-level data, which provided essential context on the school environment. I used a mixed methods design, analyzing in-depth interviews using techniques developed from

Rubin and Rubin (2005) and examining trends in survey data using descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses.

5.1.1 Research Question #1: What are Teachers' Racial Attitudes and Do They Vary by Social Location?

In examining teacher racial attitudes, I found a complex and nuanced picture. Although many teachers seek to embrace color-conscious attitudes, others endorse color-blind attitudes, and a third group of teachers inhabit a color-cautious space wherein they are aware of race, implicit bias, and racism but are evasive in addressing racism directly and struggle to articulate or enact color-conscious approaches to education. The distinction I observed between color-cautious and color-blind beliefs provides helpful clarity about the discourse on teacher racial attitudes, as it highlights the challenges of working with teachers who are aware of racism but struggle with engaging in anti-racist interventions. This categorization accords with prior research, which has found that teachers exhibit pro-white explicit and implicit biases at similar rates to other adults in the United States (Starck et al., 2020). Using a CRT lens, this finding demonstrates the endemic nature of racism within society. Indeed, every teacher interviewed during this study expressed passion, care, and concern about their work and students. Despite these good intentions, a considerable portion of teachers espoused culturally racist ideology, minimized their students' lived experiences of racism, and embraced color-blind beliefs.

This study identified racial positionality as a salient informant to teachers' racial attitudes, as teachers of color were more often color-conscious and working to intentionally address systemic racism and implicit bias in their schools. Many teachers of color noted that this passion was formed by their own experiences of racism in school, often even as adults working in these environments.

145

This speaks to the CRT tenet, the unique voice of color, which suggests that racial minority status provides insight that can only be gained through lived experience.

That is not to say that all white teachers held color-blind or evasive attitudes. Indeed, many white teachers in this study were actively committed to racial justice as an essential component of their career, a finding that strengthens an emerging literature base on white teachers committed to disrupting systemic racism in schools (Dale, 2022). Moreover, many of the teachers in this study exhibited multifaceted and contradictory beliefs as they struggled to embrace the complexity of anti-racist education. Some teachers expressed color-conscious, -cautious, and -blind beliefs within the same interview or indeed even the same thought. This emphasizes the challenge and necessity of anti-racist pedagogy and training (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). As Milner (2003) argues, teachers pursue racial competence and awareness through an iterative process that has no final destination of fully realized "competence." As such, racial attitude formation is not linear, is a constant process, and requires cyclical reflection and work.

Thus, I frame my findings in line with Lensmire (2012) who argued that we should not homogenize teachers as solely good or bad, a distinction that is largely arbitrary. Instead, we should acknowledge that racial development for teachers, particularly white teachers, is complex (Crowley, 2016). As such, researchers and educators should embrace the messiness of racial development as a necessary component towards racial justice in the classroom (Crowley, 2016; Utt & Tochluk, 2020).

5.1.2 Research Question #2: Do Teachers' Racial Attitudes Relate to School Discipline Practices?

Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, I found that teachers' racial attitudes are connected with teachers' school discipline perceptions and practices. Indeed, increased color-consciousness was related to decreased office referrals in survey findings and was the only significant variable in this regression model. This is quite fascinating, as grade-level and overall use of suspension were not significant predictors, yet teacher racial attitude was. The overall model failed to explain enough of the variance of the dependent variable, but as the model was approaching significance, it suggests that future studies might refine the control variables to identify salient factors more accurately in teacher discipline practices. While this finding should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of the model, this suggests that a teacher's racial attitude may be an essential element of a teacher's discipline practices.

Qualitative analysis helped illuminate quantitative findings on office discipline referrals. Through analysis of in-depth interviews, I found that the reduction of exclusionary discipline practices by color-conscious teachers was indeed a conscious and intentional effort by those who wanted to mitigate the school-to-prison pipeline by protecting students from exclusionary discipline outcomes such as suspension or expulsion. Further, qualitative analysis suggests that color-conscious teachers identify racial disparities in their school discipline outcomes more accurately than their color-blind peers. Many color-blind teachers reported that discipline outcomes at their school were equitable by race, despite school-level data demonstrating disparities. However, color-conscious teachers more accurately assessed racial disparities. Some color-conscious teachers worked in schools with limited or no racial disparities, while others worked in schools with high racial disparities. The key difference was that color-conscious

teachers often knew the data on discipline outcomes and described it accurately while color-blind teachers often believed outcomes were equitable regardless of the actual disparities occurring in their school. Moreover, teachers who endorsed color-blind beliefs or who were not interested in anti-bias training were often working in schools with the largest racial disparities in their suspension outcomes. This suggests an important relationship where schools in which issues of systemic racism are the most prevalent, many teachers do not wish to discuss racism.

Teachers' perceptions of students are an essential component of school discipline outcomes (Ferguson, 2000). Santiago-Rosario and colleagues (2021) found that teacher expectations of students accounted for 21% of the disparities in office discipline referrals between Black and white students. In my study, I found a significant association between teachers' racial attitudes and their perceptions of their students. Teachers with more color-conscious attitudes regarded their students far more positively than teachers with color-blind beliefs. Similarly, teachers with more color-conscious beliefs viewed their schools as safer. This is notable, as concerns of safety are often used to justify exclusionary discipline practices (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). As such, improved views of students and school safety are important factors in school discipline outcomes. This points to a vital connection between teacher racial attitudes, their perceptions of students and safety, and their subsequent office discipline referral practices.

Moreover, through qualitative analysis I found that teacher racial identity and tenure informed how teachers conceptualized discipline and viewed their students. The experiential knowledge of racism was a key factor for many teachers who actively empathized with their students and wanted to prepare and protect them from the realities of racism. As such, teacher racial attitude and social location informed how teachers viewed their students, their schools, and their use of discipline practices. The findings in my study provide important context as to why

white teachers have been found to hold lower perceptions of students of color (Gershenson et al., 2016) and discipline them more harshly (Allen & White-Smith, 2014; Bryan, 2017; Ferguson, 2000).

An ecological systems theory (EST) approach helps contextualize this finding and provides insight into potential hypotheses regarding racial disparities in discipline outcomes. EST helps explain how schools and their policies are nested within larger social, economic, political, and cultural systems (Greene, 2008; Rothery, 2016; Gray, 2019). As such, schools are susceptible, malleable, and adaptive to external political pressure, economic demands, and cultural norms (Greene, 2008; Rothery, 2016; Gray, 2019). Similarly, teachers are susceptible to external pressure and cultural norms in their schools. It was notable that more teachers with color-blind attitudes worked at schools with higher racial disparities in out-of-school suspensions. Directionality cannot be ascertained from this study, but it points to an important relationship between teacher beliefs and school policies. Additionally, while this study could not examine individual teachers' racial disparities in discipline practices, it is reasonable to argue that shifting perceptions of students and safety may alter teacher-student relationships and subsequently impact disparities in office referrals. As such, I contend that teacher racial attitudes play an important role in who is designated for punishment within schools, which in turn may contribute to disproportionate exclusionary discipline for students of color, particularly Black students.

In answering this research question, I found that color-conscious teachers seem to find restorative practices more effective. This finding supports Song and colleagues (2020) call for the field to integrate restorative practices with anti-racist interventions. That teachers with more color-conscious attitudes find restorative practices more effective provides initial evidence that anti-racist and restorative interventions are compatible and perhaps even complementary. Using a CRT

149

lens, I interpret these findings as evidence of the importance of integrating anti-racism within restorative practices. That is to say, racial disparities in discipline outcomes cannot be addressed without an explicit and intentional focus on racism within intervention design. Teachers who are more comfortable discussing race appear to have better opinions of restorative practices, which may help them implement these interventions with greater fidelity. It seems that teachers with color-conscious attitudes recognize the need for multifaceted interventions which comprehensively address school discipline reform using restorative practices, social and mental health services, and an anti-racist framework. This finding supports calls from the field to more thoroughly integrate restorative justice and anti-racist interventions so that schools can address the school-to-prison pipeline with a multi-pronged approach (Joseph et al., 2020).

5.1.3 Research Question #3: Are Teachers Interested in Anti-Racist Professional Development and What are the Perceived Barriers/Facilitators of Training?

Research into teacher professional development in the realm of restorative practices is an underexamined facet of the literature (Mayworm et al., 2016). Moreover, the recent initiatives into teacher professional development on restorative practices have frequently neglected to train on race or racism (Dhaliwal et al., 2023), despite an abundance of evidence suggesting that race is one of the most significant predictors of exclusionary discipline even when controlling for socioeconomic status (Wallace et al., 2008; Welsh & Little, 2018). This is a particularly troubling gap in the literature, as scholars have argued that one of the most important in-school factors contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline is a lack of teacher training that centers race and class (Milner et al., 2018). Consequently, the research completed in this study in partnership with

Restorative School Communities offers an innovative and unique view into teachers' perceptions of anti-bias training within restorative justice programming.

Most teachers interviewed for this study were interested in anti-bias training and found it to be a valuable tool in their ongoing professional development. However, about a third of teachers interviewed were either ambivalent or entirely opposed to these trainings. This finding accords with other research findings that some teachers are passionate about anti-bias training as a means towards racial justice, while other teachers deeply resent or oppose these trainings (Dale, 2022).

This study also offered insights into teachers' perceptions of barriers and facilitators for these trainings. Regardless of their investment in anti-bias training as a whole, almost all teachers identified barriers that impede professional development. I organized these barriers into two categories, logistical and dispositional. Logistical barriers were comprised of issues related to design, content, timing, and implementation of the training. Dispositional barriers were defined as challenges connected to teacher attitudes, such as their buy-in, defensiveness, and relational status to their trainers and peers. I identified dispositional barriers as the most important and also the most intractable challenges to anti-bias training.

In addition to the information explicitly shared by participants, I examined patterns between a teacher's exposure to training and their racial attitudes and discipline practices to infer to what extent these trainings were making an impact. Unfortunately, no clear pattern emerged that could demonstrably link exposure to training with increased color-conscious racial attitudes or altered discipline practices. A number of teachers who had received anti-bias training did not appear to see any linkages between restorative practices, racism, or racial disparities in school discipline outcomes. Conversely, other teachers stated that training made an indelible impact on

151

their work and worldview. This is an area for further research, as I discuss in the implications for research section of this chapter.

Despite the numerous barriers to anti-bias training, teachers also made it clear that there was value in these training courses and that there were effective routes that could be pursued to improve teacher buy-in. Teachers discussed how trainings provided insight and awareness that they did not have before, functioned as an essential tool for working with students from minoritized backgrounds, and facilitated conversations between teachers to address incidents of discrimination that teachers of color experienced from their white coworkers. Designing programming that utilizes relationships between coworkers and prioritizes relationship-building between trainers and teachers was one of the primary solutions identified by teachers as a means to improve their buy-in. Additionally, teachers discussed the need for data collection, analysis, and dissemination at the school-level to ensure that each teacher understood the gravity and presence of racial disparities, exclusionary discipline, and the school-to-prison pipeline in their building.

In sum, I found that teachers hold multiple views on anti-bias training. Many teachers support these trainings and identify crucial benefits that come from these learning groups. Conversely, many others resisted the training courses or failed to actualize any of the lessons into meaningful differences in their practice. This study helps expand the growing literature on the fractured and arduous nature of anti-bias professional development for teachers (Crowley, 2016; Dale, 2022; Mayworm et al., 2016; Song et al., 2020).

5.2 Implications for Practice

Although this study examines teacher racial attitudes, as a social work scholar and educator, I am particularly interested in how social workers operationalize their expertise and knowledge within interdisciplinary teams and school settings. Subsequently, I frame the implications for practice from a collaborative standpoint to discuss how school social workers and educators might work together to address racial disparities in school discipline outcomes. School social workers in this discussion are defined broadly, as many professionals in our discipline can be employed at a school as a designated school social worker, a restorative justice practitioner or coordinator, a guidance counselor, or other form of social-emotional clinician.

As Sherman (2016) argues, social workers are a powerful force within the education system, often functioning as advocates and mediators for students to help bridge the gap between school, home, community. However, social workers are often marginalized by school leadership, limiting the impact that the profession has on policy development, supervision, and influence on the education system (Sherman, 2016). Despite these challenges, research suggests that there is tremendous potential for collaborative models between social workers and teachers to support students who are at risk of suspension (Allen-Meares, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that social work begins to occupy a larger role in the education system, bringing our knowledge and expertise on social justice and anti-oppressive frameworks into collaboration with teachers who are engaged in culturally responsive pedagogy.

In light of the findings in this study, perhaps the most salient contribution social workers can make in reducing racial disparities in school discipline outcomes is to facilitate the development of color-consciousness among educators and school-based professionals through intergroup learning and professional development. Social workers are well-equipped to facilitate

153

conversations about race and racism in school settings due to their expertise in social justice, cultural humility, and anti-oppressive practice (McCarter, 2017; Joseph, 2018). Consequently, school social workers should partner with teachers to develop and facilitate open and honest conversation about race and racism during staff meetings, informal dialogues, and internal professional development programming.

Brave conversations about race led by school social workers address several key elements found in this study and supported by the broader literature. Roughly 80% of all teachers in public elementary and secondary schools are white (NCES, 2018). Research shows that white teachers engage in small- and large-scale acts of discrimination towards their Black students (Girvan et al., 2017). In this study, I found that numerous teachers have color-blind and color-cautious beliefs, which appear to impact how they perceive and engage with their students. Moreover, I found that attempts to train teachers met resistance due to defensiveness and lack of buy-in. School social workers have the potential to mitigate some of these barriers because of their existing insider status within schools. As several teachers noted during their interviews, relationships and trust are instrumental in facilitating beneficial conversations on race. School social workers can leverage their status as colleagues and friends to initiate conversations that have the potential to assist teachers in cultivating color-conscious racial attitudes.

In addition to brave conversations on race, educational professionals must work together to improve data collection, analysis, and dissemination within their schools. While broader considerations of research will be made later in this chapter, I believe that it is imperative for schools to utilize their data for action at a local level. Throughout interviews, several teachers mentioned that their colleagues dismissed concerns of racial bias because they did not think those issues applied to their school or their classroom. Improved data collection and dissemination as a

method of garnering accountability and commitment has the potential to help teachers recognize the gravity of racial disparities within their own communities. Hopefully the use of data can increase awareness and subsequently improve teacher buy-in during anti-bias trainings and anti-racist pedagogy design. Moreover, social workers have a special role in this initiative. As McCarter (2017) argues, one of the interventions that social workers can use to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline is improved data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Because school social workers function as the link between school and communities, we have an important role to play by ensuring that data dissemination across systems (e.g., health care, child welfare, juvenile legal system, education) is accessible and coherent between disciplines. At the school level, school social workers must work to distribute data so that teachers understand the reality and consequences of racial disparities in discipline outcomes in concrete terms rather than in abstractions at the national level.

5.3 Implications for Policy

There is abundant evidence that exclusionary discipline outcomes are harmful for children (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba et al., 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018) and a growing evidence-base that teachers play a fundamental role in propagating racial disparities in school discipline (Santiago-Rosario et al., 2021). This study contributes to this literature by examining how teacher racial attitudes contribute to discipline outcomes, even in school environments that are using restorative practices. Although restorative justice has been identified as one of the primary methods of school discipline reform, my research suggests that restorative practices alone are insufficient to adequately address racial disparities in school discipline. As such, I recommend that

schools address racial justice directly rather than shift disciplinary policy as an isolated practice (Joseph et al., 2020; Song et al., 2020). In this section, I discuss two primary policy recommendations emerging from this study, training and the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce.

Anti-bias training and professional development in anti-racist pedagogy are complex and will be met with resistance by some teachers and community members. In this study, many teachers described the barriers and challenges of this work. However, that teacher racial attitudes impact their discipline practices necessitates that action be taken to help color-blind and color-cautious teachers develop color-conscious attitudes.

To successfully facilitate teacher professional development towards color-conscious attitudes, the design and framing of training courses must be considered. Numerous teachers identified current professional development as shallow, detached, and overly critical. Teachers instead wanted to build relationships, foster community, and identify solutions and resources that they could bring into their classrooms. Love (2019) argues that one of the essential steps towards abolitionist education reform is for schools to design professional development that prioritizes holistic, communal, and systemic views of human beings. As such, anti-bias training should not prioritize quick fixes or catchy slogans. Instead, deep and patient work needs to be done so that systemic issues of racism and classism that impact students inside and outside the classroom can be acknowledged and addressed (Sleeter, 2017). Professional development must therefore use relationships, trust, and community as foundational elements to bridge the gap into brave and potentially uncomfortable discussions on racism and deconstructing whiteness as the ubiquitous ideology that defines school operations (Sleeter, 2017).

In addition to training and integrated intervention design, it is imperative that the teacher workforce diversify. White teachers represent a majority of the teachers in the United States (80%) and student demographics are growing increasingly more racially diverse, as more than 50% of the K-12 student body in U.S. public schools are students of color (Gold, 2020; NCES, 2020). Research has demonstrated that racial identity is a salient factor in how teachers perceive and interact with their students (Gershenson et al., 2016; Staats, 2014). In a study conducted by Lindsay and Hart (2017) it was found that pairing Black students with a teacher of the same race led to an 18% decrease in suspension rates for Black male students. Based on the teacher interviews in my study, I contend that experiential knowledge unique to teachers of color facilitates color-conscious attitudes that meaningfully impact how teachers discipline and interact with their students. Moreover, during their interviews numerous teachers, both white and Black, noted the importance of Black educators as role models, mentors, and advocates within schools. While the reality of a national teacher shortage does pose a challenge to this endeavor, universities and K-12 schools must work together to prioritize the advancement of recruitment and retention of teachers of color. This is an urgent issue that must be addressed for schools to appropriately serve the children in their communities (Bryan, 2017; Gold, 2020).

5.4 Implications for Research

This study demonstrated that teacher racial attitudes are dynamic and complex as well as germane to school discipline outcomes. To continue to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, additional research is needed to study teacher racial attitudes and their role in school outcomes, examine the effects of anti-bias training on developing color-conscious racial attitudes, and

investigate how to meaningfully integrate anti-racism, mental health, and restorative practices into cohesive multipronged interventions. Based on this study, I provide several recommendations for future research.

First, it is important that school data collection be designed so that racial disparities can be examined at different levels within the school apparatus. That is to say, while reporting school-level data on overall suspensions by race is helpful, future research should examine teacher racial attitudes and outcomes in their office discipline referral practices at the individual teacher level. To conduct such research, it is imperative that schools track information both for who is referred and for the teacher making the referral. Direct examination of teachers' racial attitudes on their discipline practices as well as investigation into any potentially mediating effects will provide vital information related to how best to mitigate racial disparities in school outcomes.

Second, based on this study's inconclusive findings related to the outcomes of anti-bias training on teachers' racial attitudes or discipline practices, one of the most urgent areas of future study is using pre- and post-design studies to determine if professional development does meaningfully increase teachers' color-conscious racial attitudes or alter their discipline practices. Using this framework, researchers can answer two important questions (1) to what extent does anti-bias training alter teachers' racial attitudes and (2) to what extent does exposure to anti-bias training reduce racial disparities in teachers' office discipline referral practices.

Third, I contend that future research into this topic must continue to use mixed methods because of the insidious nature of racism. Numerous scholars have argued that racism today is often subtle, masked, and framed through a façade of neutrality (Alvarez & Milner, 2018; Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Indeed, this was apparent in my own study in more than one way. First, during interviews it was clear that many teachers were hypervigilant about

presenting information in a way that would be perceived as "politically correct," suggesting that they are aware of what they "should" or "should not" say regardless of their own personal opinion. Only through probing and prolonged conversation did many of the underlying beliefs around race and racism emerge. Second, the specific item on color-conscious race talk used from the survey helps highlight this issue. Most of the items from the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville et al., 2000) had near unanimous support from teachers. This suggests that many teachers either believe or know that there is a social pressure to think certain things about race (e.g., racism is an issue today). However, the item I used for analysis (i.e., are you comfortable talking about racial issues) asked a question that appears to have had more teachers answer honestly, as this item had a wide range of respondents. I contend that this distinction between socially desirable and honest answers is part of why one item was significantly related to the dependent variables, and the others were not. This analytic decision was made after reviewing the qualitative data and having a better understanding of the subtlety of teacher racial attitudes. Consequently, when investigating a topic as nuanced as race in schools, it is vital that researchers use a multifaceted approach that can address research questions from multiple angles.

Finally, I believe it is necessary for future research to continue using a critical race theory (CRT) framework to scrutinize how anti-Black racism and white supremacy have informed school practices. Color-blind ideology is pervasive and attempts to obfuscate the role of history and systemic forces by prioritizing rugged individualism and myths of unfettered meritocracy. Researchers must not fall prey to this ruse. Research that focuses solely on individual risk factors that pathologize youth and families for experiences of oppression must be abandoned. Instead, research should be historical, contextualized, and strengths-based to identify how to support youth, families, and educators in their efforts to resist oppression.

Youth-led initiatives, community-based participatory research, and narrative-driven scholarship are all important components of future research. Indeed, future research must work to ensure that students perspectives and experiences are included. The school-to-prison pipeline impacts structurally vulnerable youth the most, and it is vital that their narratives are heard. While research must continue to examine teacher experiences, I contend that a valuable and necessary line of inquiry must also investigate student perceptions of their teachers' racial attitudes and the impact this has on exclusionary discipline. As has been noted throughout this chapter, disrupting color-blind teacher racial attitudes is complicated and challenging work. Centering anti-oppressive research using CRT will help maintain focus and direction as we proceed with this complex endeavor.

5.5 Limitations

There are several limitations of this dissertation that are important to describe. These include limitations related to COVID-19, the cross-sectional nature of the data, limitations with the dataset available, and potential social desirability factors that may affect how teachers talk about race. First, due to COVID-19 and restricted visitations to schools, opportunities for observations or other ethnographic methods were limited. Although interview questions were tailored to probe for examples of classroom practices to better understand teacher practices and patterns around discipline and racial critical consciousness, future research would benefit from direct observation within classroom spaces to witness how teachers discuss race and racism with students. Additionally, COVID-19 has altered our education system in many ways, including the

use of online learning, which has occurred sporadically over the last three years. As such, there are limits to the generalizability of this study regarding disciplinary data.

Second, there are limitations with this study related to its design that restrict generalizability. School-level reports of racial disparities in out-of-school suspension should be interpreted cautiously, as two schools had such homogenous populations that no non-Black students were suspended. As such, estimates of disparity ratios for those two schools were made, which limits the accuracy of this construct.

Moreover, the data used in this dissertation are cross-sectional and therefore I was unable to observe the relationship between teachers' racial attitudes and discipline practices over time. All survey data was collected via participant recollection. Additionally, while the relationship between a teacher's reported racial attitudes and racial disparities in their office referral patterns is important to examine, school-level records frequently do not include the necessary information to conduct such an analysis. As a result, survey analysis was limited to teacher's racial attitudes and their self-reported office referral practices, as well as their perceptions of school safety, student behavior, and the effectiveness of restorative practices. About one-third of teachers surveyed did not answer the question about their frequency of office referrals. It is possible teachers did not want to reveal their discipline practices because of social desirability bias or perhaps they did not respond because the item did not include an option for zero referrals per week. While I ran analyses to ensure that the exclusion of teachers who did not provide data on this item did not impact analyses, the ambiguity of why teachers did not respond and the reduced number of respondents for this item are limitations of this study.

When considering the limitations of this data and analytic strategies it is important to note that the multivariate regression model examining the relationship between teachers' racial attitudes

and office discipline referral practices was not significant. Notably, the relationship between the independent and dependent variable was significant, but the overall model only accounted for 6% of the variance as none of the control variables had significant relationships with teacher office referrals. However, the model was approaching significance with a *p*-value of .09. As such, future studies should seek to identify more salient control variables to better explain the variance of teacher office discipline referrals and better isolate the relationship between teachers' racial attitudes and their discipline practices. Potential control variables to consider in future studies include teachers' race and ethnicity and teachers' use of restorative practices. Additionally, the use of structural equation modeling might better capture the differences between schools and examine individual teachers' practices more accurately.

Talking about race and racism presents common barriers, particularly as people are very conscious of not endorsing racist beliefs explicitly even if they abet racist practices in reality (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Further, the environment around racism in education has become particularly charged with rhetoric opposing the use of critical race theory in education. Additionally, teachers may be cautious of disparaging their institutions to outside researchers and as a result could conceivably be reticent about sharing information that they feel is damaging to their school's reputation. As such, it is possible that teachers may have been hesitant to answer questions fully or that they may have amended answers to comport with social desirability either in interviews or in survey responses.

Despite these limitations, this dissertation makes an important contribution to the scant literature on how teacher racial beliefs directly impact discipline disparities. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to examine how professional development or training on racial critical consciousness affects teacher racial attitudes and discipline practices. Moreover, data collection

162

should include relevant information to more accurately capture teacher discipline practices both for overall use of office discipline referrals and for racial disparities in office referral practices.

5.6 Conclusion

Racial disparities in office referrals, detention, suspension, and expulsion are well documented in the U.S. educational system (USDOE, 2016). Beginning as early as pre-school, Black students are disciplined more often and more severely even when engaging in the same behaviors as white students (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Snellings, 2018). Research suggests that exclusionary discipline negatively affects students' relationships in school, limits their supervision and support, promotes academic disengagement, creates stigma and reintegration difficulties, decreases academic achievement, impedes attendance, lowers graduation rates, increases the risk of dropping out, is correlated with future misbehavior, and significantly increases contact with the juvenile and criminal legal systems (Skiba et al., 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018). Restorative justice has been used as an alternative to exclusionary school discipline and is gaining momentum nationally (Fronius et al., 2019). While research has indicated that restorative practices are effective at reducing the overall use of exclusionary discipline, less evidence supports that restorative practices address the racial disparities in school discipline (Fronius et al., 2019; Joseph, 2018). Teacher racial attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, likely play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining the racial disparities in exclusionary school discipline (Allen & White-Smith, 2014; Bryan, 2017; Ferguson, 2000). However, little research has examined teacher racial attitudes within restorative justice frameworks and only a limited number of restorative justice interventions utilize professional development focused on anti-racism

and implicit bias (Dhaliwal et al., 2023; Fronius et al., 2019; Song et al., 2020). To address these gaps in the literature, I conducted this study to explore teachers' racial attitudes, investigate how racial attitudes relate to discipline practices, and understand teachers' opinions on anti-racist professional development in schools implementing restorative practices.

In this study, I found that color-conscious racial attitudes have an important relationship with how a teacher engages in school discipline practices. Awareness of racism, comfort in talking about racial issues, and a desire for racial equity appear to be essential factors in how a teacher engages with their students and operationalizes their use of discipline strategies. Teachers' racial attitudes were connected to their office referral practices and their perceptions of students, school safety, and restorative practices. During interviews, color-conscious teachers described how intentional they were in disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline. Indeed, a deeper understanding of racism amongst teachers associated with teachers intentionally using referrals less. Many teachers used the framework of color-consciousness to lean into relationships with their students as a method of navigating behavioral challenges. All of this occurred within the context of schools already utilizing restorative practices, suggesting that racial attitudes are an essential component of school discipline reform that must continue to be integrated into future programming.

Additionally, I found that experiential knowledge and social location are associated with a teacher's racial attitude. While many teachers of color described color-consciousness emerging as a result of exposure to racism in their own lives, the majority of white teachers described gaining this consciousness through exposure to their students' lived experiences and professional development. As such, there is a pressing and dire need to ensure that all teachers, particularly white teachers, receive opportunities to continue developing their color-consciousness. One of the most functional approaches to building color-consciousness to address school discipline is to

provide training courses that address race, implicit bias, and racism (Milner et al., 2018). While there are numerous barriers to anti-racist professional development, the necessity of developing color-consciousness among teachers compels us to find solutions. To achieve racial equity in discipline reform, solutions must not be race neutral. Restorative justice is a vital first step in reforming school discipline, but it cannot be the only step. Race conscious solutions focused on racial equity must also be incorporated into school interventions. Professional development focused on implicit bias and anti-racist pedagogy are therefore essential components of school discipline reform.

It is important to remember the broader context of education in the United States. Roughly 80% of teachers are white, but over 50% of public-school students are children of color (NCES, 2020). As Lensmire (2012) wrote in her book on white teachers working in urban school districts, educational researchers often "figure white teachers in either one of two ways: as the object of our hope or of our disdain" (p. 5). That is to say, scholars tend to study ways in which white teachers engage in critical and race-centered pedagogy (Milner, 2017), or the ways in which white teachers contribute to systemic racism in schools (Lensmire, 2012). Based on the findings that color-conscious attitudes play a pivotal role in how teachers engage with their students and that many teachers used anti-racist trainings in their journeys towards building color-conscious attitudes, I share in Lensmire's belief that "not only is it possible for white teachers to teach students of color well, it is necessary" (2012, p. 5).

I end with a final call to action for school social workers and educators. Developing anti-racist learning spaces is difficult and complicated work (Crowley, 2016). What's more, the work is never done, as we are on perpetual journeys of learning and self-reflection (Milner, 2003; Milner, 2007). However, the difficulty of a task should never outweigh the necessity of doing the right

thing. The school-to-prison pipeline has harmed countless lives. Structurally vulnerable children are often the recipients of the worst punishments and suffer the most serious consequences. Racial disparities continue to be a central component of the pipeline, and one that must be addressed with the utmost urgency. The formation of the school-to-prison pipeline emerged through generations of systemic racism. Solutions to undo this harm must therefore address racial equity as a primary aim. I urge school social workers and educators to continue to engage in this messy work in the pursuit of racial equity and justice. It is imperative that we continue to hold brave conversations, engage in self-reflection, and build interventions that integrate anti-racism within school policy reforms like restorative practices. It is well-beyond time that the historical legacy of racism and inequality in education be dismantled so that we can build a more just society for every child.

Appendix A Teacher Interview Guide

Restorative School Communities Interview Protocol

Interview#____

Thank you for coming in to talk with us today. My name is [researcher name], and I work at Pitt. As you may already know, I am part of a research team that is helping the school improve how it manages student behavior. We are interested in talking to teachers about their experiences here, and in particular how the restorative practice programming has gone over the last year.

Before we get started, I want to inform or remind you of a few important things about participating in this interview:

> 1. First, there are no right or wrong answers. We're interested in your ideas and experiences, whatever they are.
> 2. Second, your responses are absolutely confidential—anything you say will not be attributed directly to you—, or directly to the school either. That is, we will not use your name or the school's name in any reports, papers, or presentations that come from this work.
> 3. Finally, you can ask me questions or for clarification at any time
> 4. For this interview, unless otherwise prompted please focus on your experience at the school this year.

So, before we get started, do you have any questions?   Ok, let's get started…

Introduction/Role:
> • First, please say your first name, your role in the school, and how long you have been here.

School Strengths/Weaknesses:
> • What would you say are some of the strengths of your school?
> • What would you say are some of the challenges?

School Behavioral Climate:
> • How would you compare the school atmosphere this year to years past?
>   ○ Probe: What do you think caused any changes you saw?
> • How is student behavior here this year?
>   ○ Probe: Challenges?
>   ○ Probe (if helpful/needed): Can you describe a time one of your students was having a problem that required time out of class? How did it play out?
> • How are student relationships with those at the school?
>   ○ Probe: Students with each other?
>   ○ Probe: Students with teachers?

- How do administrators respond to student behaviors?
    - Probe: Strengths and challenges?
- How do teachers respond to student behaviors?
    - Probe: Strengths and challenges?
- Do you think students are disciplined fairly?
    - Probe: What about across grade, gender, race, or ethnicity?
    - Probe: Differences between teacher or administrator fairness?

Restorative Practice Training and Usage:
- Did you attend any formal PD on restorative practices in the past year?
    - *If yes:* Which formal PD sessions on restorative practices did you attend over this past year?
    - *If yes:* What were your impressions of the formal PD sessions you attended in this past year?
- How were the restorative practice programs this year at your school?
    - Probe: Strengths?
    - Probe: Can school-wide changes in climate and behavior relate to these practices?
    - Probe: Challenges and barriers to doing more with it?
- Did you run any restorative practices circles this year (either community, reset, or healing)?
    - *If yes:* How often did you engage in restorative problem solving in the Professional Learning Group (PLG) meetings (where a staff member presents a problem — and receives support and ideas)?
    - *If yes:* Was this helpful?
- How do you think circles impacted 1) teachers and 2) students?
    - Probe: Buy-in?
   Probe: Have students taken on a leadership role in implementing restorative practices?
- How is your confidence with or preparation for using restorative practices (e.g., circles)?
    - Probe: What did you find most challenging?
    - Probe: Do you consider yourself to be more "restorative" than you were last year?

Race and Racial Disparities Training and Beliefs:
- There has been a lot of debate about whether we should be talking about race in schools, what is your opinion on the topic?
- How do you talk about issues related to race and racism in your classroom?
    - Probe: What are examples of conversations with students?
    - Probe (if time): Who typically starts these conversations?
- How might implicit bias or discrimination impact student discipline practices?
    - Probe: How do students perceive the role of implicit bias or discrimination on discipline?
- Do you have any experiences with PD on race/race issues, implicit bias, anti-discrimination, or racial disparities in school?

o*If yes:* What were the topics? How were the PDs designed?
o What topics or approaches were most helpful?
o What were the challenges?

- A great deal of data shows that Black students, particularly Black boys, receive harsher and more frequent discipline even when doing the same behaviors as other students. What are your thoughts on this?
    o In your opinion, how should schools work to address bias or racism in school discipline?
    o Overall, when thinking about interventions or trainings for teachers on discipline practices, what role should awareness of bias, racism, or discrimination play?

Reintegrating Students into the School Community:
- What happens when students return from suspension?
    o Probe: Are restorative approaches used to re-integrate students into the school or classroom?
- What do you think should happen when students return from suspension?

Administrative Leadership and Support:
- What messages, policies, or practices (e.g., testing, discipline policy) from school leadership support or don't support restorative practices?
    o Probe: Do leaders discuss practices with the school community (e.g., morning meeting)?
    o Probe: Do leaders ask you to do anything specific (e.g., # of circles)?
- What messages, policies, or practices (e.g., testing, discipline policy) from the school district support or don't support restorative practices?
- How can you be better supported?

Long-Term Goals and Sustainability:
- Do you think your school should continue to implement restorative practices?
    o Probe: How can it improve behavior long-term?
    o Probe: How can it reduce differences in discipline by race?
    o Probe: What changes can make it more effective?
- How likely are you to keep using restorative practices?

Demographics (optional for respondent):

- How do you identify in terms of race?
- How do you identify in terms of gender?
- Role in school
- Years at school and years of experience overall (total years of experience as teacher or in other school-based roles)

Can we follow up? Interview again next year?

Bibliography

Advancement Project, The. (2010). Test, punish, and push out: How "zero tolerance" and high-stakes testing funnel youth into the school-to-prison pipeline. https://www.justice4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Test-Punish-Push-Out.pdf

Advancement Project, The. (2014). Restorative practices: Fostering healthy relationships and promoting positive discipline in schools: A guide for educators. Cambridge, MA: Schott Foundation. Available from http://schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf

Allen, Q., & White-Smith, K. A. (2014). "Just as bad as prisons": The challenge of dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline through teacher and community education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47*(4), 445–460. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2014.958961

Allen-Meares, P., Hudgins, C. A., Engberg, M. E., & Lessnau, B. (2005). Using a collaboratory model to translate social work research into practice and policy. Research on Social Work Practice, 15(1), 29-40.

Alvarez, A. (2018). *Teachers' reported beliefs and feelings about race talk.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.

Alvarez, A., & Milner IV, H. R. (2018). Exploring teachers' beliefs and feelings about race and police violence. *Teaching Education*, *29*(4), 383-394. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2018.1512091

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist, 63*, 852-862.

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Univ of North Carolina Press.

Anderson, R. E., Saleem, F. T., & Huguley, J. P. (2019). Choosing to see the racial stress that afflicts our Black students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *101*(3), 20-25. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0031721719885911

Annamma, S. A., Anyon, Y., Joseph, N. M., Farrar, J., Greer, E., Downing, B., & Simmons, J. (2019). Black girls and school discipline: The complexities of being overrepresented and understudied. *Urban Education*, *54*(2), 211-242. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0042085916646610

Anyon, Y., Jenson, J. M., Altschul, I., Farrar, J., McQueen, J., Greer, E., Downing, B., & Simmons, J. (2014). The persistent effect of race and the promise of alternatives to suspension in

school discipline outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review, 44*, 379- 386. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.06.025

Armour, M. (2013). Ed White Middle School restorative discipline evaluation: Implementation and impact, 2012/2013 sixth grade. Austin: University of Texas, Austin.

Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Wang, E. L., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). Can restorative practices improve school climate and curb suspensions? An evaluation of the impact of restorative practices in a mid-sized urban school district. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html

Austen, I. (2021, June). How thousands of indigenous children vanished in Canada. *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/world/canada/mass-graves-residential-schools.html

Ayers, W., Dohrn, B., & Ayers, R. (2001). *Zero tolerance: Resisting the drive for punishment in our schools: A handbook for parents, students, educators, and citizens*. New Press.

Baker, M. (2009). DPS Restorative Justice Project: Year three. Denver, CO: Denver Public Schools.

Balfanz, R., Byrnes, V., & Fox, J. H. (2015). Sent home and put off track: The antecedents, disproportionalities, and consequences of being suspended in 9th grade. In, *Closing the school discipline gap: Equitable remedies for excessive exclusion* (pp. 17–30). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Barnes, J. C., & Motz, R. T. (2018). Reducing racial inequalities in adulthood arrest by reducing inequalities in school discipline: Evidence from the school-to-prison pipeline. *Developmental Psychology, 54*(12), 2328-2340. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000613

Beckman, K., McMorris, B., & Gower, A. (2012). *Restorative interventions implementation toolkit.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Healthy Youth Development — Prevention Research Center.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2018). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Boucher, M. L. (2016). More than an ally: A successful white teacher who builds solidarity with his African American students. *Urban Education,* 51, 1, 82-107. DOI: 10.1177/0042085914542982

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Brady, K. P. (2002). Zero tolerance or (in)tolerance policies? Weaponless school violence, due process, and the law of student suspensions and expulsions: An examination of Fuller v.

Decatur Public School board of education school district. *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal*, 159-351.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American psychologist, 32*(7), 513.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments in nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. *Annals of Child Development, 6*, 187-249.

Bryan, N. (2017). White teachers' role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline: Recommendations for teacher education. *The Urban Review, 49*(2), 326-345. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0403-3

Building Blocks for Youth (BBY). (2003). Fact sheet: Zero tolerance. http://www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/zerotolerance/facts.html

Burch, A. D. S., Harmon, A., Tavernise, S., & Badger, E. (2021, October 5). *The death of George Floyd reignited a movement. What happens now?* The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/20/us/george-floyd-protests-police-reform.html

Cameron, M., & Sheppard, S. M. (2006). School discipline and social work practice: Application of research and theory to intervention. *Children & Schools, 28*, 15-22. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/28.1.15

Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2017). You can't fix what you don't look at. *Urban Education, 52*, 207–235. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0042085916660350

Castro-Atwater, S., (2008). Waking up to Difference: Teachers, color-blindness, and the effects on students of color. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 35*(3), 246-2.

Chin, M. J., Quinn, D. M., Dhaliwal, T. K., & Lovison, V. S. (2020). Bias in the air: A nationwide exploration of teachers' implicit racial attitudes, aggregate bias, and student outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(8), 566-578. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.3102/0013189X20937240

Chiseri-Strater, E. (1996). *Turning in upon ourselves: Positionality, subjectivity, and reflexivity in case study and ethnographic research* (P. Mortenson & G. E. Kirsch (Eds.)). National Council of Teachers of English.

Clifford, B. (2019). Examining the School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Association Between School Suspension and Criminal Conviction in North Carolina.

Collins, P. H. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Connery, C. (2020). The prevalence and price of police in schools. *UCONN Center for Education Policy Analysis.* https://education.uconn.edu/2020/10/27/the-prevalence-and-the-price-of-police-in-schools/#

Cook, C. R., Duong, M. T., McIntosh, K., Fiat, A. E., Larson, M., Pullmann, M. D., & McGinnis, J. (2018). Addressing discipline disparities for Black male students: Linking malleable root causes to feasible and effective practices. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(2), 135-152.

Council on Social Work Education [CSWE] (2015). Educational policy and accreditation standards. Retrieved from https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS

Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman & R. Mykituk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence* (pp. 93–118). New York, NY: Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*: The New Press.

Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2015). *Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced, and underprotected.* New York, NY: African American Policy Forum, Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies.

Crowley, R. M. (2016). Transgressive and negotiated White racial knowledge. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *29*(8), 1016-1029. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1174901

Dale, M. (2022). *How White Literacy Teachers Committed to Racial Justice Perceive Relationships Between Race, Expectations for Classroom Talk and Behavior, and Student Learning.* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).

Darling-Hammond, S., Fronius, T. A., Sutherland, H., Guckenburg, S., Petrosino, A., & Hurley, N. (2020). Effectiveness of restorative justice in US K-12 schools: A review of quantitative research. *Contemporary School Psychology*, *24*, 295-308. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00290-0

Deckman, S. L. (2017). Managing race and race-ing management: Teachers' stories of race and classroom conflict. *Teachers College Record*, 119, 1-40.

Delale-O'Connor, L., & Graham, D. L. (2019). Teachers' talk about race and caregiver support: "You can never be too sure about parents". *Urban Education*, *54*(4), 499-534. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/0042085918806941

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory (third edition).* http ://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Devine, P. G., Forsher, P. S., Austin, A. J., Cox, W. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(6), 1267–1278.

Dhaliwal, T. K., Daramola, E. J., Alonso, J. D., & Marsh, J. A. (2023). Educators' beliefs and perceptions of implementing restorative practices. *Education and Urban Society*, *55*(1), 88-118. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245211048439

Dixson, A. D., Rousseau, A. C. K., & Donnor, J. K. (Eds.). (2016). *Critical race theory in education : All god's children got a song*. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Dunbar, C., & Villarrule, F. A. (2002). Urban school leaders and the implementation of zero-tolerance policies: An examination of its implications. *Peabody Journal of Education, 77*(1), 82–104. Retrieved September 7, 2006, from the Wilson Web database.

Dutil, S. (2020). Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline: A trauma-informed, critical race perspective on school discipline. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 171-178.

Engel, R. J., & Schutt, R. K. (2009). *The practice of research in social work.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Escayg, K. A. (2020). Anti-racism in US early childhood education: Foundational principles. *Sociology Compass*, *14*(4), e12764.

Essex, N. L. (2001). The limits of zero-tolerance. Principal Leadership. *Middle School Edition, 1*(8), 5–7.

Fabelo, T., Thompson, M.D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M.P., & Booth, E.A. (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study of how school discipline relates to students' success and juvenile justice involvement.* New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity.* University of Michigan Press.

Figlio, D. N. (2006). Testing, crime and punishment. *Journal of Public Economics, 90*(4), 837-851. Doi: 10.1016/j.jpubeco.2005.01.003

Freire, P. (1971). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. NY: Herder & Herder.

Fronius, T., Persson, H., Guckenburg, S., Hurley, N., & Petrosino, A. (2016). Restorative Justice in US Schools: A Research Review. *WestEd Justice and Prevention Research Center.*

Fronius, T., Darling-Hammond, S., Persson, H., Guckenburg, S., Hurley, N., & Petrosino, A. (2019). Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: An Updated Research Review. *WestEd Justice and Prevention Research Center.*

Gershenson, S., Holt, S., & Papageorge, N. (2016). Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student-Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations. *Economics of Education Review, 54,* 209-224.

Gilliam, W. S., Maupin, A. N., Reyes, C. R., Accavitti, M., & Shic, F. (2016). Do early educators' implicit biases regarding sex and race relate to behavior expectations and recommendations of preschool expulsions and suspensions. *Yale University Child Study Center*, *9*(28), 1-16.

Girvan, E. J., Gion, C., McIntosh, K., & Smolkowski, K. (2017). The relative contribution of subjective office referrals to racial disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Quarterly, 32*(3), 392–404. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000178

Godley, A. J. (2012). Intercultural discourse and communication in education. C. Paulston, S. Kiesling, & E. Rangel (Eds.) *The handbook of intercultural discourse and communication* (pp. 449-482). Madlen, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

Godley, A. J. & Loretto, A. (2013). Fostering counter-narratives of race, language, and identity in an urban English classroom. *Linguistics and Education, 24*, 316-327.

Gold, T. (2020). Pipeline and retention of teachers of color: Systems and structures impeding growth and sustainability in the United States. https://doi.org/10.51388/20.500.12265/96

González, T. (2012). Keeping kids in schools: Restorative justice, punitive discipline, and the school to prison pipeline. *Journal of Law and Education, 41*(2), 281–335.

González, T. (2014). Reorienting restorative justice: Initiating a new dialogue of rights consciousness, community empowerment and politicization. *Cardozo J. Conflict Resol.*, *16*, 457.

Grand Challenges for Social Work. (2020). Retrieved from https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/#the-challenges

Goodkind, S. (2019). *Institutionalized inequity: Pathways to juvenile justice for Black girls in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.* Black Girls Equity Alliance: A Gwen's Girls Initiative. https://www.gwensgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BGEA-Report3_v5.pdf

Gray, L., A. (2019). *The School-to-Prison Pipeline. In: Educational Trauma.* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28083-3_18

Greene, R. (2008). *Human behavior theory & social work practice (3rd edition).* New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39*, 59-68.

Gumz, E. J., & Grant, C. L. (2009). Restorative Justice: A Systematic Review of the Social Work Literature. *Families in Society, 90(*1), 119–126. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.3853

Hanson, A. L. (2005). Have zero tolerance school discipline policies turned into a nightmare? The American dream's promise of equal educational opportunity grounded in Brown v. Board of Education. *U.C. Davis Journal of Juvenile Law & Policy, 9,* 289-439.

Harper, K., Ryberg, R., & Temkin, D. (2019). *Black students and students with disabilities remain more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions, despite overall declines*. Child Trends. https://www.childtrends.org/publications/black-students-disabilities-out-of-school-suspensions

Hemphill, S.A., Toumbourou, J.W., Herrenkohl, T.I., McMorris, B.J., & Catalano, R.F. (2006). The effect of school suspensions and arrests on subsequent adolescent antisocial behavior in Australia and the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 39, 736-744.*

Hendriks, F., Seifried, E., & Menz, C. (2021). Unraveling the "smart but evil" stereotype: Pre-service teachers' evaluations of educational psychology researchers versus teachers as sources of information. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Psychologie*.

Himmelstein, K.E.W., & Brückner, H. (2011). Criminal justice and school sanctions against nonheterosexual youth: A national longitudinal study. *Pediatrics, 127*(1), 49–57.

Hines-Datiri, D., & Carter Andrews, D. J. (2020). The Effects of Zero Tolerance Policies on Black Girls: Using Critical Race Feminism and Figured Worlds to Examine School Discipline. *Urban Education, 55*(10), 1419–1440. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917690204

Hirschfield, P. J. (2008). Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA. *Theoretical Criminology*, *12*(1), 79-101.

Houston, S. (2002). Reflecting on habitus, field and capital towards a culturally sensitive social work. *Journal of Social Work, 2*(2), 149-167.

Hoyt, C. (2012). The pedagogy of the meaning of racism: Reconciling a discordant discourse. *Social Work, 57*, 3.

Huguley, J., Wang, M., Monahan, K., Keane, G., & Koury, A. (2018). Just Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Greater Pittsburgh: Local Challenges and Promising Solutions. *The Center on Race and Social Problems University of Pittsburgh.*

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M. T., Pasarow, S., & Wallace Jr, J. M. (2020). Just Discipline in Schools: An Integrated and Interdisciplinary Approach. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 195-199.

Jacobs, L. A., Kim, M. E., Whitfield, D. L., Gartner, R. E., Panichelli, M., Kattari, S. K., ... & Mountz, S. E. (2021). Defund the police: Moving towards an anti-carceral social work. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, *32*(1), 37-62.

Jacoby-Senghor, D. S., Sinclair, S., Shelton, J. N. (2016). A lesson in bias: The relationship between implicit racial bias and performance in pedagogical contexts. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 63*, 50–55.

Jain, S., Bassey, H., Brown, M., & Kalra, P. (2014). Restorative justice in Oakland schools: Implementation and impacts (prepared for the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education). Oakland, CA: Oakland Unified School District, Data In Action.

Jones, B. (2012). The struggle for Black education. In Bale & Knopp (Eds.), *Education and capitalism: Struggles for learning and liberation* (pp. 41-69). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.

Joseph, A. (2018). *Restorative justice and the discipline gap: Exploring the impact of restorative practices on racially disproportional school discipline* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).

Joseph, A. A., Wilcox, S. M., Hnilica, R. J., & Hansen, M. C. (2020). Keeping race at the center of school discipline practices and trauma-informed care: An interprofessional framework. *Children and Schools, 42*(3), 161-170.

Kalvesmaki, A., & Tulman, J. B. (2017). A Systems Theory Analysis for Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Using Disability Rights Laws to Keep Children in Schools and out of Courts, Jails, and Prisons. In *The School to Prison Pipeline: The Role of Culture and Discipline in School*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Kane, J. (2013). *Social class, gender and exclusion from school.* London: Routledge.

Keleher, T. (2000). Program Director, Applied Research Center, Racial Disparities Related to School Zero Tolerance Policies. *Testimony before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.* (February 18). Archived at the Student Advocacy Center, Ann Arbor.

Koon, D.S.V. (2013). *Exclusionary school discipline: An issue brief and review of the literature.* The Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy. Berkeley: University of California Berkeley School of Law.

Koonce, J. B. (2012). "Oh, those loud Black girls!": A phenomenological study of Black girls talking with an attitude. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education,* 8, 2, 26-46.

Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., & Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in our nation's schools.* New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

Kunesh, C. E. & Noltemeyer, A. (2019). Understanding disciplinary disproportionality: Stereotypes shape pre-service teachers' beliefs about Black boys' behavior. *Urban Education*, 54, 471-498.

Lacoe, J., & Steinberg, M. P. (2018). Rolling back zero tolerance: The effect of discipline policy reform on suspension usage and student outcomes. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *93*(2), 207-227.

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. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (2005). Toward a critical race theory of education. In *Critical race theory in education* (pp. 10-31). Routledge.

Lai, C. K., Skinner, A. L., Cooley, E., Murrar, S., Brauer, M., Devos, T., ... & Nosek, B. A. (2016). Reducing implicit racial preferences: II. Intervention effectiveness across time. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *145*(8), 1001.

Lei, J. L. (2003). (Un)necessary toughness? Those "loud Black girls" and those "quiet Asian boys." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 34*, 158-181.

Lensmire, A. (2012). *White urban teachers: Stories of fear, violence, and desire*. R&L Education.

Lewis, C. W., Butler, B. R., Bonner, F. A. III, & Joubert, M. (2010) African American male discipline patterns and school district responses resulting impact on academic achievement: Implications for urban educators and policymakers. *Journal of African American Males in Education, 1*, 7-25.

Lewis, A. E. (2017). *Race in the schoolyard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities.* Rutgers University Press.

Lindsay, C. A., & Hart, C. M. D. (2017). Teacher race and school discipline: Are students suspended less often when they have a teacher of the same race? *Education Next*, *17*(1), 72+.

Little, B. (2017). How boarding schools tried to 'kill the Indian' through assimilation. https://www.history.com/news/how-boarding-schools-tried-to-kill-the-indian-through-assimilation

Losen, D., Hodson, C., Keith II, M.A., Morrison, K., & Belway, S. (2015). Are we closing the school discipline gap? *The Center for Civil Rights Remedies.* Los Angeles; University of California Los Angeles. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2t36g571

Losen, D. J., & Martinez, T. E. (2013). Out of school & off track: The overuse of suspensions in American middle and high schools. *The Center of Civil Rights Remedies*. https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/out-of-school-and-off-track-the-overuse-of-suspensions-in-american-middle-and-high-schools

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.* Beacon Press.

Lush, T. (2013, April). Kiera Wilmot will not be charged for explosion at Florida school. *Huffington Post.* https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kiera-wilmot-arrested-science-experiment_n_3194768

Magaña, S., Parish, S. L., Rose, R. A., Timberlake, M., & Swaine, J. G. (2012). Racial and ethnic disparities in quality of health care among children with autism and other developmental disabilities. *Intellectual and developmental disabilities*, *50*(4), 287-299.

Mallet, C. A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: A critical review of the punitive paradigm shift. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal, 33*, 15-24.

Marcucci, O. & Elmesky, R. (2020). Advancing culturally relevant discipline: An ethnographic microanalysis of disciplinary interactions with Black students. *Urban Education*, 1-33.

Martinez, S. (2009). A System Gone Berserk: How Are Zero-Tolerance Policies Really Affecting Schools? *Preventing School Failure*, *53*(3), 153–158. https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.3200/PSFL.53.3.153-158

Mayworm, A. M., Sharkey, J. D., Hunnicutt, K. L., & Schiedel, K. C. (2016). Teacher consultation to enhance implementation of school-based restorative justice. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *26*(4), 385-412.

McCarter, S. (2017). The school-to-prison pipeline: A primer for social workers. *Social Work, 62*(1), 53-61.

McIntosh, K., Girvan, E. J., Horner, R., & Smolkowski, K. (2014). Education not incarceration: A conceptual model for reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline [SSRN Scholarly Paper No. ID 2598212]. *Social Science Research Network. https://ssrn.com/abstract=2598212*

McGrew, K. (2016). The dangers of pipeline thinking: How the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor squeezes out complexity. *Educational Theory, 66*(3), 341-367. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12173

McMorris, B. J., Beckman, K. J., Shea, G., Baumgartner, J., & Eggert, R. C. (2013). *Applying restorative justice practices to Minneapolis Public Schools students recommended for possible expulsion.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

McNeal, L. R. (2016). Managing our blind spot: The role of bias in the school-to-prison pipeline. *Arizona State Law Journal, 48*(2), 285-312.

Meiners, E. (2011). Ending the school-to-prison pipeline/Building abolition futures. *The Urban Review, 43*, 547-565.

Meiners, E. R. (2016). *For the children?: Protecting innocence in a carceral state*. U of Minnesota Press.

Milner, H. R. (2003). Teacher reflection and race in cultural contexts: History, meanings and methods in teaching. *Theory Into Practice, 42*, 3, 173-180.

Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational researcher*, *36*(7), 388-400.

Milner, H. R. (2015). *Rac(e)ing to class: Confronting poverty and race in schools and classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Milner, H. R. (2017). Race, talk, opportunity gaps, and curriculum shifts in (teacher) education. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method and Practice, 66*, 73-94.

Milner IV, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *" These kids are out of control": Why we must reimagine" classroom management" for equity*. Corwin Press.

Milner IV, H. R., & Howard, T. C. (2013). Counter-narrative as method: Race, policy and research for teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(4), 536-561.

Monahan, K., VanDerhei, S., Bechtold, J., Cauffman, E. (2014). From the school yard to the squad car: School discipline, truancy, and arrest. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 43*, 1110-1122.Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.

Morris, E. W. (2005). "Tuck in that shirt!" Race, class, gender, and discipline in an urban school. *Sociological Perspectives*, 48, 1, 25-48.

Morris, E. W. (2007). "Ladies" or "Loudies"? Perceptions and experiences of Black girls in classrooms. *Youth and Society*, 38, 4, 490-515.

Morris, E. W. & Perry, B. L. (2017). Girls behaving badly? Race, gender, and subjective evaluation in the discipline of African American girls. *Sociology of Education,* 90, 2, 127-148.

Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.

Na, C., & Gottfredson, D. C. (2013). Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors. *Justice Quarterly, 30*(4), 619-650.

National Association of Social Workers [NASW]. (2017). Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (2018). Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/spotlight_a.asp

National Center for Education Statistics (2020). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences: 2020. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020144.pdf

Neville, H. A., Awad, G. H., Brooks, J. E., Flores, M. P., & Bluemel, J. (2013). Color-blind racial ideology: Theory, training, and measurement implications in psychology. *American Psychologist*, *68*(6), 455.

Neville, H. A., Lilly, R. L., Duran, G., Lee, R. M., & Browne, L. (2000). Construction and initial validation of the color-blind racial attitudes scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of counseling psychology*, *47*(1), 59.

Nicholson-Crotty, S., Birchmeier, Z., & Valentine, D. (2009). Exploring the impact of school discipline on racial disproportion in the juvenile justice system. *Social Science Quarterly, 90*(4), 1003-1018.

Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into practice*, *42*(4), 341-350.

Okonofua, J. & Eberhardt, J. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. *Psychological Science, 26*, 617-624.

Okonofua, J. A., Paunesku, D., & Walton, G. M. (2016). Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *113*(19), 5221-5226.

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2007). Racial formations. In. Rothenberg, P. S. (Eds.), *Race, Class and Gender in the United States* (pp. 13-22) New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Paluck, E. L., & Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. *Annual review of psychology*, *60*, 339-367.

Payne, A. A., & Welch, K. (2013). The impact of schools and education on antisocial behavior over the lifecourse. In C. Gibson & M. Krohn (Eds.), *Handbook of Life-Course Criminology* (pp. 93-109). Springer, New York, NY.

Parr, A. (2020). *Learning about racial equity in teacher practice: A mixed-methods study of white teacher candidate development* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).

Perry, B.L., & Morris, E. (2014). Suspending progress: Collateral consequences of exclusionary punishment in public schools. *American Sociological Review, 79*(6), 1067-1087.

Petteruti, A. (2011). Education under arrest: The case against police in schools. *Just Policy Institute*. Retrieved from https://justicepolicy.org/research/education-under-arrest-the-case-against-police-in-schools/

Rausch, M. & Skiba, R. (2006). *Discipline, disability, and race: Disproportionality in Indiana schools.* Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.

Rex, L. A. (2006). Acting "cool" and "appropriate": Toward a framework for considering literacy classroom interactions when race is a factor. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 38, 3, 275-325.

Riddle, T., Sinclair, S. (2019). Racial disparities in school-based disciplinary actions are associated with county-level rates of racial bias. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116*(17), 8255–8260.

Roberge, G. (2012). From Zero Tolerance to Early Intervention: The Evolution of School Anti-bullying Policy. https://in.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/2018/08/From-Zero-Tolerance-to-Early-Intervention-ek.pdf

Rocque, M. (2010). Office discipline and student behavior: Does race matter? *American Journal of Education, 116*, 557–581. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1086/653629

Rocque, M., & Snellings, Q. (2018). The new disciplinology: Research, theory, and remaining puzzles on the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 59,* 3-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.05.002

Romano, A., & Arms Almengor, R. (2021). It's deeper than that!: Restorative Justice and the challenge of racial reflexivity in white-led schools. *Urban Education*, *0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085921998419

Rothery, M. (2005). Ecological theory. In F. J. Turner (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Canadian social work* (pp. 111–112). Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press

Rothery, M. (2016). Critical ecological systems theory. In N. Coady (Eds.), *Theoretical perspectives for direct social work practice: A generalist eclectic approach* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing Company. 81-107.

Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Sage Publications.

Rudd, T. (2014). Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Implicit Bias is Heavily Implicated. *Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity: The Ohio State University.*

Russell, S. T., Snapp, S., Munley, J., Licona, A., Burdge, H., & Hemingway, Z. (2013, September*). LGBTQ discipline disparities: Narratives, challenges, & solutions.* Paper presented at Discipline Disparities Collaborative meeting, Washington, DC.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers,* 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

School Social Work Association of America. (2012). *School social worker's role.* https://www.sswaa.org/

Santiago-Rosario, M. R., Whitcomb, S. A., Pearlman, J., & McIntosh, K. (2021). Associations between teacher expectations and racial disproportionality in discipline referrals. *Journal of School Psychology*, *85*, 80-93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2021.02.004

Schwartz, S. (2022, March 1). *Map: Where Critical Race Theory is under attack.* EducationWeek. https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06

Selvaggi, S. (2016). The cost of school-to-prison pipeline: Racially biased school suspensions cost taxpayers $35 billion each year. *Atlanta Black Star.*

https://atlantablackstar.com/2016/06/07/the-cost-of-school-to-prison-pipeline-racially-biased-school-suspensions-cost-taxpayers-35-billion-each-year/

Sherman, M. C. (2016). The school social worker: A marginalized commodity within the school ecosystem. *Children & Schools*, *38*(3), 147-151. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdw016

Shollenberger, T. L. (2015). Racial disparities in school suspension and subsequent outcomes: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Equitable remedies for excessive exclusion (pp. 31–43).* New York: Teachers College Press.

Siporin, M. (1980). Ecological systems theory in social work. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, 7*, 507.

Skiba, R., & Peterson, R. (1999). The dark side of zero-tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools? *Phi Delta Kappa, 80*, 372–376.

Skiba, R. J. and G. G. Noam (2001). *Zero tolerance: Can suspension and expulsion keep schools safe?*, Jossey-Bass.

Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C.-G., Karega Rausch, M., May, S. L., & Tobin, T. (2011). Race is not neutral: A national investigation of African American and Latino disproportionality in school discipline. School Psychology Review, 40(1), 85.

Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M. I., Williams, N. T. (2014) More than a metaphor: The contribution of exclusionary discipline to a school-to-prison pipeline. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 47*(4), 546-564. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2014.958965

Skiba, R. J. (2015). Interventions to address racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline: Can systems reform be race-neutral? In R. Bangs, L. E. Davis, R. Bangs, & L. E. Davis (Eds.), *Race and social problems: Restructuring inequality* (pp. 107–124). New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media

Sleeter, C. E. (2017). Critical Race Theory and the whiteness of teacher education. *Urban Education, 52*, 2, 155-169.

Smith, C. D. (2009). Deconstructing the pipeline: Evaluating school-to-prison pipeline equal protection cases through structural racism framework. *Fordham Urban Law Journal, 36*(5), 1009-1050.

Smith, E. J., & Harper, S. R. (2015). *Disproportionate impact of K-12 school suspension and expulsion on black students in Southern States.* Philadelphia, PA: Centre for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Sojoyner, D. M. (2013). Black radicals make for bad citizens: Undoing the myth of the school to prison pipeline. *Berkeley Review of Education, 4*(2), 241-263.

Solorzano, D. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Int. Journal of Qualitative Studies in Ed.*, 11(1), 121–136

Song, S. Y., Eddy, J. M., Thompson, H. M., Adams, B., & Beskow, J. (2020). Restorative Consultation in Schools: A Systematic Review and Call for Restorative Justice Science to Promote Anti-Racism and Social Justice. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *30*(4), 462-476.

Song, S. Y., & Swearer, S. M. (2016). The Cart Before the Horse: The Challenge and Promise of Restorative Justice Consultation in Schools. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *26*(4), 313–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2016.1246972

Staats, C. (2014). Implicit racial bias and school discipline disparities: Exploring the connection. Kirwan Institute Special Report, The Ohio State University.

Starck, J. G., Riddle, T., Sinclair, S., & Warikoo, N. (2020). Teachers are people too: Examining the racial bias of teachers compared to other American adults. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(4), 273-284.

Stoll, L. C. (2014). Constructing the color-blind classroom: Teachers' perspectives on race and schooling. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *17*(5), 688-705.

Strauss, V. (2014, April). How, after 60 years, Brown v. Board of Education succeeded — and didn't. *The Washington Post.* *https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/04/24/how-after-60-years-brown-v-board-of-education-succeeded-and-didnt/*

Sumner, M. D., Silverman, C. J., & Frampton, M. L. (2010). School-based restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance policies: Lessons from West Oakland. Berkeley, CA: *Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice.*

Swayne, M. (2015). Schools with higher black, minority populations call cops, not docs. *Penn State News.* https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/schools-higher-black-minority-populations-call-cops-not-docs/

Tatum, B. (2004). Defining racism: "Can we talk?" book chapter: Race, class and gender in the United States: An integrated study. P. Rothenberg (Ed.) New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Teasley, M. L. (2014). Shifting from zero tolerance to restorative justice in schools. *Children & Schools*, *36*(3), 131-133.

Triplett, N. P., Allen, A., & Lewis, C. W. (2014). Zero tolerance, school shootings, and the post-brown quest for equity in discipline policy: An examination of how urban minorities are punished for white suburban violence. *The Journal of Negro Education, 83*(3), 352-370. doi:10.7709/jnegroeducation.83.3.0352

U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Appendix 1: U.S. Department of Education: Director of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources.* Washington DC.

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights [USDOE]. (2016). *2013-2014 Civil rights data collection: A first look – Key data highlights on equity and opportunity gaps in our nation's public schools* Washington, DC. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights [USDOE]. (2018). *2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection: School climate and safety.* Washington, DC. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf

Ullucci, K., & Battey, D. (2011). Exposing color blindness/grounding color consciousness: Challenges for teacher education. *Urban Education*, *46*(6), 1195-1225.

Utt, J., & Tochluk, S. (2020). White teacher, know thyself: Improving anti-racist praxis through racial identity development. *Urban Education*, *55*(1), 125-152.

Vaandering, D. (2013). A window on relationships: Reflecting critically on a current restorative justice theory. *Restorative Justice*, *1*(3), 311-333.

Villarruel, F. A., & Dunbar Jr, C. (2006). Culture, race, and zero tolerance policy: The implications. *Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice, 6*(2), 53-63. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J158v06n02_04

Wald, J. (2001). The failure of zero-tolerance. Salon. https://www.salon.com/2001/08/29/zero_tolerance/

Wallace, J. M., Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, J. G. (2008). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline among U.S. high school students: 1991-2005. *The Negro Educational Review*, *59*(1-2), 47–62.

Wamsley, L. (2021, April 8). *CDC director declares racism a serious public health threat.* National Public Radio. https://www.npr.org/2021/04/08/985524494/cdc-director-declares-racism-a-serious-public-health-threat

Warikoo, N., Sinclair, S., Fei, J., & Jacoby-Senghor, D. (2016). Examining racial bias in education: A new approach. *Educational Researcher*, *45*(9), 508-514.

Washington, D. M., Harper, T., Hill, A. B., & Kern, L. J. (2021). Achieving juvenile justice through abolition: A critical review of social work's role in shaping the juvenile legal system and steps toward achieving an antiracist future. *Social Sciences*, *10*(6). http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060211

Welch, K., & Payne, A. A. (2010). Racial threat and punitive school discipline. *Social Problems, 57*, 25– 48. http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/sp .2010.57.1.25

Welsh, R. O., & Little, S. (2018). The school discipline dilemma: A comprehensive review of disparities and alternative approaches. *Review of Education Research*. *88*(5), 752-794. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0034654318791582

Winn, M. T. (2011). Girl time: Literacy, justice, and the school-to-prison pipeline. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Winn, M. T. (2013). Toward a restorative English education. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 48, 1.

Wun, C. (2016a). Against captivity: Black girls and school discipline policies in the afterlife of slavery. *Educational Policy, 30*, 171-196.

Wun, C. (2016b). Unaccounted foundations: Black girls, anti-Black racism, and punishment in schools. *Critical Sociology, 42*(4-5), 737-750.

Zakszeski, B., & Rutherford, L. (2020). Mind the Gap: A Systematic Review of Research on Restorative Practices in Schools. *School Psychology Review*, 1-17.

Zuberi, T., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (Eds.). (2008). *White logic, white methods: Racism and methodology*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zweifler, R. (2009). Educating all our children. In L.M. Nybell, J. J. Shook, & J.L. Finn (Eds.), *Childhood, youth, & social work in transformation* (pp. 217-238). Chichester, New York: Columbia University Press.