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An Exploration of Learning-At-Home Experiences Among Families and Children of Color Labeled with Disabilities During COVID-19: A Narrative Inquiry

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AN EXPLORATION OF LEARNING-AT-HOME EXPERIENCES AMONG FAMILIES AND CHILDREN OF COLOR LABELED WITH DISABILITIES DURING COVID-19: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

We are living in this historical moment of a COVID-19 global crisis that is continuing to impact marginalized families in our very own communities. Students of color, especially those who are already on the margins, and experience inequities in the classroom and in the community, have been further impacted by the quarantine as the educational system had not prioritized how to support students who face certain vulnerabilities due to lack of government funding, the historical oppressive tendency for schools to function within a medical model of standardization, along with the commodification of learning. Given the novelty of COVID-19 research, the full impact on these communities is yet to be fully known. Some students of color labeled with disabilities are faced with deeper struggles exacerbated by the pandemic's impact, while others may have improved performance during distance learning due to the removal of inherent bias in the classroom or the traditional inequities that may be perpetuated in a traditional school environment.

Within a DisCrit theoretical framework that centers and celebrates the intersectional identities of these families and children, this study is about exploring the unique experiences of public, private and charter school students and their families in the San Francisco Bay area. Centering the narratives of families of color and their children labeled with learning disabilities is one way to shift the voice of power and dominant narratives, and to begin to understand their lived experiences as a way to decenter and dismantle white privilege, ableism and heteronormative supremacy. This qualitative narrative-inquiry based study centers and celebrates the lived experiences of six families and their children of color labeled with learning disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic-fueled remote learning crisis. The thematic findings from this study can inform policymakers and other stakeholders on how to best support these communities, advocate for school-based rights within a constructivist lens, and contribute to the dearth in scholarly research that supports disability justice.

KEYWORDS: labeled with learning disabilities, DisCrit, disability justice, disability rights, disability, dis/ability, families of color, students of color, multiply-marginalized, identity first language, person first language, COVID-19, distance learning, remote learning, learning at home, standardization, inequities, lack of access, social class, middle income, centering disabled voices, amplifying disabled narratives, celebrating students of color, praxis

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to *oppa*, Ju Phil Han. For without his life, this would not have been.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In this liminal state of the surging of cases and deaths associated with COVID-19, there is the promise of a vaccine in sight for the general public, amidst a national racial reckoning. As a mother with a child of color labeled with disability advocating for his rights in the public school system, I want to illuminate the stories and lives of the many families of color and their children with unique needs, navigating learning in diverse school settings. We are living in this historical moment of global crisis that is continuing to impact the marginalized families in our very own communities. What brought me to this doctorate program is the sudden death of my older brother and his life trajectory shaped by his early childhood experiences in and out of the classroom, and reflecting on how he got where he ended up. Reading his journals, poems, sketches, life event dictations, there amongst the outpouring of his personal dictations and memories was a story he scribbled down, describing the time his elementary school teacher had picked him up and put him into a trash can in response to his behavior. This horrific and inhumane story of injustice and erasure is amongst so many other stories of mistreatment of students of color and of their families whose culture and understanding of self and society are discounted in this culture that values heteronormativity, ableism and whiteness. *Oppa*'s scribbling was ironically during a self-reflection activity and a means for self-healing in his rehabilitation and drug treatment program where he had been dedicated to a sober path for some time. With the rate of families and students of color living with neurodivergence, disability (learning and physical), and not having access to resources or information to get the support they need, they are faced with moving through education feeling a sense of lack, invisibility, inequity, displacement, and feeling like 'the other'.

There is a deep and expansive need for the school system, families and other advocates to share, hear and act upon the trauma that occurs within these students' lives.

Growing up in my family, we moved around a lot. My father, *appa*, was one of the early leaders and grandmasters of South Korea's martial art, Tae Kwon Do. His life dream was to move to the United States and provide for his family while promoting the art and philosophy of Tae Kwon Do in America. He started in the Korean military and eventually migrated to the United States, relocating my mother, *omma*, and *oppa* who lived in South Korea while *appa* traveled. They eventually reunited in Kingston, Jamaica where I was born and where *appa* was building his dream until the political unrest in Jamaica forced us to flee the country, with nothing but cash that my mother sewed into the hems of their clothing, leaving all of their physical belongings behind. We safely landed in Texas and planted roots there for the next 11 years. Our family's destiny was based on the trajectory of my father's next steps in his art and business around Tae Kwon-Do. My parents' main message and hope for myself and my siblings was to perform well in school, listen to our teachers and to those in power, and to assimilate. They believed this was the key to success in America, and hence a better life. They had four children - *oppa*, Ju Phil, who was given an anglicized name Jeff; myself, Nam Ju whose anglicized name was Nancy; my sister Joo eh, who became Karren; and my younger brother, Young Phil, who was referred to as Mike. *Oppa*'s school experiences didn't stand out to me growing up. The tragic experiences of erasure he endured were never uttered. We were taught to abide by the rules and not to bring attention to ourselves – to obey and assimilate. Both of my parents worked full time. *Appa* ran a successful *dojang* (Tae Kwon-Do gym) and *omma* worked various laborious jobs from working retail, working in our school cafeteria, running her own drycleaners and doing administrative duties for my father's dojang. Due to my parents' absence of sense of belonging and social capital, they didn't attend school events and refrained from any volunteer involvement. In their motherland, the expectation and social culture was to achieve straight A's and obey teachers, who are highly respected and compensated in South Korea. Thus, this was their only expectation for us in North American schools. As we grew older, we acted as translators for my parents, completed documents on their behalf, and explained American culture to them in the same way many first-generation children often do for their immigrant parents.

At the time, I was unaware that our story was reflected in so many other immigrant family stories in America. While I quickly learned how to assimilate and not to bring attention to myself, *oppa* was having a hard time. He internalized his experiences, much like we all did. His neurodivergence[1] was perceived as behavioral issues and he was punished for his differences. Being smart and witty, he learned how to survive each school year until he completed high school and entered into university. His facade finally shattered and he dropped out of school before he completed his freshman year and his life trajectory took a turn from there. The immigrant family story of survival, assimilation and concealing one's identity is ours. Our school experiences were those that taught us that we are different and that we must learn Eurocentric ways of knowing in order to survive. Had we schooled at home and were given the message that it was acceptable to retain our country's culture and accept our authentic identities, our experiences may have been very different and I wonder whether this would have changed the trajectory of each of our lives. Today, I find myself faced with reconciling the credence of my parents' dreams to the dominant narrative, and white supremacy and ableism dictating our way of life for the sake of attaining freedom, a desirable middle-class lifestyle and a 'better future' for

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[1] First termed by Australian sociologist Judy Singer in her sociology honors thesis in 1998, referring to variation in the human brain regarding sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions in a non-pathological sense (Singer, J, 1998).

their children. I grapple with this dichotomous notion of owning my upbringing, maintaining respect for my elders and being authentic, while needing justice for my brother's life trajectory and outcome, wanting something different for my own children and understanding my parents' need for something other than the aftermath of the war-torn motherland they needed to flee. This is part of my story, my narrative and the catalyst for the research I am conducting. *Oppa* is no longer here with us to share his narrative in his own voice, and the fact that he never outright shared his lived experience while embodying life on earth, exemplifies the silencing and erasure that so many people of color with disability experience. I hope for the authenticity and the valuing of families of color, their experiences and desires for the kind of life they want to live, without the barriers, violence and injustices they face as the silenced 'other' in a white, able-bodied dominant society.

Today, across the nation and around the world, students are experiencing deep setbacks within their academic, social, emotional, psychological and overall developmental needs due to the current COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the human race, leaving nobody unscathed. We are in a time in history where health care professionals, educators and caregivers are working tenuously to keep up with the effects of the pandemic from overbooked hospitals, frontline essential workers who have little choice but to work to survive, working caregivers who are suddenly faced with the compounded task of monitoring distance learning from home. Our children are one vulnerable group who, during the life of this pandemic thus far, had been faced with the loss of daily social connections at school that are critical for healthy development, in addition to the academic learning needs they were consequently missing out during remote pandemic learning. Students of color, especially those who are already on the margins and experience inequities in the classroom, on the playground and in the community have been further impacted by the quarantine as the educational system had not prioritized how to support students who face different vulnerabilities as a result of lack of government funding, the historical need for schools to function within a medical model of standardization, along with the commodification of learning while traditionally marginalized students, students of color with learning disabilities who suffer most. In a US Department of Education survey of the reopening of schools, fewer than half of the students with disabilities were receiving full-time, in-person instruction (Institute of Education Sciences, February 2021) and economically disadvantaged students and English learners were still learning at home at much higher rates than other student groups.

While the state's curriculum mandates, common core standards, and standardization practices continue to be used as success markers in schools, as demonstrated in my study, many academic expectations are founded in ableist notions centering on white dominant culture, leaving many students of color who have already been struggling academically, further exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic. While the state of California navigates the balancing act between public safety, school closures and economic health during the crisis, there is discussion and speculation that academic performance among students will have seen a sharp decline. However, given the novelty of COVID-19 research and the impact on distance learning for students of color labeled with disabilities, this is yet to be fully known. Furthermore, students of color labeled with learning disabilities who traditionally have not been receiving enough support around academic, developmental, psychological, and social emotional needs may be receiving even less, as schools and educators were doing their best to make a hard pivot in this global crisis. While others who faced marginalization in the traditional classroom may be receiving some respite within these new schooling at home settings. Herein lies the undercurrent of the issue that plagues particular communities of color; the inequities these communities face are further perpetuated for the very same reasons they have been faced with social injustices at the onset. This study aims to further explore the unique school and learning-at-home experiences of some families of color with children labeled with learning disabilities.

In addition to basic support needs being impacted, as schools being forced to transition into the online environment, there were multiple factors at play. While schools remained closed, these multiple factors affected the growing complexities of each families' unique pandemic experiences. Some students of color labeled with disabilities were faced with deeper struggles exacerbated by the pandemic's impact, while others may have improved performance during distance learning due to the removal of inherent biases in the classroom or traditional inequities that may be perpetuated in a traditional school environment. Online learning had been reported to have the greatest negative impact on students with lower levels of prior academic attainment (Reeves, 2020), namely for Black, Asian and Latinx student communities, who are the most notably disproportionately impacted (US News, March 24, 2021). These stories and experiences are not being examined or prioritized in our medical model-based system of education, a system that emphasizes an individual's disability as one that must be diagnosed, categorized and then treated. This type of model is what special education and many treatments, therapies and approaches, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) are used to treat, fix or heal the individual from the disability. A social model of disability is one that recognizes that disability is a social construct, that it is perceived in a way that society portrays the disability. While these inherent holes within our school system and not traditionally supporting students of color in schools, these stay-at-home models in response to COVID-19 safety may be opportunities for traditionally marginalized students to excel, find solace and feel safer within their home-schooling environments.

In order to achieve racial, socioeconomic, gender and disability justice especially in the age of COVID-19, it is necessary to center disability justice as a framework. Within a DisCrit theoretical framework that centers the intersectionality of race and disability identities, this study is about exploring the unique experiences of public school, private and charter school students and their families in the San Francisco Bay Area, particularly for those students of color with identified learning challenges who are struggling academically in this current moment, as a narrative inquiry. Centering the narratives of families of color and their children labeled with learning disabilities is one way to shift the voice of power and dominant narratives, and begin to understand their lived experiences as a way to decenter and dismantle white privilege, white ableism and white supremacy. This study is also about how schools, families and students have been supported during the remote or hybrid learning model. Finally, this study explores the relationship between race, disability and learning within a learning-at-home model specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic as the backdrop, which now holds much more relevance to the intersectional lives of this current generation.

Given the novel nature of the virus and the new concept in relation to how it affects our schools, the current research is growing but still sparse. Thus, there is little conclusive and long-term research on the effects of this remote pandemic learning in public, private and charter schools and how students and their families have truly been faring. This study explores families of color with child(ren) who have been labeled as having learning disabilities as they navigated remote learning with their children.

Background and Need for the Study

General education classrooms and whole school communities across the nation have historically served white heteronormative ableism. This is due in part to the lack of proper resources that are both culturally competent and representative of their diversity in literature, reproducing *dysfunction education ecologies*, a system informed by Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), as coined by Annamma, Connor & Ferri (2013), and is a theory that informs the research in this work. Dysfunctional education ecologies, where multiply-marginalized students of color – students of color that are faced with racism, ableism, heteronormativity and other intersecting oppressions - are not imagined as valuable natural resources (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 115) are the result of overrepresentation in special education and disciplinary action, underrepresented in graduation, higher incarceration and limited access to college (p. 117).

Students of color also experience barriers to their academic success in the very threads their educational institutions are built upon – institutional and systemic racism that runs pervasive through all institutions does not skip academic institutions. In fact, since the 1600s, white-generated and white-maintained oppression has long been manifested in all major societal institutions and an intense system of oppression traditionally for African-Americans, due to systemic racism, as coined by Joe Feagin (2013) and for all people of color. In the mid-1800's, views on formal standardized testing began to shift. By the 1870s, standardized testing became a mandated process for all public schools. Today, we are very familiar with the social, racial and disability inequities strongly associated with these requirements. Then the eugenics movement and ideology was propelled into a dominant cultural norm. By early twentieth century iterations, it weeded out the malformed (Winfield, p. 15) or the learning disabled, and continues to have profound implications in our educational institutions. Eugenics relied heavily on institutional racism and academic elitism (p. 17). After years of the stratification of children labeled with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) was a policy that was created to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. Still, children labeled with disabilities continue to be victims of dehumanization, discrimination, segregation and erasure in school institutions, general education and special education classrooms.

Even with government-mandated policies and regulations such as ADA, IDEA, and culturally relevant pedagogies, and more recently, K-12 educators are expected to know and teach culturally and linguistically diverse students about issues of equity while most teachers receive little or no preparation (Annamma, 2015; Sleeter, 2016; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2018). The result is a further perpetuation of racism, discrimination and inherent bias as teachers struggle to find sustainable and meaningful changes in the classroom (Flynn, 2015). Educators teaching students with disabilities are seldom given critical pedagogical strategies to teach their disabled students (Oslick and Pearson, 2016). These and other related findings point to the need to truly train educators in critically informed pedagogy and praxis for real impact in the classroom (Muller et al, 2019). These oppressive notions of white heteronormative dominance and power are further perpetuated in societal racism and injustice in the dominant discourse and messaging students of color, those with disabilities and other multiply marginalized identities witness everyday (Muller et al, 2019).

This tradition of white heteronormative abled-bodied dominance also informs the standardization tools used in schools. Educators are taught to depend on these standardization tools to assess, place and respond to students and their needs, sometimes in opposition of educators' personal and professional frameworks and values. Within the public and some charter school systems, schools are required to follow these state mandates in order to receive federal and municipal funding. Common K-12 general education classrooms are a significant sector of public education services that fall privy to these state-required regulations and assessments, which are based upon the normative, able-bodied expectations of the predominantly white, powerful, heteronormative demands of those in power in both public and private industries. Most often, K-12 teachers along with students labeled with a disability are among those who suffer. Their disability or anything that strays from what is considered ‘normal’, as defined within a medical model based upon the notion that students diagnosed with a learning challenge or disability are abnormal, abhorrent, need to be cured and don’t fit within the societal standards of normativity (Collins & Ferri, 2014). This model is based upon a paradigm that is historically positivist and reductionist - positivist in its view that disability is a deficit and disorder that needs to be fixed (Cosier, 2012), and reductionist in being reduced to quantifiable variables that can be empirically researched (Gallagher, 2004). Hence, students accept these generalizable truths around this disability label and accept this externally imposed paradigm, despite their internal truths of knowing. This paradigm is perpetuated again and again both inside and outside of the classroom, leading to a higher percentage of failure in academia and in life for neurodivergent students of color and those labeled with learning disabilities. In these ways, the inequities and injustices toward these students and families of color span wide and deep along the spectrum of history, society, and politics.

Multiculturalists state that traditional academic instruction can alienate and exclude members of culturally marginalized groups (Morrell, 2008). Within classrooms, effective pedagogical practice includes a model that “not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate (p. 469), that Gloria Ladson-Billings coined *culturally relevant pedagogy* (1995) that has now been more widely recognized and adopted in classrooms worldwide to support students of color and their teachers who teach them. Ladson-Billings' research showcased the efficacy of group leadership within the classroom amongst African-American students who had experienced multiple suspensions. Giving them opportunities to demonstrate leadership abilities and encouraging them to express and own their cultural heritage, language and interaction styles was shown to lead to stronger self-beliefs and leadership roles. The foundation of culturally relevant pedagogy is the notion that when teachers have knowledge and understanding about their students' unique cultural and familial conceptions, they can begin to make true connections with their students. This teacher-student connection can lead to a strong belief of competency within their students and sense of self (Whitaker, 2020). This developed sense of self and acceptance encourages a community of learners, and lifting students up as opposed to peer alienation (p. 480). When traditionally marginalized students of color are encouraged to develop a stronger sense of self and cultural/familial acceptance, it increases cooperative learning, expands knowledge centers away from just the teacher, and systematically authorizes student culture as a means of official knowledge (p. 483).

Researchers have explored the negative and deploring impact of this reductionist pedagogical approach on general education classrooms. For instance, Reid and Valle (2004) have explored the construction of the special education model used in public and charter schools across the nation and the sociopolitical underpinnings supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and American Disabilities Act (ADA) in the 1990's where the emphasis is on the individual and not on the structure of the system. IDEA ensures students with disabilities access to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) tailored to their needs (U.S. Department of Education). Studies within the intersection of race and disability have been explored amongst both qualitative and quantitative theorists insofar as leading to this interdisciplinary field of study called Disability Studies. Disability Studies, as coined by Linda Ware says "disability is synonymous with SPED in that the reductionism and pathology that is embedded in SPED produces a deficiency discourse informed by labels, categories of difference, needs identification, and resource allocation" (p. 259). Ware seeks to contextualize dis/ability[2] within political and social spheres, give a voice to those labeled with disability, promote social justice and inclusive opportunities for those labeled with disability, and reject deficit models of disability (p. 261). Therefore, it is very common for teachers and administrators to speak informally about the new student labeled with learning disability. By referring to this student by his learning disability, he is then reduced to just his deficit and not his other facets and identities, resulting in his whole identity being lost. The foundations of this universal approach to disability is informed by the medical model of disability that is the bedrock of special education and general education classrooms worldwide. Lovaas, a pioneer of ABA, popularized the rhetoric around recovery in that the goal for intervention is to cure those with disability; that disability is abhorrent and wrong. Within Disability Studies, the foundation rejects that deficit model and assumes competence of the individual first. Learning disability is a social construction. One cannot be learning disabled on one's own, thus disability cannot exist without meaning making that is prevalent within society (Dudley, Marling, p. 488). Thus, the rhetoric within Disability Studies revolves around equitable practices and meaningful access that is centered around the individual's unique needs, desires, requests. Ware supports the understanding that disability is a natural part of the human experience and seeks to contextualize disability within political and social spheres. “When students are treated as competent, they are likely to demonstrate competence,” (Dudley-Marling, p. 488) an excerpt from a real-life fourth grade classroom in which the teacher leads an engaging and challenging moment with ESL and SPED students, exploring the consideration of instructional implications. From this Disability Studies in Education (DSE) perspective, a perspective that changes the relationship between teachers and students to one that is reciprocal, and in so doing, it relocates the source of and responsibility for literacy struggles (Collins & Ferri, 2016) and shifts the focus on the students’ individual identity and needs. Nonetheless, school institutions continue to be plagued with reductionist pedagogies and frameworks, inherent biases and poorly delivered teacher training on equity. When schools and communities were disrupted by a global pandemic and were suddenly forced to shut down classroom doors, many longstanding problems ensued, while new concerns surfaced around ableist, social and cultural inequities, as well as new technical inequities that were exacerbated by pre-existing injustices.

It is in this moment in history to ignite a call to action for service providers, educational and psychological consultants, school-based and agency-based professionals to redirect perspectives towards a strengths-based model that relies on guidance and support rather than a deficit model that relies on treatments, interventions, and services (Nevin et al, 2008). The issue of disproportional representation of racial minorities being inaccurately labeled with a learning disability has received growing attention over the last several decades (Artiles, 2003; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002). This problem is analyzed primarily as systemic racism without an equal review of the negative assumptions about disability (Nusbaum & Ferguson, p. 74). There are deeply interconnected constructions of race and disability in schools and in society as first drawn out by critical scholar W. E. Dubois (1920) who highlights ability with racial classification, who explored the discounting of over a century long belief that African American brains were considered smaller and therefore less intelligent than their white counterparts. Unfortunately, the legacy of historical beliefs about race and ability which were clearly based in white supremacy, have become intertwined in complex ways that carry into the present day (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 9). This legacy of systemic racism and ableism continues to perpetuate neurodivergent and disabled students of color within the current distance learning model.

One root cause for this failure of inequity is the prevalence of a dominant discourse that centers on classroom/behavioral management and adherence to state standards. In 2001, when No Child Left Behind was rewritten for elementary and secondary public and some charter schools, all 50 states complied with the act for fear of losing federal monies (Moore et al, 2004). During this time, a certain handful of private commercial enterprise took control of the curriculum, which meant more elite power and control resulting in teachers being trained to follow state-mandated curricula in their classrooms such as Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Pandya, 2013). A wide range of public and private organizations funded the CCSS initiative such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Achieve. Pearson, the publishing giant, use their access to money and power as a way to build profitable businesses related to education or gain profitable positions within existing education related businesses and to influence education policy. This power elite not only shapes policy but brings opportunities for the private sector (Pandya, 2013) to shape services such as test development, data analysis and remedial services. Education reform is closely linked to political and private enterprise. During an education summit in Virginia in 1989, then President George H.W. Bush and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton were discussions that took place that were the seeds of what would later become the core tenets of education reform: accountability, goals, competition and teacher quality (Pandya, 2013) and often by those who have little understanding of students' real educational needs.

In March of 2020, virtually all K-12 schools were forced to lock up their doors, send students home and wait eagerly for municipal announcements by Governor Gavin Newsom and the state's Health and Human Services. While families and educators had to scramble to learn new technology tools and platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom, their increased screen usage, more workload, more stressors around social emotional needs, financial needs, physical needs, especially for lower socioeconomic students and families of color, this study illuminates their experiences and seeks to understand how to support marginalized students and families of color especially during a global crisis. Furthermore, while interdisciplinary literature spans the work involved in exploring the experiences of students of color raised in historically marginalized communities, there is little research exploring the school experiences of students of color labeled with disabilities within a distance learning model and schooling at home models. Herein lies a gap in the literature exploring the intersectionality of disability and race.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry is to illuminate the academic, social-emotional, and psychological needs of students of color labeled with learning disabilities who are schooling at home during this global crisis. The central purpose of the study is two-fold. First, I sought to document the experiences of families who were navigating schooling at home during the COVID-19 pandemic with a child of color labeled with disability. Secondly, I sought to examine what particular resources, practices and tools these families were utilizing and/or needed. Through interviews with families and their children, this research aimed to examine the real challenges students of color were experiencing during this remote learning context while also exploring the tools and resources that helped them navigate their child's academic and social-emotional needs during this difficult time. My hope was to uncover and explore the unique and specific experiences and support needs for those students of color labeled with disabilities who were schooling at home during the COVID-19 crisis. My hope was to understand families' experiences to inform how best to support them as we returned to school, advocate for rights and resources amidst the existing standardized model of learning in public, charter and private schools and with the added element/depth a global pandemic brought to each unique family story. My hope was to contribute to research that may further inform literature that supports disability justice and advocate for an equitable pedagogy and approach in schools and learning-at-home in the face of another schooling at home model. It is within community-based research that we can continue to unpack, inform and dismantle deficit-based models in which our society and educational institutions are founded in.

The research questions are as follows:

1.) (a) How did children of color who are labeled with learning disabilities, and their families navigate schooling at home as a result of COVID-19? (b) What challenges and/or opportunities were created for these children and their families while schooling at home?

2.) How did schools and districts interact with the families of children of color who are labeled as having a learning disability to provide support and how closely did this support match the needs of families while schooling at home?

3.) (a) How have students of color and their families labeled with disabilities by schools come to understand their identities as learners in new ways as a result of distance learning? (b) How can schools learn from families to create a rehumanizing post-pandemic school context for students of color labeled with disabilities?

This set of research questions are important and significant across social class lines, however poor and low income families and students who have been labeled with learning disabilities face a particular set of concerns, difficulties and institutional challenges that are unique to the intersectional inequities of their social class. This study largely examines middle income families as self-identified by each research participant family, each of whom faced unique familial and institutional struggles, as discussed in Chapters IV and V. In one study (Ong-Dean, 2006), it "helped if a child's parents had the economic and cultural resources that privileged parents have" (p. 93).

As social class shapes experience, this study sought inquiry into the unique nuances of the intersectionality of these families and students based on all of their identities that illuminates in-person and remote pandemic learning experiences. This study also sought how schools responded to their support needs during the pandemic, and the ways that students and families learned about their identities, as well as how schools may learn of best practices to support them within a DisCrit framework.

Educational Significance

As we move into different iterations of the stay-at-home order in conjunction with each district's varying response to how they roll out the next mandates and recommendations for their district's families, this specific demographic continues to suffer from the adverse effects of this global pandemic, which provides insight into how best to respond to families in and out of a global pandemic. In addition, given the novel nature of the pandemic, there is limited literature and very little specifically about students of color especially those diagnosed with learning disabilities during this crisis. Educators, educational leaders and activists are poorly positioned to advocate for support when little is known about their experiences. This study aims to record and learn from the lived experiences of students of color with learning disabilities and their families with the intent to advance changes to provide the needed support for each individual student and family. This study also aims to inform schools, educators and lawmakers with research that supports their true educational and social emotional needs. Given that Black, Latinx and Asian students are on average around fifteen times more likely than white students to live in a ‘remote-only’ school district (Brookings, 2020), these and other students of color are also more likely to be receiving less services at school and in the community experiences of these students schooling at home are shaped by race. In the absence of aggressive policy interventions, families of color are reporting a preference to keep their children learning-at-home due to racism, racial oppression and violence, in addition to the COVID-19 risk (NPR, 2021, 10:24) and the widening of existing educational inequities by race and ability. This study also aims to contribute to the growing popular discussions found in social media, media and community-based organizations that support DisCrit tenets. This study aims to also contribute to the gap in the literature about students of color labeled with learning disabilities learning in an at-home model. The impact on students of color long after they are back to in-person learning are yet to be fully uncovered due to the novel and ongoing nature of the pandemic. As mentioned in the bodies of literature below, there are general mainstream notions in popular media and scholarly research that all families of color are struggling due to the stay-at-home learning model. While this may be true for some families of color, it was also true that some families of color have been thriving in this schooling at home model that caregivers have been recognizing is a safer alternative that provides the culturally relevant teaching and learning that students of color may need. This study aims to uncover these stories and contribute to this long-term meta-analysis of research that is yet to develop.

Definition of Terms

Disability: To counter the emphasis on having a whole person be represented by what he /she/they cannot do, rather than what he/she/they can, and to disrupt notions of the fixity and permanency of the concept of disability, seeking rather to analyze the entire context in which a person functions (Annamma et al, p. 1).

Dis/ability (as opposed to disability): To call attention to ways in which the latter overwhelmingly signals a specific inability to perform culturally defined expected tasks such as learning or walking that come to define the individual as primarily and generally unable to navigate society. The slash in the word dis/ability disrupts misleading understandings of disability as it simultaneously conveys the social construction of both ability and disability. The term dis/ability is not an individual trait, but rather a product of cultural, political and economic practices (Davis, 1995). The use of disability refers to its official or traditional use within classification structures and organizations (Annamma et al, p. 7). This term is used to counter the emphasis on having a whole person be represented by what he or she cannot do, rather than what he or she can and to disrupt notions of the fixity and permanency of the concept of disability, seeking rather to analyze the entire context in which a person functions (Connor et al, p. 28). Thus, when 'dis/ability' is used in this research, it is explicitly being used to refer to disability as a social construction, disrupting traditional societal notions of disability.

Intersectionality: This widely used concept in contemporary scholarly inquiry, and has now gone viral, widely used at the forefront of national conversations about racial justice, addresses the question of how multiple forms of inequality and identity are interrelated across different contexts and over time, such race, gender, class, dis/ability, and other identity markers. Coined by U.S. critical race theorist Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995) as a way to help explain the oppression of African-American women.

Person-First Language: Language used to emphasize the individual over the disability such as ‘a student with a dis/ability” or a “student of color”. Interdisciplinary scholars and advocates use person-first language to refer to individuals with disabilities in daily discourse and to reduce bias in writing (Dunn & Andrews, 2015). This well-intentioned but harmful language perpetuates the notion that those labeled with disability have problems in their bodies and minds that need to be fixed. This also justifies the entire industries and caring professions that intervene on the bodies, minds and lives of disabled people often without their consent and the silencing of disabled peoples’ voices and histories.

Identity-first language*:* Disability Justice scholars and advocates challenge the rationale of using person-first language with identity-first language, i.e. disabled people, to emphasize dis/ability as a valued identity as well as to show how people are actively (dis)enabled by society’s commitment to physical and psychological barriers (Annamma et al, p. 6).

Multiply-marginalized students*:* This term refers to the stress, injustice, inequity, lack of access and sub-par life experience that those with more than one minority label experience. These include the intersection of people of color, low-income, gender non-binary, disability labels and other traditionally marginalized groups that are discounted and decentered.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): An IEP is a contract between the caregivers, school and students identifying the students’ specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate accommodations, programs as outlined in specific instructional and assessment strategies (US Department of Education, 2017). Authorized under IDEA, a federal law in the United States that ensures children with disabilities to have the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) alongside their peers without disabilities in the least restrictive environment (MacLeod et al, 2017). Caregiver involvement is authorized under this act yet caregivers often feel like outsiders during the process. To address some of these ideological disconnects, researchers have suggested teachers consider a Disability Studies (DS) framework as they collaborate with families on the IEP process (Ferguson and Ferguson, 2006; Lamar-Dukes, 2009; Sauer and Kasa, 2013). Within this lens, rather than dismissing much of what caregivers and families contribute, schools can build upon the work in a collaborative way, creating individualized goals that provide thoughtful accommodations and support for the student.

***Accommodations**:* Schools may offer students with disabilities certain supports or alterations in their classroom environment and/or curriculum that may allow students with disabilities to complete the same school work, these accommodations may be written into the student's IEP. Some examples of accommodations include speech to text, large print, extended time to complete tests, allow usage of tape recorder or calculator, preferential seating or test in a private room. Due to the nature of this service or structure, it must be requested for an identified need and therefore puts the burden on the disabled person to ask the gatekeeper. It is reactive and Disability Justice scholars advocate for access that is already embedded within the classroom and curriculum so that dis/abled students can truly move through their educational experience and life experience with a sense of belonging and acceptance for their whole self, and not just the self that society deems as whole, pure or good.

504 plan: This is a plan that is often heard and used to refer to accommodations for students with disabilities. It may or may not be used within IEP's. Students with disabilities who may not require specialized instruction or an IEP, but need assurance that they will receive equal access to public education and services, may be given a 504 plan (The University of Washington, 2021) to outline their specific accessibility requirements. It refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that guarantees certain rights to people with disabilities.

***Accessibility**:* This refers to a space that is always welcoming and is created for our society as a whole, not just for the able-bodied.

***Caregivers, families**:* These terms used within this research study may be used interchangeably, depending on the family structure of the particular research participant. The term *families* is used when referring to families in a general manner, or when the family structure is unknown. The term *caregivers* is used when describing all participant families who are the main caregivers of the child. This may include and not be limited to birth parent, adoptive parent, step parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent, family relative, family friend.

Families of color, students of color – The term 'family of color' represents the entire immediate family unit as a whole. All caregivers do not necessarily need to identify as a person of color. If the family identity is a family of color because there is one or more caregiver who is a person of color or there is one or more children who identify as a person of color whether as a multi-racial person or an adoptee. The term 'student of color' represents the identity of that student as being one that identifies as a person of color or multi-racial. Sometimes, the term ‘non-dominant family’ or ‘non-dominant student’ may be used interchangeably within this study.

Remote pandemic learning, homeschooling, learning-at-home, schooling at home, remote learning model: Traditionally, the term *homeschooling* is defined as any parent-led home-based education and whose enrollment at a traditional school does not exceed 25 hours per week and are not being homeschooled due to a temporary illness (NCES, 2016). The term *learning-at-home* has traditionally referred to any type of learning that caregivers provide to their children aside from their daytime school work, such as reading, extended learning lessons, educational media. This may include other areas of learning that may not be academically-centered, such as learning how to bake cupcakes, learning how to set up a social media app on your device or learning about family ancestry from a family member. During COVID-19, learning has taken on new approaches from caregivers and communities. Within this study, this term *learning-at-home* refers to all new learning approaches that caregivers have pivoted to and adopted as a response to the remote learning shift during COVID-19. The term *schooling at home* refers to the distance learning or remote learning models that have been implemented to replace in-person schooling within public, charter and private school systems and/or alternative school models. The term *remote learning model* specifically refers to schools who had the resources or wherewithal to design an alternate model or curriculum for online learning. Most schools struggled to create such a ‘model’ as they were not equipped or trained to create a teaching plan in a brand new format during a crisis. Therefore I refer to the learning-at-home period or distance learning time during the pandemic as *‘remote pandemic learning’*.

Theoretical Framework

This research is primarily examined within the theoretical framework of Disability Critical Race Theory or DisCrit to explore the school and learning experiences that students of color labeled with disabilities may be facing in distance learning models such as those during the COVID-19 crisis.

DisCrit

The theoretical foundations within a DisCrit framework can be seen in classrooms and schools in the form of CRP, Universal Design in Learning and in centering the voices and stories of students of color labeled with disabilities, as aforementioned. Within a theoretical framework, DisCrit is a dynamic framework simultaneously engaging Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). DisCrit is "rooted in the work that is forged by people of color and people with dis/abilities respectively, designed to counter hegemonic knowledge-claims about the meaning of race, class and disability in society" (Annamma et al, 2016). The foundation is the importance of following the path laid by scholars of color, those with disabilities, those with intersecting marginalized identities, and their allies who were teaching us to move past simplistic and unidimensional notions of identity" (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 1). Narratives of these individuals often misrepresent their bodies and neglect their situatedness at the intersections of race and disability along with other identities. Drawing from Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory, the work of Connor (2015) is situated with his work with disabled youth of color. In a similar way, Ferri's (2010) work is from a Feminist and Disability Studies perspective. Annamma (2015) connected the work Connor (2015) and Ferri (2010), along with many other scholars and coined the term DisCrit as a way to "recover the bodies of my students, and the detection of how their lives transformed the systems and cultures of which they were a part" (p.

3). This new theoretical framework was first examined by critical scholar W. E. Du Bois (1920) within the connections between the interdependent constructions of class, race and dis/ability in education and society, who first highlighted the intersections of ability with racial classification, discounting a more than century long belief that African American brains were considered smaller and therefore less intelligent than their white counterparts. Unfortunately, this racist and white supremacist legacy of distorted historical beliefs about class, race and ability have become intertwined in complex ways that carry into the present day (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 9), in the way schools function, the way students of color are mistreated and misdiagnosed, the way society is built upon injustice and inequity based on the intersections of one's identity.

DisCrit theorists (Gilborn et al, 2016) have an explicit focus on race and class, and how it intersects with dis/ability in the lives of families. Different scholars approach intersectionality from different places, with a focus on one set of identities in their analyses (Bhopal & Preston, 2012) whether it is race, class, dis/ability, gender, achievement. The focus of this particular research (Gilborn et al, 2015) arose from the need to speak to the silences and assumptions that Black middle-class caregivers experience in the United Kingdom, who are assumed to be working-class (Rollock, Vincent, Gillborn, & Vall, 2013). Examining Black families in higher professional roles as opposed to those in working-class communities can provide a more nuanced understanding of race/class intersections, given the intersectionality with social class. One key theme that emerged from these studies was the greater surveillance and control that these caregivers experienced with their sons, and the categorization within their schools and community (Gillborn et al, 2012). The questions that arose were not so much on over- or under-representation, but rather looking at the experiences of Black middle-class caregivers and their children as they encounter labels used against them (Annamma et al, 2016). These and other intersectional analyses on class bias will be further explored in this study within the parameters of the particular participant sample studied in this research. Drawing from DisCrit, when examining racism and other injustices that multiply-marginalized students of color experience, within and outside of the classroom and particularly during COVID-19, we can further conceptualize and understand the ways in which race, ability, class, gender intersect. With this understanding, we must continue to unpack our inherent biases, challenge public policy and structural/societal norms, and realign beliefs and approaches to change these deeply embedded practices and belief systems within the structure of our societies, organizations and schools.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

As stated in Part I, there is scant published and peer reviewed research that specifically explores the experiences of students of color and those with learning disabilities, and yet more limited research for students of color labeled with disabilities in remote learning. Therefore, in conducting a literature review with this focus, it is important to explore this topic beyond the scope of inquiry to understand it within its true context and implications. In addition to the literature that directly addresses the experiences of students of color with disability labels in schools, it is imperative to also explore the intersections of race, gender and class, and the implications in remote learning environments within social, institutional and historical contexts.

The literature review is organized into three sections that explore several interrelated bodies of literature that are imperative to note in order to understand the true implications within this scope. Given the novel nature of this research and the expected gap in COVID-19 research, emphasis is placed on current and popular discussions and narratives of families of color and those labeled with disabilities within this current scope. This literature review also frames classic research within the field of DisCrit to offer a historical foundation to fully capture the understanding within this current scope. This is in addition to the influences of recent and historical research in interdisciplinary scholarly fields of work.

The first section is divided into three sub-sections that examines popular discourse and narratives found within online communities and reflecting real communities during the pandemic. There are three sub-sections that explore the popular discourse within the intersectionality between race, disability and learning. The first sub-section focuses on the intersectional relationship between race and learning that has recently served as a social inflection point in media, in social media and all over our communities as a result of COVID-19-related shifts in learning and as a backdrop within the racial reckoning that has merged into our conversations, daily life, politics and schools. The second sub-theme explores the small but growing body of on-the-ground social movements within the disability rights world driven by dis/abled activists and advocates. The third sub-theme explores the even smaller body of Disability Rights activists like Lydia Brown understand "race has everything to do with ableism" (Brown, 2021). Brown further posits that ableism is a system of oppression that targets and marginalizes disabled people of color, more than White disabled people. Traditionally, White abled-bodied voices are deemed as voices of power and credibility while the voices of disabled people of color are discounted and silenced. This kind of epistemological violence that disabled people experience further perpetuates the marginalization and erasure they experience. Centering disabled voices of inquiry like Brown's, in popular discourse is imperative in the paradigm shifts and experiences of disabled students and families. The third sub-theme explores the intersection amongst all three identities and settings, and its role in popular discourse today.

The second section covers the body of literature that studies family/school partnerships for students of color and the research that examines schools' responses to family engagement for students of color labeled with disability. This section also explores traditional models of family involvement in schools that serve Eurocentric approaches and culture while discounting families of color's intergenerational culture and knowing. This section also explores the dearth of research that explores school experiences for families with children labeled with disabilities. This section concludes with the growing power of homeschooling and similar learning-at-home pivots during the pandemic that families have been opting for.

The final section of this literature review explores the history of traditional classroom instruction including standardized achievement testing and the implications of this widespread utilization in schools across North America. This historical exploration into the bodies of literature helps to contextualize the experiences of multiply marginalized families and how the impact of COVID-19 frames the shift to distance learning has further perpetuated these inequities into the current context. The first sub-section provides a historical framework for which the interdisciplinary work and research that Disability Studies was founded. The second sub-section explores the overrepresentation of multiply marginalized students within special education and/or those given disability labels in relation to their White middle-class and upper-class counterparts. The third sub-section frames the work of disability justice scholars whose research focuses on the counter-story and narratives told by disabled people and advocates, which informs the research methodology of this study.

Popular discussions and narratives of race, disability and learning during COVID-19

This body of research explores the narratives of families of color and whose children labeled with disabilities, particularly for Black, Latino and Asian families who are experiencing this new shift in their relationship to their school communities and their educational approaches within the framework of popular discourse. Given the novel nature of the experiences within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to center the narratives of families of color and their children labeled with disabilities within current media platforms such as online news media, podcasts, and social media. It is imperative to understand the educational contexts of students, particularly historically marginalized students with dis/ability labels and one way to do that is to listen and learn from their experiences (Tefera et al, 2019). This section is divided into three sub-categories that first looks at the intersection of race within a broader context prior to COVID-19 and during the pandemic within an educational context. The second sub-theme focuses on the experiences and stories of those labeled with disabilities within an educational context during the pandemic. The final sub-theme focuses on the intersections of disability and race within an educational context.

Race and learning

Amidst the challenges within the pandemic is a national racial reckoning with police brutality and lynching against Blacks, African Americans and Asian Americans. Most recently, there have been a wave of reported cases of anti-Asian hate crimes and violence. In the context of schools and distance learning, there has been a growing space for online discussions, media coverage and community-led activism. Last month, after the horrific targeted mass murder of 8 victims at Asian massage parlors in the Atlanta, Georgia area, Tsong Tong Vang was walking his 5 year old grandson to the school bus in St. Paul, Minnesota when a woman pulled up in a car and started yelling anti-Asian abuse and threats at him (NPR Instagram, 2021). Tsong Tong Vang was not interviewed to hear his experience, rather the article continued to share statistics that are important to note, such as "as of February 2021, almost 7 out of 10 Asian American K-12 students were still learning online only, which is 45 points higher than White students" (NCES, 2021). In a separate NPR news story, the reporter interviewed a number of Asian and Asian American families. Russell Jeung, a parent and co-founder of the organization #Stopaapihate, says "Asian Americans are so hesitant to send their kids to school" given the rise in anti-Asian violence (NPR, 2021, 0:21). It was reported that some of this may be attributed to the large number of the nation's Asian students living in California where most public, charter and private schools remained closed in February but this gap is also evident in the Northeast, the Midwest and a number of Southern states across the United States, which suggest that Asian families are choosing to stay remote even when there are in-person options (NPR, April 9, 2021). There are a number of social media forums on Facebook that have several million members and are hosting online discussions on the topic which typically get heated and are fraught with opinionated racialized comments. In NPR's podcast Codeswitch, it was reported that Asian Americans are on high alert now and that even though racist attacks "on Asians are normal, we are in the age of Trump and the pandemic, making the problem more visible", as shared by an Asian American interviewed (NPR Codeswitch, 2021, 10:01). A 27-year-old woman who identifies as Chinese American said that she hadn't been taught Asian American history in school growing up in America, and only learned in college because she was interested in learning it. She continues to say that "if you aren't interested, you're never going to learn it" (NPR, Codeswitch, 2021, 10:25), alluding to the erasure, racism, devaluing of non-White culture and centering of White culture. In another podcast called 'Things I didn't learn in school' by Paul Podolsky, an investment strategist, author and foster parent, hosts an episode on the conversation of race in schools within the backdrop of COVID-19, his guest Greg Taylor, an educator, parent advocate and old friend of Paul's shares his experiences growing up Black in Washington, D.C. He recalls having conversations with his family growing up that were required conversations if you are Black in America. His family would tell him "if you have an encounter with the police, not if, when, this is the conversation we would have as a family. I remember my grandfather, father, older siblings say hey, this is how you have to act when you get stopped. You're not human anymore. You just have to be polite even if you are being disrespected at the time. You say yes sir, no sir" (NPR, 2021, 13:02). He refers to living with racialization within this era of the pandemic:

> We are a target of different isms, but we go about our lives, we go to school, we fall in love, we have families, but there are incidents in life and you are reminded that this country doesn't want you here and that your mere existence is an issue for other people, so I've had a hard time in the last 6 months or so in rapid succession, there has been some sort of racial incident that has happened over and over again, psychologically it wears down on you, if I sit still and think about what's going on, it drives you crazy but I think all of us are just really good at compartmentalizing, just going on about our daily business until these natural events slap you back and say ok, this is really serious right now (NPR, 2021, 13:54).

As Black, Latino and Asian American are feeling the strain in society, their families are afraid to send their children to school given the COVID-19 risk and racial inequities in school (Ozy.com, August 8, 2020) even if they have a choice to do so. OiYan Poon, a mother and expert of racial politics in education at the University of Illinois recalls "plenty of people, including myself, who experienced this kind of racialized bullying in schools as children," she said. "And as a parent to a young child in public school systems, I'm not comfortable, personally, now with sending my child in to school for that reason" (NPR, 2021, 3:34). Amidst this country's racial reckoning, there is a growing body of reporting narratives in media of Asian and Asian American voices. It is imperative that these stories are valued as well as critically reflect on whose stories are excluded (Connor et al, 2015). Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge the ongoing 'single stories' of people of color whose stories seem to center on their racialized struggles amidst the pandemic, which perpetuates the stereotypes associated with their unique identities.

Disability and learning

Within the framework of learning and education, there are a number of podcasts and online news media sources stating that families and their children labeled with disabilities are struggling to learn remotely during COVID-19 (NPR Morning Edition, 2020, :34), and that part of the problem is that many therapy providers say they got little direction from school district leaders about how to deliver their services remotely. "Elsewhere, a handful of lawsuits have already been filed by parents and advocates, arguing that schools broke federal disability law by providing insufficient services in the spring" (NPR Morning Edition, 2020, 3:48). For seven million public (charter and some private) school K-12 students who receive IEP's, accommodations and other services (NCES, 2020), the shift to remote learning has meant a loss of services and critical face-to-face learning that cannot be replicated (WNYC Studios, April 2020). Despite the mandates set forth by FAPE and IDE, the US Department of Education told schools that if they are completely closed, they are not required to offer services, as an interim guidance plan in response to COVID-19 (2020) that was implemented with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are now new timelines for assessments and services that have been waived (US Department of Education, 2020). As of May 2020, 46 states had temporarily closed its schools due to COVID-19 (Education Week, September 2020). The Los Angeles Times spoke with Victoria Creswell, mother of 16 year old Tyler who says "I think the district should pay me for doing the teachers' job because online learning does not work for students with special needs" (LA Times, August 2020). Mateo's father Ruvalcaba said that his speech therapy was reduced to one time per week for 15 minutes from three times per week for half an hour (LA Times, August 2020). Ruvalcaba says Mateo's progress had stalled during the limited support he has been receiving during COVID-19. The expansive online news media outlets report on the challenges that families and their children with disability have been experiencing during COVID-19 included the voices of many special education experts, with very little narratives from families themselves. This kind of devaluing of voices and experiences is a direct result of the neoliberal ideology that places high value on ableism and independence. There is little narrative from students labeled with disabilities and their families about their whole school experiences or remote learning experiences. Alena Morales is a queer disabled advocate of color and a student at UC Berkeley, who says that being disabled on campus is not just about receiving services. "We also want to be able to have events that foster those conversations so students can feel more comfortable and encouraged to vocalize their access needs in the classroom space and then get resources that maybe go beyond what is super visible at DSP, so we're visible, more visible than what's on campus, right?" (Disability Visibility Project, Episode 98, 27:34).

Amidst the dearth of research in both popular media and scholarly literature, there is a small but growing body of documented narratives and discussion on the remote experiences of those labeled with disability on many of the aforementioned social and media platforms. I discovered two projects that were launched during and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by disabled people. One online project is called 'COVID disability archive' which was created by Daisy, a 27 year old disability researcher and activist who lives in Bristol, United Kingdom. Daisy launched the COVID disability archive for these reasons listed on her website:

> For art, documents, pictures, videos, emails, text messages, everything from the disabled, sick and chronically ill population from this pandemic. We have often been overlooked, and I hope that this archive will give future historians a glimpse of what we went through during this time, despite many of us feeling like we're being seen as reasonable collateral damage (daisythechronicinvalid, 2020).

The other online project focuses on the intersectionality that race and disability plays in their accessibility experiences during COVID-19 and is explained in more detail in the sub-section below on race, disability and learning. It is these kinds of on-the-ground platforms that are helping to shift the voice of power and privilege, decenter White ableism and amplify the voices and narratives of disabled people and those labeled with disability. Broadening awareness within the field of educational research about *whose* stories are being heard (and whose are not) and how these stories are embedded in a system of power that treats dominant structures and practices as normative can help make race and racialized [and other minoritized] experiences explicit in educational contexts (Nasir & Hand, 2006, p. 455). Within my study, the hope is to illuminate the experiences of students of color labeled with disabilities and their families through narratives and lived experiences of these students during their COVID-19 experience. My hope is that my research may inform policymakers and educational leaders with the redesign and access for all students with disabilities to technology, curriculum and framework. My hope is also to counter these traditionally oppressive images and stories of people of color and those labeled with disabilities as stories of struggle, challenge and negativity. There are so many other stories that capture the richness of their cultures, the uniqueness of their families and communities, and the power of their intergenerational knowledge, as will be discussed in Chapters IV and V.

Race, dis/ability and learning

Race and dis/ability cannot be separated. “Race has everything to do with ableism”, says Lydia X.Z. Brown, attorney and disability rights activist (Learn Play Thrive, 2021, 3:21). Yet, as a society and in schools, we hear so little discussion with both race and disability in the same conversation despite the intersectional relationship and implications within our society. Brown explains:

> “in the world that we live in and in particular in the US, it is impossible to exist in the world without your existence being marked by race and by processes of racialization. The entire US was built on a bedrock of theft and hoarding of resources from Natives, Black, Latinx, Asian, and continues in the legacy of white

> supremacy and affects POC lives now. Unfortunately, the way white supremacy works, it simultaneously devalues, harms, excludes and attempts to destroy the lives and existence of racialized people" (Learn Play Thrive, 2021, 14:21).

Brown continues to share that 'when we talk about disability, ableness is coated with whiteness and when White people are disabled, their whiteness is seen as most deserving of respect and of services over people of color (10:56). Within the pandemic, disabled people of color are the most impacted whether in schools or in remote learning.

Mia Mingus, an educator, writer and disability justice activist, says "we live in a society of relentless violence and intense amounts of oppression and violence, how can we not talk about disability and race? (Youtube.com, Equitable Education, 2013, 3:51). Mingus explains the workings of interdependence and what it would mean to move from a place of independence, a neoliberal ideology that is founded on ableism. She speaks about a shift in paradigmatic notions within DisCrit that is the start of shifts in the way we perceive and respond to the constructs of disability and race.

It is through the ongoing narratives and actions of disability rights activists that paradigm shifts and responses can change. One community-based disability rights project called Seattle Accessibility Consortium (SCAC), founded by Elizabeth Ralston, "seeks to amplify voices of people with disabilities, including Black, Indigenous and other people of color. SCAC's mission is to connect arts organizations with information and resources to improve accessibility for people of all abilities (awesomefoundation, 2020). The SCAC website continues to explain,

> As the Black Lives Matter movement gains traction, people with disabilities are being overlooked in this push for racial justice. Disabled Black people and other

> disabled people of color are even more disproportionately impacted by poverty, racism, and are at greater risk of COVID-19 infections than their non-disabled counterparts. Many Black people with disabilities are unable to participate in the protests because of the severity of their disability, increased risk to personal safety and being immunocompromised. Their voices are not amplified and heard around the nation–they continue to be marginalized and forgotten (SCAC, 2020).

The SCAC is working on a pilot project of 4 podcasts that would include interviews with Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) about their accessibility experiences and their thoughts and feelings about this unique time period we are living in now. Like SCAC, The Disability & Intersectionality Summit (DIS) features all disabled organizers and presenters in a biennial one-day conference that centers the experiences and knowledge of multiply marginalized disabled people such as queer, disabled people of color, undocumented transgender disabled people or formerly incarcerated disabled people and others (disabilityintersectionalitysummit.com, 2020). The website further explains,

> The conference serves as a platform to highlight the multiple oppressions that shape the lived experiences of disabled individuals, as told by disabled people, in a setting organized by disabled activities. DIS aims to create dialogue on how our society must address systemic oppressions using an intersectional approach.

When the voices and experiences of Black, Latinx and Asian students with dis/ability labels are centered, it "affords those who do not hold power in society to achieve more equality, more inclusion, and ultimately more of the dignity they deserve" (Baglieri, Valle, Connor & Gallagher, 2011, [p. 273).

School/family partnerships and engagement for students of color and those labeled with disability

This section of the literature review situates the present study within the existing body of research that focuses on family and school partnerships and these experiences for families of color. The first part of this section presents scholarly literature that focuses on the perpetuation of the negative school experiences that families of color have with their school communities. The second part of this section outlines the bodies of literature whose focus is primarily on the IEP partnership for those who have been labeled with disabilities and the disregard for their whole school experience. The third section presents a scholarly debut within the context of examining homeschooling experiences and narratives during COVID-19 for students of color labeled with disabilities. This subsection also explores the paradigm shifts for these families during this time.

School partnerships for families of color pre-COVID-19

Families of color and caregivers place exceedingly high value on their child's education (Audet, 2008; Delgado Gaitan, 1991; Kanouté, Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011; Valdés, 1996). Additionally, it is widely known that family involvement is fundamental in students' positive school experiences and success (Auerbach, 2009; Gibson & Haight, 2013; Noguera, 2001). Yet for multiply marginalized students, this family/school partnership is one that is rare, misunderstood and hardly supported by the school, administrators or the school community as a whole. Additionally, language and cultural differences between the family and school influence familial engagement as families experience culture shock and lack of opportunities to learn and understand school culture and expectations that are often times very different from their motherland school culture (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007; Klein, 2008; Li, 2006; Wang, 2008). The result is that caregivers are perceived by schools as disengaged, uninterested, uncaring and angry (Beauregard et al, 2014; Cooper, 2009) leading to a negative impact on their child's academic standing, relationships with teachers and peers, and overall school experience. For many caregivers of color, there are similar experiences due to ineffective home-school communication, language differences and a lack of shared meaning regarding familial involvement between families and teachers (Marion, 2017). Studies also show that socioeconomic status (SES) also play a role in family-school partnerships. Families of lower SES tend to provide indirect, behind-the scenes support for education (Baker & Stevenson, 1986; Gandara, 1995; Lareau, 1989, 2003; McDonough, 1997; Mehan et al., 1996; Useem, 1991), whereas families of higher SES play a proactive role in managing and intervening in their children's K-12 careers. Moreover, middle and upper-class families have more resources to support their children and exert their influence over their school's decisions about their children's academic choices, whereas poor and working-class families have far less power and are uncertain about school choices (Olivos, 2003; Wells & Serna, 1996; Yonezawa, 1997). In addition, it is White, highly educated, upper-income parents whose assumptions and claims on their own children's disability labels may be favored (Ong-Dean, 2005). It is these and other unique and distinct intersectional identities that are studied in this research with families of color a and non-dominant families.

Traditionally, schools expect families to participate in their child's education by communicating with their schools and assisting them with their school work and responsibilities at home. These norms are based on a Eurocentric model within a neoliberal school reform policy that also includes behavioral practices of White middle-class caregivers, who generally lead most of the programs organized by the school and establish the standard for successful family involvement (Lewis & Forman, 2002). The perpetuation of the myth that caregivers of color are disengaged is maintained within a deficit model that supports White privilege and biases towards families of color, leading to the assumption that caregivers of color are ill-equipped or inconsiderate to make meaningful contributions to their child's education (Cooper, 2009). Racial and cultural bias have an impact on families of color from all socioeconomic classes, which affects family involvement with schools (McAdoo, 2006). Teachers may not have the cultural competencies to understand or include families of color in ways that are related to their own cultural backgrounds and traditions. Teachers also may stereotype students and families based on these biases therefore having lower expectations for students of color, leading to more incidences of suspensions and disciplinary action against perceived behavioral issues. Thus, families of color are devalued and perceived as lacking skills (Allvidrez & Weinstein, 1999) which leads families of color to experience isolation (Cooper, 2009). Furthermore, much of the scholarly literature fails to problematize the roles of race and class in parenting practices with schools, and when race and class are considered, rarely are upper-class families used as units of analysis (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). When families do participate in school sanctioned activities, they are often positioned as receivers of information (Lightfoot, 2004). Lareau and Horvat (1999) found that when minority caregivers voiced concerns about the education of their children, their claims were discounted. These findings echo Olsen's (1994) who found that "involvement was restricted to a prescriptive kind in which schools determine the roles caregivers are to assume. When caregivers went from passive receivers of knowledge to advocates for their children, their involvement was no longer welcomed" (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). There are clear and distinct differences between the involvement patterns of White middle-class caregivers and African American middle-class caregivers and the complexities of those differences have been well documented in scholarly literature (Conley, 1999; Patillo-McCoy, 1999; Wilson, 1987; 1996). African American families tended to demonstrate involvement through home and school-based involvement and intervened more in their children's school, which Yan (1999) terms as "frontstage/ activist involvement," conversely the Chinese American families were less likely to be active in schools, but manifested their involvement through home-based activities which Diamond et. Al define as "back stage/behind the scene" involvement. They conclude that non-dominant cultural capital can be as equally useful as family involvement as those used in dominant families and communities.

Schools traditionally follow the Epstein model of parental involvement (1999, 2001) which is composed of six dimensions that cover parenting practices with their child's school. The following includes caregivers, guardians and caregivers distinct to each family structure. The dimensions include: (1) family obligations and support of their child ("Parenting"), (2) home–school communication ("Communicating"), (3) family involvement in school life ("Volunteering"), (4) parental involvement in the child's schoolwork at home ("Learning at Home"), (5) parental participation in the decision-making process and in the management and defense of the child's interests ("Decision Making"), and (6) partnership with the school, businesses, and other local organizations. Caregivers of color feel culture shock, and a sense of powerlessness with having to give up some of their own cultures and values in order to avoid conflicts with their children growing up within this framework (Beauregard et al, 2014). Another model that is commonly used is the Hoover-Dempsey (2005) and Sandler (1995, 1997) which focuses on caregivers' underlying involvement that is defined particularly by caregivers' feelings and perceptions of competency and effectiveness, as well as opportunities created by the school to foster caregiver involvement (Auerbach, 2007). Their four-part model theorizes that caregiver role construction is the key predictor in whether caregivers become actively engaged in their children's education (Auerbach, 2007) while understating or discounting the role of race, class, culture of marginalized families.

The problem of this myth within schools may be further perpetuated by the models that are being used to identify caregiver engagement in schools. Alternatively, Delgado-Gaitan (1994b) offers an empowerment model of family-school relations in which power is shared, influence is two-way between home and school, and parties are mutually accommodating. Another alternative model is by Lopez, Scribner and Mahitivanichcha (2001), who suggest that marginalized families need more home involvement by educators that addresses basic family needs and builds trusting relationships rather than more school involvement by caregivers. Caregiver roles in education are fundamentally socially structured by class and race, culturally mediated by particular cultural schemas and scripts, and psychosocially enacted according to individual psychosocial resources and relationships within families (Auerbach, 2007). Thus, caregiver role construction must be explored with all of these components, as social capital – the sum of all resources accrued, including economic resources, that are gained through a network of social relationships – is essential to the makeup of a families' social mobility (Bourdieu, 1973). This social capital tends to disadvantage caregivers who are low SES, minority students and their families. In addition, caregivers' home cultures may be at odds with dominant culture norms, leading to misunderstandings and tensions in family-school relations (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994b). Furthermore, even though the school teachers encouraged parental participation especially in reinforcing and monitoring the learning efforts of their children, participation by upper-middle-class caregivers was found to be higher both in terms of quality and quantity, whereas the working-class caregivers showed signs of discomfort in interacting with the same teachers. The working-class caregivers were also unfamiliar with the school's curriculum and the specific educational problems of their children (Sil, 2007), based on cultural differences and misunderstandings. Caregivers of color and schools are often separated by cultural divides as well as by legacies of racism, deficit thinking, and mutual distrust (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994b; Fine, 1993; Fordham, 1996). African American and Latino caregivers are more likely than those of the dominant culture to have a skeptical, ambivalent, and potentially adversarial stance toward school programs that have historically failed their communities (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Olivos, 2003; Tillman, 2004). If the norm for students of color is underachievement in K-12 schools and underrepresentation in 4-year colleges, then caregivers of color with high educational aspirations for their children may need to take deliberate steps to ensure access and counter the tendencies of schools to reproduce inequality (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Auerbach, 2001; Delgado et al, 1989). Because teachers place a high premium on school-based involvement and lower SES African American and Latino caregivers are less likely to come to the school than middle-class White caregivers (Gandara, 1995; Moles, 1993).

There are an expansive number of studies that explore the relationship of social capital within families of color for the purposes of college planning and preparation, increasing grade point average (GPA), and an increase of other related positive academic behaviors (Farmer-Hinton, 2008; Rollins & Romero-Hernandez, 2018; Laosa, 2005). Partnership models fail to acknowledge the ways in which caregiver roles in education, and the home-school relations in which they are embedded, are a reflection of broader social inequalities that affect students.

Little research studies the ways in which schools can truly partner with caregivers of color beyond the traditional types of caregiver involvement. By "highlighting the voices and beliefs of caregivers themselves", "by considering status variables, structural factors and caregivers' lived experience along with process variables and individual psychosocial resources" (Auerbach, 2007, p. 244), and recognizing that the goal of caregiver involvement is not only raising student achievement, partnerships can enrich and expand educational opportunity and equity for all students (Auerbach, 2007, p. 245). There is still so much to be learned about how to improve caregiver/school partnerships and caregiver involvement in schools.

In one rare study that considers cultural differences and support for families of color was conducted in Northeast United States with middle-class caregivers of color whose children attend a small urban school district within the context of building and sustaining dialogues resulted in findings that schools lack cultural competency, continue to stereotype and further racial disproportionality in school discipline (Yull et al, 2014). The study was guided by a community based participatory action research program (Swantz, 2008) with three goals – to (a) increase engagement among caregivers of color and school personnel, (b) inform the school district's initiatives to increase cultural responsiveness, and (c) foster the positive racial identity development of students of color (Yull, 2014, p. 11). Another study (Cooper, 2009) found that addressing caregiver concern improved cultural competency overall. When the school district provided several educational presentations and resources to school staff to increase their understanding of culturally responsive practices, challenge stereotypes, and help them apply strategies that counter deficit-model thinking, caregiver involvement increased, while feeling a greater sense of recognition and value as part of the school community. In another study that was conducted in a Title 1 elementary school looking to create ways to empower low-income children and families of color approached the school-family partnership through encouraging positive relationships, strengthening social support networks and empowering children with a sense of purpose (Bryan & Henry, 2018).

Within these studies, there were a number of recommendations for support. Understanding the underlying meaning of caregivers' practices will allow leaders to develop conditions that promote the development of effective partnerships between families and the school (Beauregard et al, 2014). In addition, schools who make a demonstrated effort to work together to create more cultural awareness, in training and in practice, do so through workshops on family-school relationship building. This should not be reserved just for homework and attending formal meetings. Increasing funds of knowledge, positive attitudes and perceptions towards students and families of color increase (Murray, 2009, p. 399). Training also involves adding specific activities to promote closeness and trust in relationships such as meeting with students individually on a weekly basis, calling students at home monthly to discuss progress and providing students with increased positive feedback within classrooms. Findings from a particular study conducted on urban low-income Latino households showed an increase in grade-point averages (Murray, 2009). One study explored the application of mentoring programs for building connections between school and families for marginalized students, with the greatest resource for improvement is feedback from the students, mentors and families who are directly involved with the program (Dappen & Isernhagen, 2005). One study that focused on supporting the Latino community showed the emphasis of community based organizations, such as national church-affiliated organization, historic college fraternities or sororities, national service organizations, which are the "life-blood of Latino communities whose members value family loyalty and share a sense of community" (Osterling & Garza, 2004, p. 271).

Families of color with children labeled with disabilities pre-COVID-19

For families with children with disabilities, familial participation and advocacy is key to ensure their children receive the supports and services they need. This is more difficult for families of color (Burke et al, 2018; Cavendish & Conner, 2018). Yet, families who are from lower SES and/or families of color have a different family/school partnership than their White and higher SES counterparts. This distinction leads schools to perceive their lack of response or different response as one that is related to a lack of care, but rather it is due to cultural barriers, schools' lack in cultural competency, and their cultural and racial biases leading to microaggressions towards families of color (Colker, 2015; Fenton et al, 2017). Educators may further these aggressions by imposing their own goals that suit their own cultural norms, rather than valuing and respecting families' input (Fenton et al, 2017). These patterns that occur in schools are also being reflected in the literature. Studies in scholarly research often have a focus on academic standing among students of color with disabilities and the focus is on how to best support their children through the IEP process (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013; Olivos et al, 2010) or providing supports towards their college or career path (Connally & Kimmel, 2020), with very little on how to promote their sense of belonging or school fulfillment.

However, one study conducted by Cadleux, Crooks and King (2019) acknowledges this gap and focuses their study on strengthening the family-school partnership through providing a program – Caregivers in Partnership with Educators Program (PIPE) – in order to give caregivers unconditional support and guidance and new skills to help them communicate their perspective in a meaningful way (Cadleux et al, 2019). The intervention within this study involves four steps over a short period of time: (a) an information gathering session focusing on identifying the core problems, conflicts, and barriers between family and school personnel; (b) a skills-based session to review a structured binder compiled by the program representative with all of the materials related to the child's education and care, and to practice communication skills; (c) a school-based meeting where the PIPE representative attends with the caregiver; and (d) a follow-up session with the representative to discuss next steps. The findings in their study found caregivers reporting feeling empowered, informed and prepared to advocate for their child. Caregivers felt like "they had someone on their team", gave them peace of mind, and felt empowered in making the right and informed educational choices for their child. Another study with Yull et al examined parent experiences for families of color but did not include those with children labeled with disabilities. The findings in this study included a lack of cultural enrichment for families, isolation in the community and cultural ignorance. The scholars in this study focused on using a community-based participatory action research model to help families of color build community within their schools. Other studies that acknowledge the gap in the literature that examines this particular population – families of color with a child labeled with disabilities – recommends facilitating advocacy by training volunteers to provide skills to families to advocate for their own children (Burke et al, 2018; Trainor, 2010), to support families through schools by facilitating family support and communication such as providing interpreters and offering meetings, dialogues and encouraging social events (Bold, 2019), or by providing supports for cultural competence within teachers and school administrators. Cultural competence can bridge home-school culture gap and create culturally responsive and affirming classrooms that support students' learning and identity development (Allen & Steed, 2016). However, the difficulty of bridging this gap lies within the lack of policy in place to support these families. The inequities these families face and the lack of resources they are offered by the state and federal level must change. Therefore, until policy, legislation and practice moves from its present perspective of viewing disability as the failure of the individual to that of a perspective embracing equality of value for all, relationships between caregivers and professionals will be fraught with difficulties (Murray, 2000).

The gap in the literature is evidence of the little work that is being done in schools to promote true partnerships between schools and families of color and those labeled with disabilities. Despite school administrators and educators expressing the need to engage with families of color, these families feel further marginalized by the uninformed efforts or ununiformed lack of efforts being made. Families then feel further isolated and discriminated against within a school community that fails to deliver the need for authentic and culturally relevant partnerships, thus perpetuating the disproportionally negative educational outcomes for students of color. Rather than blaming caregivers and seeing deficits in their social capital, policymakers need to make policies that strengthen the social networks of these underprivileged caregivers and make them equal partners in their children's success in education (Sil, 2007).

One avenue that can begin to strengthen these partnerships and encourage more cultural and social understanding of caregivers and children of color is through encouraging storytelling. Storytelling has a long and rich history in communities of color that has utilized oral means of conveying stories and struggles that are often overlooked by those in position of power, and it draws explicitly on experiential knowledge (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). It is in this way that we can begin to unpack the misalignment between school perceptions of caregivers of color and caregivers' experiences within schools. The voices of caregivers should act as an informative tool with which to guide the schools, their perspectives and their actions around inviting caregivers of color to participate in authentic, mutually democratic relationships with shared decision-making power (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). As Ladson-Billings (2009) writes, “when schools and teachers develop an understanding of their students, their families, and their cultures, they can be willing and able to see situations from varying perspectives other than their own” (p. 136). In this approach, they are better able to avoid making untrue assumptions, which can start with encouraging storytelling.

With the little conclusive research on enhancing school engagement and experiences for families of color, along with the little research on families of color with disability and their overall fulfillment within schools, juxtaposed with the extensive research that studies the caregiver and school partnership specifically with IEPs, accommodations and 504 plans, it is evident that there is so much more work that must be done to explore and uncover family experiences in schools. In addition, there is no research within a DisCrit framework that explores overall school experience and fulfillment for those labeled with disability or during a remote learning experience. This study hopes to illuminate the lived experiences for families and students of color labeled with disabilities and through their own narratives within a scholarly platform to propel student and family success and sense of belonging.

Homeschooling and learning-at-home during COVID-19

Since the inception of the stay-at-home order in March 2020, there had been an increase in the number of families who were homeschooling their children. Since the start of 2021, there was an estimated 4 to 5 million homeschooled students in K-12 in the United States, which was an increase from 2019 with 2.5 million families (National Home Education Research Institute, 2021). Homeschooling is defined as any parent-led home-based education and whose enrollment at a traditional school does not exceed 25 hours per week and are not being homeschooled due to a temporary illness (NCES, 2016). With the cancelling of schools across the nation during COVID-19, it had become an unsuspecting catalyst for homeschooling for families who were choosing this route and families who had no choice. While many families who could afford to have one parent at home teaching their children or pay a full-time salary for a private tutor or teacher who was out of work, this new situation had become something that higher income families were opting for their own children. However, for families who could not afford to stay at home, many of these children were suffering from the negative effects from the pandemic. There are very distinct reasons that families of color were homeschooling versus white families who were homeschooling. White upper-class families were choosing to homeschool based on the lack of individualized attention and freedom in their children's schools (The Conversation, 2020), while the distance learning order had forced families of color into a homeschooling situation. One nationwide study revealed that 41% of homeschooled students are Black, Latinx and other students of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). With the increase of students of color who were being homeschooled, there was also an increase in varying reports of their experiences. While there were national media channels that reported the increase in abuse, neglect, academic loss, widening intersectional disparities (LA Times, 2020; Time, 2020; CNBC, 2021) for multiply marginalized students, there were also reports of families of color who had been benefiting from homeschooling. Black families and other families of color were benefiting from families' curriculum choices – reading books with Black protagonists, learning about Black history and less experiences of biased behavioral intervention (Better Conversation, 2020). Like Better Conversation, Chicago Unheard is a parent-led online educational community that offers other families of color tips and support towards an alternative approach to schools for their children who have historically experienced racial and disability bias in schools, along with a lack of cultural representation in their curriculum and literature. This growing trend has been a paradigm shift for many families of color as an opportunity to shift their approach to offer better school experiences for their children (The Undefeated, 2020). The Undefeated also reported that "70% of Black households said they want to keep their children online compared to 32% of White parents, as they struggle with the fact that schools won't have their best interests at heart in terms of keeping their children safe" (2020). This online forged unity for families of color supporting other families of color was still a novel concept as families were faced with the possibility of their children returning to school in the near future. There were also families who shared their decisions to choose homeschooling for their child labeled with disabilities. One parent who wrote for 'Montana Voices Amplified' wrote an article called 'A Parent's Perspective: How I am successfully homeschooling my child' (University of Montana, 2021). This parent acknowledged the anxiety that parents may have felt when faced with the decision to homeschool. This parent's child was diagnosed with autism at the age of 4 and offered several tips on how to start homeschooling, including following your instincts, or being guided by your child's interests and socialization. Prior to the onset of the pandemic-related remote learning, the US. Department of Education listed 17% of homeschooled families as choosing to homeschool due to a "dissatisfaction with academic instruction at their school" and the most common response being "a concern about the school environment" (NCES, 2019). The updated data after the effects of the pandemic has not yet been published. There is also growing online support from educational organizations such as Khan Academy, Core Knowledge Foundation, which have created complete online curriculums that is free of cost. Other organizations such as museums, zoos, Brainpop, and Commonlit offer interest-based lessons. Other resources such as Youtube and Facebook groups made socialization and support easier to access for families. Families were also choosing other homeschooling designs such as home-based pods, microschools and tutors. A Facebook group called *Pandemic Pods and Microschools* was created by Lian Chang who wanted a safe space for her child to socialize during the pandemic. It marketed itself as a way for families to "work together to navigate childcare and education during the pandemic" and has almost 40,000 members.

While pandemic-induced alternative education had been on the minds of an increasing number of families of color, there were diverse experiences as we continued to navigate the complexities that were unique to each family, this research documented and analyzed the experiences of the select group of families who participated in this study.

School experiences of students labeled with learning disability and the intersection of race and class

This section of the literature review situates the present study within the existing body of research spanning decades of research within the field of Disability Studies. The first part of this section frames the history of scholarly literature and advocacy from its early beginnings. The second part of this section outlines the bodies of literature that focuses on the experiences of students with learning disabilities. The third section presents a debut within the context of examining lived experiences and narratives of students of color labeled with disabilities in schools, examining the intersectionality of multiply marginalized identities.

History of Disability Studies in Education

Disability Studies traces its real beginnings to 1982 with the founding of The Society of Disability Studies, the oldest academic organization explicitly dedicated to this area. But in the early 1960s, there were isolated examples of individual researchers that helped to construct the foundations of Disability Studies in Education, which then birthed the emergence of the disability rights movement. During these early years, sociologists and anthropologists such as Erving Goffman (1961, 1963) and Robert Edgerton (1967) applied the social construct of stigma to explore the phenomenological and cultural experience of disability. Born of the protests and growing self-advocacy of activists and disability advocates in the 1970s (Shapiro, 1993), disability studies reflected the efforts of scholars with disabilities and non-disabled colleagues to conceptualize and interpret experiences of those with disabilities and their families. In the early 1980s, medical sociologist Irving Zola began to publish and illustrate the concept of disability within a social context, placing his own experiences of physical disability within a social context (Zola, 1982, 1982b). Zola then published a newsletter that was to become the Disability Studies Quarterly, the oldest academic journal devoted to the interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies and still exists today. In 1982, 4 young sociologists – Darryl Evans, Gary Kiger, Stephen Hey, John Seidel – collaborated with Zola to both gain visibility and credibility for the new organization, and soon founded the Society for Disability Studies, holding regular conferences. What had been the sporadic and often unconnected work of isolated researchers and theorists began to coalesce around a set of core ideas and shared experiences (71) by the end of the decade. Out of this diverse scholarship came the new, interdisciplinary field of study, ‘Disability Studies in Education’, which became used to denote a newly critical stance towards traditional assumptions of the more familiar term ‘Special Education’ (Connor et al, 2008). The Society for

Disability Studies, a scholarly organization dedicated to DSE, defines Disability Studies as one that:

> recognizes that disability is a key aspect of human experience, and that disability has important political, social, and economic implications for society as a whole, including both disabled and non-disabled people. Through research, artistic production, teaching and activism, disability studies seeks to augment understanding of disability in all cultures and historical periods, to promote greater awareness of the experiences of disabled people, and to advocate for social change (Society for Disability Studies, 2016).

Disability Studies is not a synonym of special education, nor can it be interchangeable with special education, due to the underlying and core characteristic of what special education is derived. Special education situates disability within the individual, defining terms of skills mastery and deficit, while negating the social constructivist lens that disability is a social, historical and cultural construct whose meaning is dependent on human interaction (Dudley-Marling, 2004). 'One cannot be learning disabled on one's own' yet the powerful ideology of individualism in our society exists in the meaning making that is prevalent within society (p. 78). Disability scholars and researchers Reid and Valle reconceptualize learning disability research within a Disability Studies framework by arguing that education is a sociopolitical enterprise, segregated schooling is not equal, learning disabilities are not objective fact but are historically and culturally determined, disability is both a personal and social attribute, and learning disabilities are not immutable (p. 471). They draw three conclusions relevant to their collective work as researchers and educators. First, learning disabilities are not objective fact; they are historically and culturally determined. Second, disability is both a personal and a societal attribute. Finally, learning disabilities are not and have never been immutable. They contend that they are ethically bound to transform educational practices to both welcome and accommodate everybody's children (p. 476).

Disability scholars Ferguson and Nusbaum (2012) define 5 core concepts of Disability Studies. The first core concept states that disability must be social, as opposed to the medical or deficit model of disability, that is used in special education, in society, and other organizational constructs. The World Health Organization (WHO) says disability is more than individual pathology and deficits must be studied in its social, cultural, historical context as much as the personal conditions of impairment and functioning must be studied in their medical and educational contexts (2001). The WHO continues to explain that disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence the "management of the problem requires social action, and it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the changes necessary for full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life" (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 28).

The second core concept of Disability Studies states that the study of disability "must be foundational in that the importance of exploring the meaning of disability is not to understand disability but to understand other categories of human difference" (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 28). The study of disability is at the foundation of our understanding of the social construction of race, gender, class and other ways in which we differentiate ourselves from one another (Devlieger et al, 2003). Traditionally, the concept of disability has been used to justify discrimination against disabled people and other groups by attributing disability to them. This was in part in opposition to suffrage and women's rights in the early 20th century. Male politicians would cite feebleness and instability as reasons to protect women from voting, running for political office, or learning a profession (Baynton, 2001, p. 42). “The imagery of disability is used to hide what scares us, to remove what repulses us, and to medicalize what shocks us. Disability is the ultimate ‘other’” (Kudlick, 2003). In the same way, this ideology is used to exclude and neglect other marginalized groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community, the homeless poor, the social construction of our identities in relation to others and their identities is central to the conceptualization of disability.

The third core concept of disability studies is that the study of disability must be interdisciplinary. Disability Studies demands that it must be as broad as culture itself, drawing upon the tools and traditions of all our ways of knowing about the world. In a similar way that women’s studies or ethnic studies has drawn upon the history and sociology of feminism, culture, literature, among others, Disability Studies explores the meanings of disability as it emerges in all academic, interdisciplinary frameworks. This concept is also evident in the intersections of the implications of multiply marginalized students and families in disability labels, race, gender, class and more.

The fourth concept of disability studies affirms that the study of disability must be participatory. Participation is not just about what questions get asked and who gets to ask the questions (Ferguson, Ferguson & Taylor, 1992), and that scholars with disabilities should be prominent in research and teaching. Disability Studies research should be action oriented, and analytic and historical in focus, which is one of the central tenets of disability studies scholarship (Barton, 1996). As long as people with disabilities remain underrepresented and underacknowledged in our schools and research institutions, then the issue must remain central to the field. The role of grassroots and community organizations is examined and explored later in this literature review.

The fifth core concept of disability studies includes that the study of disability must be values-based. It is now standard practice to use and report social measures within traditionally quantitative and behavioral research (Wolf, 1978). It is within the work of disability scholars – disabled and able-bodied – where traditional scholarly literature can be critically analyzed within a disability justice framework. Disability studies research in its very nature, aims to decenter and dismantle traditional Eurocentric, heteronormative notions of what is deemed scholarly research. This study also aims to challenge these deficit norms within disability studies bodies of literature and frameworks, community action-oriented work and giving power to the voices of dis/abled students and families of color.

A leading disability studies scholar and researcher, Linda Ware, began her work also challenging existing conversations around disability that fall within a special education and/or reductionist paradigm, and has aimed to change this conversation that is informed by the field of Disability Studies. Ware seeks to contextualize disability within political and social spheres, giving a voice to those labeled with disability, promoting social justice and inclusive opportunities for those labeled with disability, and rejecting deficit models of disability (Ware, 2017, p. 261). Ware further challenges the existing notions of disability with specific organizing questions to contemplate and explore the conversations on an accessible level, such as asking questions like "What do we actually talk about when we talk about disability in K-12 schools? How can disability be considered in the K-12 curriculum? Why are changing cultural meanings of disability relevant now? (p. 261)". Disability Studies in Education can only evolve with the continuing scholarly support and advocacy that birthed this field of study at its' inception, in addition to the commitment we see in the disability scholars mentioned above. Within this framework, this study aims to continue to advance the existing and growing scholarly literature that is committed to the disability studies foundation, impetus and movement that exists today.

School experiences of students labeled with disabilities

The previous sub-section covered the literature that mapped out the historical evolution of what Disability Studies has become today. This section illuminates the actual experiences that students of color labeled with disabilities are facing in schools, in communities, throughout their lives. Within schools today, multiply marginalized students are continuing to experience violence, inequity and oppression within their general education classrooms and self-contained special education classrooms. It is widely known that general education teachers who continue to teach students labeled with disability in the same way they do their non-disabled students, they continue to fail students labeled with disability (Zigmund & Baker, 1990). In addition, those labeled with disabilities who are also students of color are more apt to be categorized and labeled with disabilities. Yet, school boards, and the federal and municipal government continue to mandate special education classrooms for students labeled with disabilities, perpetuating the marginalized experience for them and those with further multiply marginalized identities – identities such as low-income, gender non-binary and immigrant families. In 2017, students who were identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Latinx, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander between the ages 6 through 21 were more likely to be served under IDEA (41st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act). This continued over-representation found across the nation, the lack of access to general education and exclusion of students in general education classrooms for students with disabilities, particularly students with extensive support needs, students of color and those from low-income households, reflects continued and ongoing educational inequities for multiply-marginalized students. Students of color experience disproportionate disability identification and more restrictive placements, placing them at greater risk of being denied equal educational opportunities (Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons, & Feggins-Azziz, 2006). Students of color with disabilities are overrepresented in terms of placement and granted less access to inclusive environments than White students with the same disability labels (Losen & Orfield, 2002). Students of color also experience qualitatively different experiences than White students even when they share the same disability label (Ferri et al, 2019). This accounts for the disproportionate overrepresentation of students of color in sub-par categories that extend beyond the school environment and perpetuate segregation such as geographic housing locations, high crime rate areas, lack of access to good health care, employment opportunities, incarceration and more. In addition, those who reside in low-income areas and attend low-income schools are more likely to be placed in self-contained classrooms compared to those attending high-income schools (Ferri et al, 2019). Students who attend K-8 schools in particular, experience better outcomes than their middle school peers on many measures. This has been attributed to those schools being whiter and wealthier than middle school counterparts, as “K-8 schools operate as enclaves of privilege perpetuating inequities around race, class, and ability” (p. 357). In another study (White et al, 2019) that studied the collusive and compounding effects of race and disability in relation to geographic locations, the findings resulted in multiple forms of segregation within schools and in the larger community. The study demonstrated that very few

White students with autism lived in areas associated with low inclusion environments, yet students of color, particularly Black students, with autism were disproportionately represented in areas associated with low inclusion (p. 15).

These exemplifiers of the intersections of class, race, gender and ability have been studied across various scholarly context since the historical onset of DisCrit. Despite the over 40 years of research that shows students labeled with disabilities perform much better both academically and socially when taught in general education classrooms, yet continue to be forced to work in self-contained classrooms (Manset & Semmel, 1997). Poor students from minority backgrounds are likely to have a harder time both in and out of school, due to language barriers, lack of resources, and the turbulence of disadvantaged neighborhoods, leading to poor performance in school. Such demographic factors likely affect attendance rates and other social outcomes, as well as academics (358). Ethnic and racial minorities labeled as having learning disabilities now make up the largest subgroup of students in special education (Artiles, Trent, & Kuan, 1997). Black students remain the most overrepresented learning disabled group in nearly every state (p. 510). Furthermore, Black students are more at risk of being inappropriately labeled in wealthier districts (Collins, 2000, p. 286). Equity gaps highlight ableist, racist, classist, and other identity-based biases that entrench inequitable treatment of students with disabilities, despite attempts to include them in general education classrooms, leading to inequitable outcomes for this historically marginalized student population (Pak & Parsons, 2020, p. 2). The intersection of multiply marginalized students and their experiences in schools and in communities can best be illuminated through the body of literature that focuses on their lived experiences and narratives.

Lived experiences and narratives in scholarly research

Centering self-narrated stories of disabled persons in our curriculum for children and in programs of teacher education is another way to shift the expert-driven discourse to one that opens to their life experiences in all of their complexity (Baglieri, Valle, Connor, and Gallagher; 2011). Within Disability Studies in Education (DSE), this approach to the telling of the stories of disabled people questions research and inquiry.

Heshusius (2004) states that "scholarship in special education has always been about the other—about the differing other, about the other that needs to be measured, ranked, segregated or integrated, remediated, or adjusted to" (p. 216). All DSE researchers construct knowledge about disability and the consequences of this knowledge on the lives of the disabled. The aim of DSE scholars is to use research as a vehicle for disabled voices so they can share their own goals, needs, and experiences (Broderick & Ne'eman, 2008; J. M. Davis & Watson, 2000, 2001; Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2006; Rodis, Garrod, & Boscardin, 2001). DSE encourages professional dialogue that embraces the values of pluralism. We are convinced that all of us committed to the issues of disability and education can carry on such a conversation (Bagliari, Valle, Connor, Gallagher, 2011).In effect, DSE researchers view research as an emancipatory tool that affords those who do not hold power in our society to achieve more equality, more inclusion, and ultimately more of the dignity they deserve (Mercer, 2002). Broadening awareness within the field of educational research about whose stories are being heard (and whose are not) and how these stories are embedded in a system of power that treats dominant structures and practices as normative can help make race and racialized [and other minoritized] experiences explicit in educational contexts (Nasir & Hand, 2006, p. 455).

These are bodies of literature that support the need to create opportunities to integrate the voices and lived experiences of students labeled with disabilities when designing curriculum (Reid & Button, 1995), de-centering white privilege and centering multiply marginalized students. Specifically, when lived experiences, storytelling and narratives are heard directly from students labeled with disabilities, the consistent themes of erasure, injustice, and centering white privilege and white heteronormative ableism arise (p. 225). In one study conducted by Reid and Button (1995), they discuss the importance of storytelling in understanding the experiences of children labeled with disabilities. They argue this sort of first-person narrative allows them to understand their experiences while centering their lived realities. In their study, the hope was to shift the voice of power from researchers to the voices of students with dis/ability.

It is known that sharing narratives of personal experience is central to the feelings of belonging, acceptance, equity and simply improving quality of life (Gallagher & Reid, 1983). Narrative stories are a way for people to make sense of their lives and the lives of others (Richardson, 1990) and is helpful for both the storyteller and the listener in furthering their understanding of one another. Narrative tradition can be traced back to Aristotle (Bruner, 2002) with the importance of lived experience. Some researchers suggest narratives goes back further to when early humans began grunting and creating senses of their experiences around camp fires (LeGuin, 1989). Narratives from students of color can help bridge cultural gaps and modes of thinking, while potentially breaking down the impact of cultural monolithic stories and the source of bias and discrimination. Yet, for many students labeled with disabilities, there is little or no opportunity given to them to share this oral tradition, leading to experiences of isolation, undervaluing and oppression.

Reid and Button share the story of Anna, a 13-year-old, White, middle-class adolescent who was diagnosed at the age of 5 with language disabilities and later diagnosed with both language and learning disabilities. Her caregivers were told not to bother saving for college education since she would never have the academic ability. Another student they worked with is Pedro, a 13-year-old Hispanic American and working-class who was initially reticent about talking about his experiences had become animated when sharing about his adventures with friends. Anna recalled feelings of frustration and anger and was noted as 'distancing herself from the label of disability'. She says "We are isolated from the regular sixth graders," and continues repeatedly to share the isolation and separation she feels from the other sixth graders. She says with anger, "I'm not in there, I'm retarded. I'm special ed" (p. 605). In a collective essay with Anna and Pedro's classmates, they write, "when you are learning disabled, you feel different because you are not with the same teachers as the regular students (p. 609)." Anna and Pedro continue to share their experiences:

> teachers should go faster because when they go slow, we fall asleep or we can't get our work done. Sometimes they talk too fast and talk too much. They repeat too much and that's another thing that stops us from doing our work. When you come from another class and they say something, they won't repeat it. They say, if you weren't here, too bad (606).

The experience they are sharing is the punishment they receive for being in the special ed or pull-out program instituted by the school board, and the lack of understanding and/or training that teachers receive about how to best support students with dis/ability. This storytelling is an opportunity to begin to discuss what it means, how it feels, how it impacts them in a way that is not monolithically depicted otherwise. These and other counterstories provide a real and complex history of students labeled with disabilities, who otherwise are faced with accepting the faceless, simplified perceptions of students labeled with disabilities. The counterstory of the marginalized and the oppressed began in the 1970s with the concept of Critical Race Theory introduced by pioneering scholars such as Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, and Richard Delgado. Counterstory is a methodology, an action, a research tool (Martinez, A, 2020, p. 3). Counterstories are an act of resistance against white ableist hegemony and institutional oppression of traditionally marginalized people and communities.

Within Connor's research (2006), whose observations began when he was a special education teacher in New York City's high schools, he noticed patterns of entrenched racial segregation with his predominantly Black and Latinx students, usually male. The central premise of Connor's study was to explore the intersections of learning dis/ability, race and class with Michael, the participant-researcher as part of a larger year-long study exploring young adults' understanding of their positionality within the discourse of learning disabilities. Michael chose to arrange the data in poetic form as it is a powerful medium for him to present information and further understanding. Michael also chose this medium as it challenged the privilege of scientific and dominant research discourse. This excerpt was pulled from a poem that Michael wrote, sharing his multiply marginalized experience as a Black man with a learning dis/ability. The poem contains 210 stanzas.

I really wanted to kill myself. One day, when they first put me in there,
I think I sat in my bath tub all day trying to drown myself.

I was so pissed off. The way they get your caregiver ...
"If you don't sign it, your child's gonna be left back
Coz he can't keep up with the rest of the children ...
He'll be more embarrassed to be left back than to be in special ed.''
She ends up signing the paper. You just lost your rights right there.
Once you're in, it's just like Hell.
If they don't want to get you out, if they need a certain amount of numbers in that class,
Your behind is gonna stay in there until you graduate.
The sad thing about it is that they put you in a separate part of the building.
So basically you're labeled already by being put in that department, in that little section.
You can never see the other kids.
My mother looked at the IEPs, It'd just sit there,
like junk mail. From ninth, tenth, eleventh grade, nothing went on.
I didn't get promoted, I worked hard to get out, but I never got out.
Then I stopped caring. I just didn't care.
I'd act like the rest of them, sit and play around, making jokes, throwing stuff (158).

This multi-dimensional poetic narration highlights some thoughts and experiences that Michael summarizes about his intersectional multiply marginalized experiences as a poor Black male living with learning dis/ability labels. He contemplates the limitations imposed on him in school and in life. The division of ‘us and them’ is deeply apparent in Michael’s narrative and leave him very much aware of the distinctions between him and able-bodied peers, teachers and others. Other individuals similarly positioned to Michael are rarely represented in media and in life without the negative stereotypes society and institutional structures have imposed on them. This platform for Michael to share his narrative and his contributions as participant-researcher enables him to the construction of knowledge-making and in relation to his world; it suggests “untapped power of student narratives as vehicles to share their knowledge of the educational system” (p. 163) and attempts to “address widespread misrepresentation as well as imbalances of power” (p. 163). Through genuine and authentic exchanges of thought and knowledge, offers an “understanding from various positionalities, making students feel visible and as a respected source of knowledge” (p. 163). It is important to share real voices and narratives of students of color labeled with disability to decenter white dominant narratives, shift the power dynamic to support counterstories and contemplate internalized oppression.

“Given the increasing diversity in the United States and racial and ethnic disproportionalities in special education, interrogating the master narratives of the educational label of learning disabilities is needed to contribute to a praxis on the ground that is helpful for all students labeled with disability at their intersections and within educational contexts,” writes disability justice scholar and assistant professor at the University of Northern Iowa in the Department of Special Education, Dr. David I. Hernandez-Saca. As a bilingual, gay Latino of mixed ethnicity – El Salvadorian and Palestinian from a working-class family and growing up with a disability, today as an educational researcher, he has the unique and rare platform to speak about his lived experiences as a child growing up with a learning disability and the “fear and stigma of being labeled with a disability”. He shares that growing up with a learning disability has been a form of epistemological violence that few researchers can claim unless they have been labeled with a learning disability and have phenomenologically experienced both the diagnosis and the assignment to special education structures (p. 10). He shares that ‘master narratives’ derived from white heteronormative voices of power are damaging to communities of color, thus the voices of people of color and those living on the margins who share their experiences about their dis/abilities are an act of resistance to the hegemonic ways that the master narratives have come to overpower within our schools and communities (p. 11), further perpetuating the struggle, inequity and erasure that those labeled with learning disabilities face and live with. Moreover, how students labelled as learning disabled conceptualize their own disabilities, and particularly their emotion-laden talk about disabilities, is of critical and paradigmatic importance to reframe theory, research, and practice for equitable system-wide transformation (p. 16).

The counternarratives that Hernandez-Saca, Michael, Anna and Pedro share imply positionality and meaning making as lived knowledge and scholarly knowledge. Their narratives are a result of lived experience, self-reflection, and agency. The power through which these experiences are shared are acts of resistance, decentering and a dismantling of white hegemony in small but powerful ways. Within this framework, I hope to further illuminate this trend within a COVID-19 experience, and conduct a comparative analysis with K-12 students in both urban and suburban areas in the San Francisco Bay Area, across different social and economic backgrounds.

Literature on previous remote learning experiences for marginalized students

There is little known about remote learning experiences for students who are historically marginalized and who experience inequities based on the intersectional impact of race, class and dis/ability. One case study that was conducted among disabled students enrolled in online higher education courses found that those students attended overall 3 more days of school per year. This is consistent with research that shows contemporaneous achievement benefits to online high school course taking in America (Seale et al, 2010). This study looked at disabled university students overall without a breakdown of race or class or class. In the few studies that have been conducted on disabled students and their experience with remote learning, they have been studied outside of North America – UK, Ireland – and on university level students. Those results found consistent themes with a "perceived lack of support or training to enable disabled learners to become fluent users of specialized assistive technologies (Cobham et al, 2001; Goodman et al, 2002; Shevlin et al, 2004). These studies have also found that this system for assessing and funding assistive technology is frustrating for disabled students (Goode 2007; Shevlin et al, 2004). These studies "have done little to further the understanding of the role technology plays in the learning experiences of disabled students (Seale et al, 2010) and in the lived experiences of disabled students, and there was no research found that was conducted in K-12 schools. While there is very little known on students labeled with disability and their experience with remote learning, there is still little research on students of color and their experiences with online learning and moreover, there is little to no scholarly research on students of color labeled with disabilities.

In one study (Salvo et al, 2017) conducted on African American students and their experiences with online learning (Czerniewicz et al 2020) that was conducted during COVID-19 examined equity and inequality within a South African university and their remote teachers. The findings in this study reported the 'biggest threat' was related to digital access and lack of preparation for both students and teachers. This study did not explore students of color or students labeled with disability. In a report published in Kappa Delta Pi (Tienken, 2020), the author examined the experiences of students during COVID-19. Tienken argued that lack of access to resources such as internet and devices pointed to existing inequities for certain groups related to race and class. Specifically, poor families of color had experienced more inequities with remote learning than White families and those with more resources. "Only 25% of White families without internet cited cost as the reason, compared to 45% of Latinx families and 39% of Black families" (p. 151). It cited that teachers need to "mitigate some of the inequities by creating supports within their remote learning lessons to provide 'at the elbow' support for students who might need it" (p. 153). This was one report that focused on inequities in a general framework but the extensive gap in the literature on remote learning is evidence of the need for so much more research that must be conducted on the granular experiences of students of color especially during COVID-19 and for students of color labeled with disabilities. There is so much to be explored. This study hopes to start this scholarly discussion on the unique experiences, with the hope of giving a voice and platform for these traditionally marginalized students.

What we do know about access is that for those with access to technologies, which includes access to opportunities for engagement (p. 255) and access to technology, there is a direct link to access and participation in local communities and social networks (p. 256). This type of online experience is typically saved for able-bodied students and those who live in higher income neighborhoods, and become considerably less common for multiply marginalized students. For students of color who are historically marginalized, labeled with disabilities and even more so if they are low-income, this gap in scholarly research that focuses on their experiences in remote learning is a significant one that is reflective of the historical overlook and erasure that students with these labels experience.

In one rare study conducted by Roberts et al (2019), results indicated that students labeled with a disability perceive that this label gives them a negative impact on their ability to succeed in online courses; however, the organization reported that their requests for accommodations were met (p. 45). This dissonance is a direct reflection on the way society prioritizes able-bodied, white heteronormativity. This purpose of this study was to determine if students labeled with disabilities were satisfied with their institutions' accessibility and compliance services and with their ability to be academically successful in an online environment. Recommendations were made on how institutions can take steps toward meeting all accessibility standards without sacrificing rigor or online course curriculum. It is evident by the study's purpose and recommendations that the intent is not on the needs of the disabled student of color but rather on how to meet institutions' bottom line and be most efficient with the success of their program. The extensive gap in the literature on students of color with dis/ability and their experiences during remote learning is evidence of the lack of forethought and advocacy placed on disabled students' lives. Students of color with dis/ability have been living sub-standard lives within an able-bodied society and whose lack of access to technology, physical spaces, education, health care, and other social and life needs are a direct result of able-bodied structures that society is built upon.

In a recent online article published in July 2020 by Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, D.C., was written by Lydia X. Z. Brown, an autistic dis/ability rights activist and policy attorney at the Center for Democracy and Technology. This article was among the only article found on remote learning experiences of students of color labeled with disabilities. Brown is a policy activist focused on violence against multiply marginalized disabled people. Brown writes:

> On the one hand, technology holds enormous promise for helping disabled people to cope with, and perhaps even thrive amid the pandemic, such as by enabling consistent access to meaningful social interaction. On the other, however, technology threatens to exacerbate long-standing structural problems, such as widespread medical discrimination resulting in denial of care. For disabled people, the stakes have never been higher, and this requires the tech policy community to make careful, well-designed proposals in collaboration with the most impacted communities (Brookings, 2020).

For students of color labeled with disabilities who need access to remote learning technology, lack of access is further perpetuated during COVID-19. Tech policy fails to acknowledge, understand or respond to issues impacting disabled people across different disability experiences. As of 2020, a whopping 98 percent of all web content fails to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, a compliance made by the Department of Justice (2018) and is the international standard for making web content accessible to people with disabilities including screen readers, Braillers, eye tracking or other adapted technologies. Even basic public health information and pandemic news updates are inaccessible to large numbers of disabled people for school work, employment, social media. Disabled people are also disproportionally less likely to have broadband access or have devices capable of using web-based content. This affects multiply marginalized people and communities much sharply. Brown continues to write about disabled people being disproportionately less likely to have broadband access or access to any web-based content which affects disabled students of color (2020). Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the inequitable experiences of disabled people have been further perpetuated by lack of access, feelings and treatment of erasure. Disabled people are among the greatest risk group of experiencing severe symptoms of COVID-19 and are among the greatest to experience post-recovery complications. Brown continues to write that disabled people are among the highest population to live in areas that are highest risk – group homes, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes and prisons. The trauma experience that disabled people and students experience has been compounded by the trauma experience during the pandemic.

Summary

This literature review presented key findings from research extended across 40 years in educational, social and psychological based research examining school experiences for students of color labeled with disabilities prior to the pandemic within schools and with remote learning experiences, with a closer exposé to how schools have responded and supported students and families of color during the pandemic. Earlier research focused on the examination and findings of the impact of the intersections of race, class and ability. As expected, there is very little known about specific experiences of families and students of color labeled with learning disabilities in remote learning educational settings and virtually nothing found in scholarly research in K-12 schools. Moreover, there is no published research that has been conducted looking at experiences of students of color labeled with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as aforementioned, there has been a number of platforms – news media, social media, grass roots organizations – all driven by people and their current lived experiences during this pandemic, which has been reported that "social media has played a multitude of positive roles in information exchange during the COVID-19 crisis, including disseminating health-related recommendations, enabling connectivity and psychological first aid" (Merchant & Lurie, 2020). This present study aimed to address these gaps in the literature in three ways. First it sought to provide a space for the stories and narratives of K-12 students of color labeled with disabilities and their families. Second, this study aimed to provide a space for their families to share their specific lived experiences with their school districts and school communities prior to the onset of the pandemic and during the pandemic. Finally, this study presented an opportunity to explore the experiences of students of color and their families in direct relation to their intersectional identities between their race and disability, with the goal of contributing to the dearth of literature that explores the perpetuation of marginalization for families of color and the further implications of those labeled with disabilities and lower socioeconomic status and their experiences within a global pandemic such as COVID-19. Decades of research findings show the inequities, oppression and erasure that occurs in schools and in general life for students of color labeled with disabilities. With so little known about their experiences during remote learning and little known about experiences during COVID-19 within schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, this research hopes to amplify their voices and experiences within a scholarly platform. In addition, with the growing presence of the world wide web and social media, there is more opportunity for on-the-ground social movements to form and mature with the support of others in the disabled community, as what was described earlier. As it is evident that access to the web, broadband internet and content is limiting to many disabled people, this study explored different ways to propel access in order to amplify voices and stories of disabled communities of color.

PART III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

As stated in Part I, the purpose of this research study was to explore the distance learning and hybrid learning experiences of students of color and for their caregivers in the San Francisco Bay Area of California during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this study was to seek out the experiences of students of color labeled with learning disabilities and their caregivers navigating remote learning during a global pandemic such as COVID-19 and through this platform, their narratives and counterstories may be told. Through countering the dominant narrative with counterstories of disabled students of color and their caregivers, paradigm shifts may begin while decentering white ableist hegemonic voices. The findings from this study point toward both their marginalized experiences of students of color labeled with learning disabilities and their caregivers pre-COVID-19, illuminating their experience during their remote learning as multiply marginalized students of color.

While there is a wide spectrum of research that explores academic performance of students of color labeled with disabilities in general education classrooms and self-contained special education classrooms using quantitative data, there is little scholarly research that explores narrative inquiry from caregivers of color and their children labeled with disabilities, and moreover, within a remote learning setting. As such, the goals of this study were best met using a qualitative narrative inquiry approach, capturing a rich and nuanced exploration of the experiences of my research population.

Research Design

Qualitative research has historically emphasized bringing previously unheard voices into scholarly discourse on a range of subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), and thus aligns well with the goals of this study. Qualitative research methods included the following over two or more virtual and in-person sessions during the summer months after the 2020-21 remote learning academic year: 1) one virtual or in-person interview with each of the six caregivers of color who have a child who have been labeled with disability 2) one follow-up virtual or in-person interview with each of the seven caregivers of color 3) two virtual interviews with their children who willfully participated and offered their own narratives. The interviews that were held with each of the family caregivers provided the narratives of the caregivers' experiences prior to learning-at-home that was implemented during COVID-19 and during remote pandemic learning. They also allowed for the uncovering and discovering of patterns and themes around school engagement, school support and school shortcomings, as well as how students potentially re-envisioned themselves as empowered learners when schooling at home and away from the oppressive school context. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for themes. Each interview provided rich and nuanced stories of each unique family experience, which informed this research study within the framework of DisCrit. I also offered interviews with students who willfully shared about their school and remote learning experiences with me. These were semi-structured with some topics and a focus in mind, along with some prepared questions. The trajectory of each of the interviews depended solely on the student and what they were willing to share. Thus, my intention was to aim to gather data on all student participants within this method and all student participants had agreed to share their narratives in varying degrees, based on their ages, grades, intersectional identities, and their home-based and school-based experiences. The potential diversity in perspectives offered from the students' lens provided deeper understanding of the shifts in learning and the empowering schooling at home experiences for traditionally multiply marginalized communities of color. Caregivers had the opportunity for reflection after the end of a school year that had started and ended during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique perspective that caregivers shared had enabled some deeper reflection, connections made between experiences and people, as well as an identification and examination of those themes, along with experiences and connections made.

Although all people tell stories of their lives in one form or another, the narrative researcher not only describes these lives, but she also "...collects and tells stories of them, and writes narratives of experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). As defined by Chase (2011), narrative as a research methodology has a distinct form. Narrative analysis that is used within this study means an approach where the researcher narrates based on data. Since analysis will always be the researchers' construct, this also included analysis of narrative, which is also a certain approach where the researcher analyses stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative inquiry here refers to a method of investigation into a problem, following pragmatism, inspired by John Dewey. Following this tradition, narrative inquiry also means a way of knowing by telling and reflecting. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researchers and participants, over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). In this particular focus on narrative constellations, narrative inquiry is the focal point. Research through narrative inquiry makes meaning through the shaping and ordering of experiences from its subjects. It is “a way of understanding one’s own or others’ actions, organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time” (p. 42). Thus, when a participant shares their story, the researcher uses analytical strategies to make meaning from the story (Riessman, 2005). Although the researcher hears the consciously-told stories of a person, the researcher also looks for deeper stories and meanings that a participant might not be aware of (Bell, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The final product is a combination of their life stories and experiences with the attempt to make meaning of the stories they have told, while their families engage in dialogue and collaboration, learning about and processing their combined perspectives and needs (Howard & Reynolds, 2008) as a way to inform further dialogical research within the field of education and research alike, with the ultimate end goal of amplifying, centering and valuing disabled students of color’s voices both in research and in the classroom.

Recruitment of Participants

Due to the nature of this qualitative study, I identified and recruited six families and their children to participate in this study. I used an examination of these focal six families to contribute to the COVID-19 related research that may continue to expand over time, and be a contribution to the work that needs to be done to support this population, amplifying their voices and shifting paradigms and processes within schools. The type of qualitative study of this research is of narrative inquiry, which is critical to the development of individuals with disabilities and explores meaning within the classroom (Ferguson, 2003) and within their lives. While Disability Studies in Education (DSE) favors counter narratives of people labeled with disabilities, DSE itself may also be seen as a counter narrative to other prevailing and intertwined hegemonic discourses of normalcy, deficiency and efficiency operating in special education (Connor et al, 2008). DSE has already proven its worth: challenging many ontological and epistemological assumptions that under gird traditional special education practices; re-defining how the concept of disability can be taught within school and college curricula; emphasizing disabled people's experiences, concerns, and ideas about their lives; and directly embracing disability as a 'natural' part of human diversity (p. 455). Thus, within this research study, amplifying narratives of the participants may offer opportunities to hear how their current experiences at home and away from traditionally oppressive school settings have re-humanized them and positioned them as whole identities.

Given the nature of this study, recruitment was based on a two types of recruitment samples. One type that was used was snowball sampling, which is a type of sampling where current colleagues reached out to existing colleagues, acquaintances and families who they believe may be interested in participating. Another type of sampling that was used in this participant recruitment is called convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling method where the sample was taken from a group of people who are within reach and available for contacting. This included reaching out to people through social media. Further, it is necessary to acquire a purposeful criterion sampling method and thus identifying participants that fit within certain criteria. For this study, the criteria for adult participants are as follows:

1. Self-identify as a family of color who is either Black, Latinx or Asian. Families who identify as mixed or multi-racial will also fit within this criteria as long as they identify with any of the aforementioned racial groups. These racial identities are the most common groups of color in and around Marin County. This is not to eliminate other

racial/ethnic identities that reside in and around Marin County, but for the purposes of this research study, the focus will be on these groups.

2. Has a child(ren) who has been labeled with disability.
3. Child is a student of a K-12 school in the San Francisco Bay Area during some form of learning at home during COVID-19
4. Are supporting their child(ren) schooling at home

Each minor participant was required to meet the following criterium:

1. To identify as a child of color or mixed race
2. Reside with those in the same household pre-pandemic and during remote pandemic learning Has been labeled with a learning disability
3. Is a student of a K-12 San Francisco Bay Area school

In order to identify participants who met these criteria, I conducted an initial introduction to my research study to personal and professional connections I have already formed within the schools I am affiliated with – my children's schools, the school I am employed at and the school I am pursuing my doctorate degree from. I also conducted an initial introduction to my research study to general groups and membership-only groups within social media sites that I have accounts with, such as parenting groups. Within Facebook, I am a member of a number of parenting groups and writing groups. Then, once I completed the IRB approval process, I then distributed official flyers to these institutions in order to secure my participant pool. I also reached out to professional colleagues and friends. Once families made contact with me, I provided a more detailed description of the study, such as their commitment, the timeline and the focus of my research. I also shared information about myself as researcher. Once the participants informed me of their commitment to the research, I then shared a consent form for the participation in the study and requested them to read and sign it prior to the start of the data collection process. Also prior to the start of the research, I offered my time for them to pose any questions they had so that all participants felt they were well-informed of the study. I also gave them the option of choosing their identity to be known or to choose a pseudonym. Some participants chose pseudonyms, and I only referred to them by pseudonym in order to protect the confidentiality of their identity, their families' identities and their responses. Additionally, this participant pool mainly identified as middle income families or did not disclose their socioeconomic class, which illuminates their unique experiences during this pandemic. There were specific nuances to each of the family participants with regard to their social class identity, which was distinguishable in different nuanced ways for each family, such as their access to resources, allocation of funds, family's own perception of their social class, and more. Although this participant pool is biased towards a particular range in middle income social class, the research and findings shed light on a particular set of experiences.

Table 1
Participant School Profiles

School Type	**School Location**	**School Size**	**Student of Color %**	**Median Household Income (2019)**	**Annual Tuition (2021-2022)**
Public middle school, grades 6-8	Marin County, CA	700-765 students	unknown	$128, 212	n/a
Public middle school, grades 6-	Marin County, CA	1203 students	75% (69.9% Hispanic/Latinx)	$91,742	n/a
Independent K-8	Marin County, CA	595 students	41%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$38,220 to $42, 230

Independent high school, 9-12	Marin County, CA	440 students	25%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$53,086
Independent specialized school, grades 5-12	Marin County, CA	55-60 students	33%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$22,950
Charter arts school, grades 6-12	Oakland, CA	795 students	65%	Families who live in and around East Bay and Bay Area	n/a

Research Questions

As stated in Part I, the following research questions guided the inquiry of this study:

1.) (a) How did children of color who are labeled with learning disabilities, and their families navigate schooling at home as a result of COVID-19? (b) What challenges and/or opportunities were created for these children and their families while schooling at home?

2.) How did schools and districts interact with the families of children of color who are labeled as having a learning disability to provide support and how closely did this support match the needs of families while schooling at home?

3.) (a) How have students of color and their families labeled with disabilities by schools come to understand their identities as learners in new ways as a result of distance learning? (b) How can schools learn from families to create a rehumanizing post-pandemic school context for students of color labeled with disabilities?

Research Setting

Participants were recruited from local communities and schools in the San Francisco Bay Area by developing recruitment flyers and then circulating them within these communities. I emailed the director of each program within each organization, who distributed the digital flyer within their communities that reached students, teachers and caregivers affiliated with each program. I recruited from North Bay and East Bay’s largest demographics of communities of color to promote more diversity within those families of color within my research study. Within my recruitment process, I recruited families who were interested in participating in this study. Within this potential participant pool, I recruited families who self-identify as African American, Black or multi-racial Black or African-American; families who self-identify as Latino or multi-racial Latino; and families who self-identify as Asian or multi-racial Asian. The communities I recruited from included 1) the public elementary school my children attend, 2) the public middle school my oldest child attends, 3) through the student body at The University of San Francisco, located in San Francisco Bay Area, and 4) among personal and professional contacts, through current and previous work colleagues and friends. The two schools that my children attend are local public schools located in Marin County, a county that is situated north of the Golden Gate Bridge in the San Francisco North Bay Area (Table 1). One is called Sun Valley Elementary School, which is located in San Rafael, California, and is the public elementary school that two of my children, in grades 4 and 5, attend. Sun Valley Elementary School is a K-5 public elementary school in San Rafael, California. San Rafael is characterized as being the most diverse city in the county of Marin, that is predominantly homogenous in race and class. San Rafael is comprised of a population that is 72% White, 28% POC, with a median household income of $87, 262 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The other public school is White Hill Middle

School which includes grades 6, 7 and 8. White Hill Middle School is located in Fairfax, California, in Marin County in the San Francisco North Bay Area. White Hill Middle School is where my current 7th grader, Rhys, attends. He is receiving an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at this school and we have developed a family/school partnership with their learning specialist and teachers. I reached out to Rhys' learning specialist, his core teachers and school counsellors since they work directly with students with learning needs. I reached out to them by drafting and sending them emails with information about my research study. White Hill Middle school is situated in a small town called Fairfax, California. With a total population of 7, 522 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019), with 88% of the population identifying as White, 9% identifying as Latino or Hispanic, .4% as Black or African American and 4.3% as Asian. The median household income from 2015-2019 in 2019 dollars is $104,122. Another community I recruited from is within my own school where I am pursuing my doctorate degree – The University of San Francisco. I recruited from the School of Education, where some students may know students of color and their families who may want to participate in a study such as this. Many of the students in the doctorate program are also teachers who may work with students of color labeled with learning disabilities and who may like to participate in this research study. I attempted to recruit from the general public through certain social media sites such as Facebook, the parenting and writing groups that I am a member of, and also published a general post for friends and followers to see, requesting for participation from caregivers of color who qualify for this research study. However, I did not yield from this recruiting effort. Gathering data from a diverse set of families helped illuminate the unique and varied experiences of these families, and uncovered themes that are consistent among the Intersectional identities of race, class, gender and dis/ability for deeper exploration within a distance learning environment. All of the families included as subjects in this study identify as having a disabled student of color. I want to acknowledge that all of the students in this study have been labeled with mild learning disabilities, and were able to access and maneuver the digital learning platform with little technical support or independently. So the nuances connected with these families whose children have mild disability labels are distinguishable from those who may have been labeled with more moderate or severe disabilities that require more support from others. The families in my participant pool have diverse identities and intersections that illuminated the impact of their intersectionality of race, class, gender and dis/ability. I provided the background and purpose of my research study to all interested families, and included the timeline and commitment for participation. The process and discovery that occurred within these groups further uncovered and impacted the lives of all who participated, including the researcher and surrounding community. My process of discovery included initial connections made with caregivers of students of color with disabilities. I introduced myself as a caregiver with a student of color labeled with disabilities living in Marin. Once I received approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco, I officially recruited families through a public flyer that I distributed to my contacts at each of these educational institutions, confirming which families agreed to work with me, and which families committed to this research study, who then each signed consent forms.

Data Collection

During the Summer of 2021, I conducted two virtual interviews per family and per student via Zoom, Facetime and met some families in person, depending on their preferences. Each interview focused on the experiences of each participant during the shifting learning models proposed by their respective schools. Within these interviews, I documented their unique lived experiences during this pandemic during the summer months of 2021. I also explored topics related to racial/cultural identity and the intersectional identities with ableism/disability, socioeconomic status and gender.

Although gathering qualitative data through interviews is the most used method of data collection within qualitative research, Bowen (2009) states that qualitative researchers should utilize at least two different kinds of data sources. The data sources that were used include: 1) unstructured and individual interviews with caregivers, 2) and unstructured and individual interviews with their child(ren). I took researcher notes, recorded interviews, and observed during all virtual and in-person meetings. I conducted the interviews with the caregivers and students during two separate interviews, allowing each of them to direct the interviews. I offered to discuss related topics based on their shared experiences during this remote learning time, mutually discussing ways that these topics may further impact their lives not just within the classroom or learning-at-home, but within their lives.

Individual and unstructured interviews with caregivers and with students

The unstructured and individual interviews allowed for a phenomenological narrative inquiry that led with open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013) that were unstructured and based on the flow of each unique interview space. The questions that were asked were oriented to focus on understanding the central phenomenon of my research study (p. 443).

Interviews were conducted with a total of six families, involving caregivers and students. These unstructured interviews were conducted with each family of color or non-dominant family. The interviews with students were based on each students' willingness to participate and were optional. Each student opted to participate in both interviews – the initial interview and the follow-up interview. The interviews with students were conducted one on one between the student and the researcher, and were conducted with those who were interested in sharing their experiences directly with the researcher. I had planned not to conduct interviews with students who were not comfortable or willing to share within this research study and this level of comfort was assessed with each caregiver. Therefore, the interviews with the students were conducted and continued with each students' preferences in mind. If the student chose not to share or respond to any initiating questions, the researcher took the students' cues and proceeded accordingly. However, each student participant willingly participated. This methodological approach was necessary in order to establish trust and authenticity in the relationship between researcher and participant. Each interview ranged in length from thirty minutes to 60 minutes, and were conducted either virtually via Zoom or Facetime, or in person at a local community location, such as a park. All interviews were recorded using the recording feature integrated within each virtual meeting platform or via a stand-alone personal recording device. These recordings are only accessible by the researcher. All of the interviews were conducted in English as all participants speak English as their language of choice. All of the transcriptions are preserved in an electronic folder on my laptop. The initial interview with each family included tentative follow-up questions that were asked depending on the trajectory of the interview, what the participant was comfortable with sharing, and how the interview evolved. The parent/guardians were interviewed first, and then the children were interviewed. Each participant was interviewed two times. After the initial interview, another meeting date and time was scheduled for the follow-up interview for each family. Each interview with families and students began with a creative check-in that included any of the following: using a barometer of one to five on how good we were feeling, or describing the current mood using a color, or choosing an animal or food that might describe their current state or mood. Some interviews started with more organic check-ins depending on what the researcher was picking up on at the moment. The associated goal was to create a safe space based on connection. This relational setting helped to develop a sense of trust and relationship between researcher and participant so that it felt safe for participants to share their narratives, the scholarly methodology that was used to conduct this research. The narratives of others are critical to the development of individuals labeled with disabilities and explores it meaning within the classroom (Ferguson, 2003). In so doing, this allowed the documenting of natural student relations within the classroom and within the students' and families' approaches to their class work and school culture. Each interview consisted of reflection time, along with time for questions from each participant. Unstructured questions that were asked by the researcher were based on what they shared and were based on the direction of each interview time. If there was a focus on a particular incident, follow-up questions were asked that were related to this particular incident. If the participant chose not to share in that particular interview, the role of the researcher was to honor that space and time to respect the participant's wishes and current state of mind. The follow-up interviews with each family consisted of a recapitulation of the time together, by listing some consistent themes, stories and emotions. The follow-up interviews also included contemplation and reflection time. There were a total of two informal and unstructured interviews that the researcher conducted with each family individually. These occurred during two separate times during the Summer of 2021 following the remote learning school year that was convenient for them. Both sets of interviews with the caregivers were between two hours to three hours in length. Each interview with all participants were recorded and transcribed using the integrated recording feature for each virtual platform. The transcription applications that were used were NVivo and a manual transcription.

Interview questions

Within semi-unstructured interview questions, some questions were prepared prior to, but with the idea and expectation that the interview may not advance in this way depending on age, maturity level, preference of interviewee, needs of interviewee and family and so forth. The intention behind this approach was to allow opportunities for each participant to share what they would like and to move through the interview time in an authentic and unstructured way. As such, the following open-ended questions were meant to set up a conversation that evolved in different trajectories, thus these questions may or may not have been asked in each interview. The full transcription of each interview was kept confidentially and later analyzed using coded themes that are discussed in Chapter IV.

Interview questions with caregivers

Interview One – This initial interview focused on a general overview of their experience with their child's teacher, school specialists and school in general. Some questions included: Tell me what school was like prior to remote learning as a caregiver, and community member and for your child. Tell me what school experience was like with remote learning as a caregiver, a community member and for your child. Share any specific stories or memories you may have in relation to these experiences. Tell me what particular challenges you were facing pre-COVID and during remote learning. What would you like for your child in relation to their school, their classroom experience, and beyond? How did the school administrators and teachers respond?

What would you like for your child and your family at this school? How supported do you feel at this school? What was the IEP process for you like? Separate from the schooling at home requirements imposed by your school, tell me about what you are teaching your child? What is your child learning? How would you describe your child as a learner outside of traditional school? Talk about their interests, passions, needs/wants, successes, challenges. What would you want your child's teachers to know about them as a learned during school closures when your child is in school in-person?

Depending on the trajectory of the conversation, some other topics included racial/cultural identity, ableism/disability, gender, family structure. How do you think your identity affects you and your child's experiences at school? How is your child's disability received at school, with peers, with others? What would you like to see happen moving forward? How can your child be best supported? What are your thoughts around how to engage the school or other resources?

Interview Two – This follow-up interview focused on any follow-up stories, experiences and themes they shared from the previous meeting. This week also focused on some topics exploring such as the intersectionality between race, ability, gender, family structure and socioeconomic status, the power of counter-narratives, youth literature and representation in social media and other media platforms. Some questions may have included: Tell me about your experiences at your child's school, with their teachers and other parents/families. Tell me about your child's academic experiences? How did you feel sharing these stories with me? During your reflection, what kinds of things came up for you? What would you like to see happen moving forward? How can your child be best supported? What are your thoughts around how to engage the school or other resources?

This follow-up interview also acted as a recapitulation with some time that prompted contemplation and individual reflection about their school year, their child's identity and experience, family structure and identity, advocacy for their child, key areas of support with regards to academic, social emotional and school involvement, and what was next moving forward.

Optional interviews with students

Interview One – This initial interview focused on a general overview of each students' school and classroom experience pre-COVID and during remote learning; how their caregivers responded to this remote learning time, . Some questions may have included: tell me about what school is like now during COVID-19? What was school like before COVID-19? Talk about your classroom experience pre-COVID and during COVID. Please share a specific story during a time that made you feel (an emotion that was mentioned). Are there other kids in your class that look like you? Do you feel heard by your teachers or other school personnel? How are your assignments – are they easy to follow? Are you getting the support you need? Do you feel connected to your school pre-COVID and during remote learning? Tell me about your IEP or accommodations. How do you feel about them? For younger students: What do you like about school? How do you like to learn about things you are interested in? How about things you are not interested in? How were your caregivers handling the school year pre-COVID-19? How are they handling it during remote learning? How do you know? How do you feel your caregivers are handling you, your classroom expectations and your IEP during remote learning? Do you think your caregivers are getting the support they need to help you? What were you learning at home during remote learning? How is it different? How do you like it and why?

Interview Two – This follow-up interview focused on topics such as race, ethnicity, ableism/disability, gender, and family structure. I shared information about identity markers. Some questions may have included: How do you identify yourself? How do you think your teachers and peers see you? How do you see yourself? How do you think your identity affects your life? This week also included discussions on texts and literature that showcase disabled youth that they may identify with. Some questions in relation to this topic may have included: What books do you enjoy reading? What characters do you identify with? What characters would you like to see more of? How would you feel if you saw more characters that identified similarly with you? This follow-up interview also included a closing recapitulation with some time for prompted contemplation individually reflection about their school year, their identity, their family identity, their experience, their self-advocacy, their paradigms in which they frame their lives, their approach to school, peers and life moving forward, and any questions they would like to address.

Data Analysis

I utilized two modes of transcription for my data depending of the complexity of the data. First, I personally transcribed some interviews manually by listening to the pre-recorded interviews and manually transcribing them. This effort was time-consuming but allowed for more deeper introspection and familiarity with the data, which may lead to a deeper analysis. After transcribing the interviews, I began organizing, categorizing into themes and discovering meaning through analysis and introspection in order to help answer my research questions. For other data transcriptions, I also used an automated, cloud-based transcription service called NVivo Transcription that sends media files for transcription directly to my email. This method was more time efficient and allowed for more time to focus on other areas of my research – analyzing and interpreting the data. Therefore, the tools that were used to explore the particular themes and findings were with a coding software called NVivo. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software system that is designed to help analyze data within qualitative research. Through the use of NVivo, as well as manually transcribing the interview transcripts, what resulted was the transcription of the 13 interviews that were conducted for this research study in a total of 289 single-spaced pages of transcriptions. Each interview consisting of each adult participant and each minor participant varied in length, and was directed by the participants and their responses. Thus, each interview length ranged from 35 minutes for the participants who are minors to approximately 85 minutes. The adult participant interviews ranged in length from approximately 125 minutes to 160 minutes each. Each participant engaged in a follow-up interview with me either in person at their home or at a school community, or via zoom from our respective homes. All of the interviews took place during the summer months of 2021 prior to the start of the new 2021-22 academic year.

Once all of my interviews were transcribed, I organized these transcriptions into data to code and analyze. My iterative coding and analysis procedures included using my research questions as a framework for organizing an overarching structure of the data as well as coding my participants' responses into themes and subthemes that may form through repetition amongst my participants and themes that may repeat for each participant. I used a coding system to help organize these themes and then analyzed them using my theoretical framework as an overarching lens in addition to the bodies of literature that supports some of the themes and subthemes that arose. Through a nonlinear and iterative process of reflecting, coding and analyzing, a combination of deductive and inductive themes emerged. The combination of these themes will be described in greater detail within this chapter, listed under each theme. In addition, since the research questions that were posed early on in this study helped guide the inquiry of this study, I also explore, list and answer each of them in this chapter.

Ethical Considerations

Given that the focus of my research is with students who attend K-12 schools, many of the students are of age minority status, which means that informed consent was to have been obtained through their caregivers or legal guardians. Despite fully enclosing the purpose of this research study and then receiving full written consent from each participating caregiver who had also signed on behalf of their child, I did not receive a written consent from the participant student. As such, there was a level of commitment that was unknown until the researcher began making contact with each student and started to develop the relationship. Thus, my role as a researcher was in part to establish this relationship from the onset and foster connections with each minority student prior to attempting to pull data from each student participant. This voluntary participation from each student occurred free from coercion from either caregivers or the researcher. I had anticipated some challenges to encourage some young children to participate and to keep them engaged in this research study, however, all of the minor participants remained relatively engaged without any level of pressure to continue.

At the start of the recruitment phase, I asked all of my participants whether they preferred full confidentiality or would prefer that their real name and identities be used. Some participants requested full confidentiality, thus I ensured that any identifying information would be excluded from any part of this published study, such as names, schools and other identity markers that may reveal their identity.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study drew upon the lived experiences of six families and their children who had been labeled with disability and who were experiencing distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this qualitative narrative-inquiry approach offered rich and unique insight into the experiences during a particular moment in history, the aim of this study is not to represent the experiences of all students of color labeled with learning disabilities. In addition, while the participant pool captured a diverse set, there were limitations in the range of identities in some areas. For instance, many of the participant families identified as middle class and upper middle class, and these families did not identify as poor. There are a number of nuanced data points related to class, disability label, gender and race that are unique for each family. The labels of learning disabilities were within a mild range, and all of the students were deemed capable of participating in online learning. So, although these students were in need of specific learning supports and inclusive pedagogies, they were not deficit treatments. Additionally, the family participants all possessed knowledge of the academic system, were fully capable as English speakers and had enough social capital to pivot in the ways their children needed, in order to provide them with the support they needed. Thus, given these limitations, meta-analyses, replication studies, participatory action research and other research studies may further illuminate a wider scope of study. My positionality as a mother with a 13-year-old mixed race student of color labeled with disabilities, who receives IEPs and accommodations during this pandemic may further illuminate this study by providing another perspective given my positionality as both researcher and pseudo-participant. This positionality allowed for more empathy, established trust with my participants, and encouraged authenticity during storytelling.

The dual and dichotomous role of both researcher and participant offered a sensitive perspective while also being a valuable means for developing research skills (Probst, 2016). The diversity of race, class, gender and dis/ability also contributed to a deeper intersectional framework within this lens.

Data for this research study was collected during the Summer of 2021, after the end of the remote learning school year when the pressures of school work and schedules were no longer at the forefront. I had speculated the possibility that this may result in different memories as opposed to discussing these experiences while it is happening. It is still unclear at this point in the pandemic. In addition, the COVID-19 vaccination had begun its initial roll-out as President Joseph Biden Jr made an announcement earlier in the Spring of 2021 that he and the administration would have enough vaccines for every adult by the end of May 2021 (CNN news, March 2, 2021). This information may have had an impact on the thoughts of my participants during the time of data collection, which may be a skewed reflection of the school year they experienced prior to this knowledge. This speculation is also still unknown.

Protection of Human Subjects

I applied for approval and permission to conduct research with my selected participants from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco. I ensured to provide all of my participants with a thorough explanation of the focus of my research study and of my research methodology. I also ensured to provide all of my participants with the proper documentation for formal consent to participate, including consent forms and assent forms. These forms outlined their right to withdraw their consent and their participation within this study, should they need to. All participants had the right to use a pseudonym should they choose. Data collection was recorded using a personal recording device, interview transcripts, and researcher notes. All of the data was confidential and cannot be accessed by anybody other than myself.

Researcher's Profile

There are a number of aspects of my identity and my life experiences that have contributed to my interest and purpose for this chosen research study. As a woman of color, the eldest daughter in a family whose caregivers emigrated out of their mother country of South Korea, in search of a better life for their children, I live with the legacy of trauma and pain that *oppa* endured as a result of a school system that failed him, a neoliberal inclusionism that "values normative modes of being developed with respect to ablebodiedness, rationality and heteronormativity" (Mitchell, 2020). *Oppa*, whose neurodivergence went undiagnosed throughout his school career, and consequently dropped out of his first year of college from the pressure and years of oppression, is the result of the erasure and injustice that many students of color labeled with learning disabilities – diagnosed or not – experience. Many families are not given the tools or resources to effectively navigate these challenges in addition to the diversity and injustice they experience simply by being a person of color in America and with less access to resources. My hope with this study was to acknowledge those stories of students of color and their families who have had and continue to have similar experiences within their school system being unheard, devalued, and with little to no social capital (Bourdieux, 1973) to support their upward mobility in this new country. My family's working-class status, with little social capital and model minority inspirations that if they work an honest living and their children obtain a solid education, that would be enough. As a consequence and product of society's paradigmatic approaches with hegemony and ableism, many poor and working-class caregivers commit to similar notions, living powerlessly and with uncertainty about their child's academic and life trajectories (Olivos, 2003; Wells & Serna, 1996; Yonezawa, 1997). My hope was that the findings from this study empowers students and families of color for self-advocacy to challenge societal norms, and work to question and dismantle those paradigms.

Today, as a caregiver of color with my own child labeled with disabilities, navigating the public school system, schooling at home, I provide this layer of perspective as a researcher. And finally, within my role as an educator, I bring this added lens of social class and privilege, providing my professional experience working within a higher socioeconomic community within a local independent school. I share my experiences as a caregiver navigating learning initiatives, social and school culture norms around family/school partnerships and school commitment. With the methodology used within my study, I uncovered the unique stories of each of the families and students as a means of narrative inquiry informing scholarly research within the COVID-19 timeframe, in addition to informing other research that explores remote learning experiences in general for multiply marginalized populations.

PART IV: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Overview

The process of discovery with my findings has been deeply meaningful, affirming and insightful. Using a nonlinear and iterative approach within the many stages of coding from line-by-line coding, open coding, axial and selective coding, and back again, which led to the building and discovering of the themes in an inductive process. What began to emerge was a thematic coding process that uncovered deductive themes, such as the technical and social challenges of my participants, as well as the positive experiences of the students of color and their families during and pre-remote learning; i.e. feeling a sense of freedom and authenticity learning at home with family. Another deductive theme that was identified was the lack of support that the schools provided students during remote learning that all of the student participants had experienced. Some inductive themes that emerged in this iterative process of discovery were that families had rediscovered this deep source of resiliency and adaptability through navigating the pandemic in ways that supported their children without the help from their school systems. Another inductive theme that emerged was the powerful discovery that families' positive messaging and acceptance around their children's intersectional identities was strongly supported by love and understanding, and that this carried into their school environments and relationships. These deductive and inductive themes will be further explored more deeply within this chapter. I also approached my process of discovery through another method of analyzing discourse amongst family members, which is very relevant to the phenomenological narrative inquiry within a DisCrit framework that my research study is grounded in. This specific analysis refers to the way that I, as a researcher, analyzed the way that families and students expressed themselves and the types of words they used to describe their experiences. This analysis helped provide insight into their own paradigmatic lens and their lived experiences. I dive deeper into this thematic approach under each theme listed in this chapter. And finally, as part of this iterative process, I returned to my research questions that initially guided my study. Returning to my research questions allowed me to return to the groundwork of my research, and the purpose of centering and amplifying the voices and narratives of the families in this study. It was such a gift to sit with these families and to be a medium, an advocate and community member to share their unique and special stories within this format.

The emerging themes were both deductive and inductive in nature, which has been so exciting to discover, namely since this research study is contributing to the dearth of research within a DisCrit framework for families and their children of color labeled with learning disabilities. This research study is among the first of its kind.

Introduction

Given that the purpose of this study is to illuminate the academic, social-emotional and psychological needs of students of color labeled with learning disabilities during this pandemic, the research method used was a qualitative narrative inquiry approach. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researchers and participants, over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20).

Participant Profiles and Stories

As discussed in Chapter III, the participant selection for this study was yielded through snowball sampling and convenience sampling. These two methods, including the query to follow a specific criterium, as mentioned in the previous chapter, yielded 6 families of color. Each family consisted of one adult participant who identified as their parent, guardian or caregiver, and either 1 or 2 minor participants who all identified as their child(ren). Each adult participant was required to meet the criterium discussed in Chapter III.

Five of the six families in this study reside in various cities and towns in Marin County, Northern San Francisco Bay Area San Francisco Bay Area. One of the families reside in Oakland, California, West of the Richmond Bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area. Despite the small participant pool, there was diversity in family structure, socioeconomic status, racial and gender identity, and labels of a variety of learning disabilities. The students attended different schools – some public elementary, public middle school, independent K-8 schools and a charter arts school.

It is important to acknowledge that my participant pool is small in comparison to an entire subset of families within the United States. My participant pool included 6 families, totaling 6 adult participants and 8 minor participants. Notwithstanding, each family's story is important and significant. To focus deeply on each of these families and their unique experiences during remote pandemic learning amidst COVID-19 has been such a gift, an opportunity to center their experiences, and a celebration of their identities and narratives. It is also important to acknowledge that two out of the six families are adoptive. Both of the families had adopted two biological children from the same two mothers, both who had anonymously gave their children up for adoption. Having two adoptive families in a small sample such as this is significant but the process of recruitment was through snowball sampling as well as through relying on personal networks.

One purpose of this research study is to center and amplify the wonderful and unique stories of these families. I am eager to share each and every one of these stories. They symbolize the centering of traditionally otherwise silencing of their narratives, whose familial and cultural power deserve to be amplified, the righteousness of their lived experiences admired and revered, and the celebration of their lives documented. Therefore, although the story of one family sharing their truth about their lived experience represents the singularity and significance of the stories of all families of color labeled with learning disability.

For the purposes of this research study and in preserving the confidentiality of all participants, I list each participant by pseudonym, parent/caregiver first, along with a brief introduction for each parent/child pair. Table 2 presents the participant profile by family and accompanied student. Tables 3 and 4 present some identity markers for both the adult participants (Table 3), as well as the minor participants (Table 4).

Marcus and Kai

Marcus – Identifies as a Multi-racial male using he/him pronouns, who lives in the Northern San Francisco Bay Area (Marin County) in San Francisco Bay Area. He was recently divorced and identifies as a single parent, although there is an active co-parent for their two children, sharing 50/50 custody for both. His former spouse, a musician, resided in a town 40 miles north of his residence, which meant long commute times for their two children, who were both participating in remote pandemic learning at the same school. At the time of the research interviews, he had recently moved into a 2 bedroom rental apartment in Northern Marin County. Marcus and his former spouse do not have family members who live in the area and therefore did not have familial support during their children's remote pandemic learning. His background is in multi-media, specializing in post-production and video editing. He is the father of Kai, who is a talented 12 year old, currently in the 6th grade. Kai had experienced years of bullying at the independent school they attended since Kindergarten. They were receiving financial assistance from the school. After the research interviews, Marcus was laid off from his full-time job at a school, and his two children also left the school and started at a different school mid-year.

Kai – Identifies as gender non-binary and uses they/their pronouns. They identify as White, despite presenting as a person of color. One of Kai's parent identifies as White and presents as White, while the other parent, Marcus, identifies as multi-racial and presents as a person of color. Their interests are in media, art and 3D. Kai evolved as a media artist during remote pandemic learning. Kai preferred the learning-at-home, as they didn't have to address the social challenges they faced at school. Kai did not have local extended family members to assist with their academic needs, but Marcus fostered Kai's needs through research, daily habits and balancing social needs through digital platforms. Kai and Marcus appeared to have a very close father/child relationship and shared similar interests. Kai expressed improving in their media skills during the pandemic. They were labeled with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ADD).

Marla and Wayne

Marla – Identifies as White, middle class, gender non-binary, using she/her pronouns, and sharing parenting duties with Marla's former-spouse, a gender non-binary caregiver of color living in separate households with weekend custody and visits with their twin children. This parent is Wayne's biological father and has custody of Wayne and twin sibling every Friday and Saturday. Wayne is a student participant of this study. The mutually agreed-upon arrangement is one that benefits the family, including Wayne and his twin sister. Marla also parents with a third parent who shares the same household with Marla, Wayne and Wayne's twin sibling, identifies as a parent of color, is Wayne's step-parent, and shares physical residence with Wayne. Marla is an educator teaching English to English Language Learners in San Francisco Bay Area, and resides in Oakland, California. Marla is concurrently obtaining their Doctorate in Education. Marla was Wayne's main academic support during remote pandemic learning.

Wayne–- Identifies as male and uses he/him pronouns. He identifies as Black/White multi-racial. His mother identifies as White. He has one father, who he resides with and who identifies as Black. His biological father identifies as White. He was female assigned at birth, and has a fraternal twin who identifies as female and was assigned female at birth. Wayne is in the 6th grade and attends a charter arts school in Oakland, CA. His interests are in digital media and has grown in his craft during remote pandemic learning. His specialty is 8-bit animation loops. He was labeled with being on the autism spectrum after his mother made observations during his 5th grade year at a private elementary school in East Bay.

Abby, Jane and Anna

Abby – Identifies as cisgender female, using she/her pronouns. She is fourth generation Chinese American and identifies as upper middle class. She lives in San Rafael, California, a town in the North San Francisco Bay Area. She has a Bachelor's in Arts and has been an educator for 30 years at an independent school in Marin County. Her husband has also been a longtime educator in special education. She is an adoptive mom to twin girls, Jane and Anna, whom she adopted when they were infants. Abby has family who live locally, however they did not assist during remote pandemic learning. Abby has been raising her twin girls, Jane and Anna, to be autonomous, and this was no different during pandemic learning.

Jane and Anna – 18 year old twin girls to Abby. Jane and Anna both use she/her pronouns. They are seniors in high school at an independent school in Marin County, California. They identify as upper middle class and are Chinese American. They enjoy sports and describe themselves as competitive athletes. They were both labeled with a language-based learning disability. They received positive messaging around their diagnosed learning disability while in middle school. Their middle school provided them with a strong foundation and tools that seem to stay with them as they complete high school and begin to apply to colleges. They used their intersectional identities as an adoptee, a woman of color, as a middle class family amidst privileged communities in the social circles they belonged in. They expressed the positive messaging from their parents very early on that helped them form their school and larger social identities as they aged. They both seemed very comfortable with their learning disability labels and used them to their advantage. They expressed that their high school also had positive messaging and acceptance around their learning disability labels and collaborated with them to discover and foster the most ideal learning conditions for them.

Selena and Peter

Selena – Identifies as a Hispanic female using she/her pronouns. The other parent who is not an active parent in Selena's child's life identifies as half Cuban and half European. Selena is a single parent living in Marin County working remotely full time for a national grocery store chain, in addition to maintaining a 'side gig' for a skin care line. She is the mother of Peter, her youngest of two sons, and is the primary head of household. She has another son who is a high school student. Selena's mother lives locally and had assisted Selena during the pandemic with at-home learning while Selena worked for both of her jobs. Selena lives in a 2 bedroom apartment with Peter in San Rafael, California. She mentioned how she struggled to find the right school for Peter and his unique needs. After the research interviews, she pulled Peter out of the specialized independent school for gifted students so that he could return to his previous school community that better matches his social needs.

Peter – Identifies as cisgender male, using he/him pronouns. He identifies as multi-racial Hispanic. He is in the 5th grade, aged 10 and has an older half-brother who is 17 years old. He attends an independent school in Marin County for gifted children. He is an outgoing boy who enjoys football, basketball and soccer. He was labeled with ADHD and as being gifted. In schools, he was labeled as a troublemaker by a number of school teachers who did not understand him as a learner. Peter expressed that the school he attended during the research interviews was challenging for him as the pedagogy was not something he was accustomed to. He said he felt 'stupid' in class and did not feel comfortable requesting supports pre-pandemic and during the pandemic. During remote pandemic learning, Peter received additional supports from his grandmother, who is a former school teacher. He expressed enjoying the learning-at-home model in some ways and also wanting to return to school for the social aspects of the school community.

Sarah and Jacob

Sarah – Identifies as a White female using she/her pronouns. She is a public school educator and her husband is also a public school educator. They live in San Rafael, California. They are adoptive parents to Jacob and his biological brother, from Ethiopia. She had the intention to adopt both boys so that they could grow up with biological family members. She lives in Marin County with parents who live nearby and are actively involved in their children's lives. Both mothers on each side were very supportive during remote pandemic learning and regularly visited to support Jacob, who expressed his appreciation and enjoyment learning-at-home with his grandmother.

Jacob – Identifies as Black and cisgender male, using he/him pronouns. He is 12 years old and in 7th grade. He attends the local public middle school in his school district and bikes to school every day. His biological brother from the same mother is also adopted by the same family with Jacob. Jacob enjoys hiking, riding his electric scooter around the neighborhood and being with friends. He was labeled with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Tourette's Syndrome. Jacob preferred learning-at-home because his grandmother understood his needs and picked up on his cues. He did not feel comfortable seeking support from school pre-pandemic, and said he would 'try harder' in school in order to improve his academic standing.

Cecilia, Tasha and Donovan

Cecilia – Identifies as cisgender, multi-racial with Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Black, Irish, White. She is mother to Tasha and Donovan, and expecting her third child. She works remotely and part time for a local school district. Cecilia uses she/her pronouns. She lives in Marin County and grew up in the area. She is the mother of Tasha and Donovan. Cecilia's husband is a military soldier and was stationed elsewhere. But when he did return home, he would assist with academics, dinner and other household duties. Cecilia was very active in both of her children's remote learning and provided both of them with additional supports using the knowledge and connections she had within the school district. After the research interviews, she and her family relocated to another state and made a career transition into real estate. Cecilia and her family did not have extended family members who lived locally, therefore she did not use familial resources during pandemic learning. However, she continued to provide her two children with supports through tutoring services, extracurricular activities and social outlets.

Tasha – Identifies as cisgender female, using she/her pronouns. She is multi-racial and is 12 years old. She is in the 7th grade at the local public middle school. Her interests are cheerleading, illustrations, shopping and hanging out with friends. She is Donovan's older sister. She was labeled with ADHD. She expressed her preference to return to in-person learning and felt she was better supported at her local public school pre-pandemic because she had learning specialists with whom she could check in. Tasha is a student who advocated for her needs and felt that resources were better attainable in person because she 'could walk into her teacher's classroom if she needed help'. During the pandemic, she did not have this resource but managed to pivot to online learning and online social outlets.

Donovan – Identifies as cisgender male, using he/him pronouns and identifies as multi-racial. He is 10 years old and in the 5th grade. He enjoys traveling, soccer, gaming and family. He is Tasha's younger brother. He was labeled with ADHD.

Table 2
Family Participant Identity Profiles

Name	Gender identity	Racial identity	Family structure	Socioeconomic identity	City	Disability Label
Marla (parent)	Non-binary (she/they)	White	3 parents, twins	Middle class	Oakland	
Wayne (Marla's child)	Male; female assigned at birth (he/him)	Black/multiracial	3 parents, twins	Not mentioned	Oakland	Autism spectrum
Abby (parent)	Female (she/her)	5th gen Chinese American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	
Jane (Abby's child)	Female (she/her)	Asian American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Language based
Anna (Abby's child)	Female (she/her)	Asian American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Language based
Selena (parent)	Female (she/her)	Hispanic American	Single mother	Did not share	San Rafael	
Peter (Selena's child)	Male (he/him)	Hispanic American	Single mother	Middle class	San Rafael	ADHD, gifted
Marcus (parent)	Male (he/his)	White multi-racial	Recently divorced	Did not share	San Rafael	
Kai (Marcus' child)	Female assigned at birth (they/them)	Multi-racial	Recently divorced	Not mentioned	San Rafael	ADHD, ODD
Sarah (parent)	Female (she/her)	White	Adoptive family	Middle class	San Rafael	
Jacob (Sarah's child)	Male (he/him)	Black	Adoptive family	Not mentioned	San Rafael	ADD, Tourette's Syndrome
Cecelia (parent)	Female (she/her)	Multi-racial – Native American, Puerto Rico, Irish Black	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	
Tasha (Cecilia's child)	Female (she/her)	Black, Latinx, multiracial	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	ADHD
Donovan (Cecelia's child)	Male (he/him)	Multi-racial	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	ADHD

Table 3
Adult Participant Profiles

Name	Gender identity	Racial identity	Family structure	Socioeconomic identity	City	Profession
Marla	Non-binary (she/they)	White	Biological co-parent in a 3 parents, twins	Middle class	Oakland	Educator/doctorate student
Abby	Cisgender Female (she/her)	5th gen Chinese American	Adoptive mother in two-parent family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Educator for 29 years
Selena	Cisgender Female (she/her)	Hispanic American	Biological single mother	Did not share	San Rafael	Working remotely
Marcus	Cisgender Male (he/his)	White multi-racial	Biological father, recently divorced	Did not share	San Rafael	Working full-time
Sarah	Cisgender Female (she/her)	White	Adoptive mother in two-parent family	Middle class	San Rafael	Public school educator
Cecilia	Cisgender Female (she/her)	Multi-racial – Native American, Puerto Rico, Irish Black	Biological mother in traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	Educator for school district

Table 4
Minor Participant Profiles

Name	Age/grade	School/City	Racial identity	Gender identity	Socioeconomic identity	Disability label
Wayne	12/7th grade	Charter arts, Oakland	Black/White Multi-racial	Male; female assigned at birth (he/him)	Not mentioned	Autism spectrum
Jane	16/12th grade	Independent high school, San Rafael	Asian American	Female (she/her)	Upper middle class	Language-based
Anna	16/12th grade	Independent high school, San Rafael	Asian American	Female (she/her)	Upper middle class	Language-based
Peter	10/5th grade	Independent for the gifted, San Rafael	Hispanic American	Male (he/him)	Middle class	ADHD, gifted
Kai	10/5th grade	Independent K-8, San Rafael	Multi-racial	Female assigned at birth (they/them)	Not mentioned	ADHD, ODD
Jacob	12/7th grade	Public middle, San Rafael	Black	Male (he/him)	Not mentioned	ADD, Tourette's Syndrome
Tasha	12/7th grade	Public middle, San Anselmo	Black, Latinx, Multiracial	Female (she/her)	Middle class	ADHD
Donovan	10/5th grade	Public elementary, San Anselmo	Multi-racial	Male (he/him)	Middle class	ADHD

Thematic Findings

This section examines the findings from this study that emerged from the interviews conducted with each family. During each of the interviews, each of the questions delved deeply into each family's experiences, which uncovered several recurring themes for the families in this research study, uncovering the phenomenological nature of these findings. As the themes became more and more unearthed and other themes became confirmed, one overarching theme unraveled. Schools and school systems failed the families of color in my research study amidst COVID-19 both academically and socioemotionally. Despite this, an overarching discovery emerged from the narratives of the families of color in this research study. Students of color have reported positive learning-at-home experiences, and have been surviving and thriving during remote pandemic learning through familial-supported resources, strong cultural capital and positive at-home messaging.

Despite the literature in the field, there was not a direct relationship between socioeconomic status and the school/home experience in this research study. Rather, the data showed a relationship between close family relationships and familial support, with positive identity and positive school experience such as a parent/guardian sense of knowing, identity and belonging, social peer relationships, messaging and narratives at home, and discovering new ways of knowing and being. In other words, the students who had healthy, supportive networks at home were having positive experiences at school, regardless of their socioeconomic status or financial ability to pay for support or academic resources.

Within this overarching theme, there were three themes that emerged from the narratives and experiences of the families in this research study. The three themes are:

1. Familial resources and sense of knowing led to positive learning-at-home experiences
2. Academic experiences while learning-at-home were both consistent and inconsistent with pre-pandemic in-school experiences
3. Home-based identity and home-based messaging in relation to identity and messaging in school environments

Each of these three themes will be discussed in deeper detail in the subsequent headings and subheadings.

Familial resources and sense of knowing led to positive learning-at-home experiences

What emerged from the findings were the inductive themes during remote pandemic learning with COVID-19, which were that the families of color in my study had positive remote learning experiences due to familial resources, navigating access to external resources and families' sense of knowing, which are the subthemes that emerged from this thematic finding. It is important to acknowledge the socioeconomic status of these families as the majority of them identified as middle class and upper middle class. They do not identify as poor, which would elicit much different pandemic experiences especially had they been frontline workers, were furloughed or were more deeply financially impacted by the pandemic. These thematic findings are discussed in further detail below.

Familial Resources

The families of color in this study reported positive remote learning experiences during COVID-19 in terms of the support their children were receiving, and their overall experiences learning at home. One reason why these families were having positive experiences is due to their family's access to resources through their own personal knowledge and community networks. While families did not identify as upper class nor as having the financial resources to exclusively homeschool or hire a full-time tutor, these families were figuring out how to best navigate the learning-at-home while maintaining their full-time jobs and managing other parts of the crisis we were all facing. The families in this study were making a moderate, middle class to working class income as educators and managers.

Sarah, a public school elementary teacher whose mother lives in Walnut Creek, California, which is approximately 38 miles away from their home in Marin, took on the role of homeschool teacher for Sarah's son, Jacob (7th grade), during remote pandemic learning. Sarah recognizes her mother's role in Jacob's life and the importance of it. She shared a recent story that was demonstrative of their bond when Jacob had inadvertently witnessed a horrific accident in their neighborhood. He had witnessed a pedestrian 'get run over' when he and his friends were biking to school, who also happened to be one of his mother's students. Sarah recalls:

> But I had him come to school and there's this big rigamarole. But it was super cool because that weekend we were going to see my mom and he's like, 'can I talk to grandma?' ''m like, 'yeah, you go talk'. So they walked and talked for quite a while. And it was good because as you know, as a parent, sometimes the I'll tell you things, but not always. Sometimes they need someone else to process with. So it was awesome.

Sarah's mother-in-law, who lives in Placerville, California, approximately 140 miles Northeast of Marin, also became very involved in her grandchildren's distance learning schedule. Jacob's extended family, namely his grandmother, was instrumental in supporting him during remote pandemic learning. She understood his needs and supplied them for him, was a sounding board when he needed it, and she was a close family member. She was also a former school teacher, so she had the teaching knowledge and teaching experience, providing supports for him when he needed it. "When I went back to school, I got really hungry," Jacob reminisced about the limited access to snacks at his school, which was not conducive to learning. However, at home, when he was in the learning-at-home, his grandmother from Walnut Creek visited him daily, and they had developed a closer relationship. She also knew his hunger cues and knew him as a learner. Jacob said, "I liked what my grandma told me was work and I know being done really was and I like the way that I could get snacks whenever I want." Jacob felt supported, comfortable and loved in his learning-at-home environment where his grandmother acted as his teacher/tutor during the distance learning model. Additionally, Sarah has solid roots in their neighborhood, and their community network was an integral part of their lived experience. Sarah spoke about how Jacob's occupational therapist also being a local neighborhood family whom she met in their community. When it was his time to meet with her, he would scoot down to her home down the street. Sarah's husband also works in the local school district at the high school level as a basketball coach. The mother of one of the students he coaches is a therapist who visited Jacob at their house for therapy sessions during remote pandemic learning. Jacob's current teacher is also a parent of Sarah's school that she teaches at. She shares that, "he's like the nicest guy in the world and has such a good rapport with the kids. He just makes kids feel OK about not knowing something or being confused by something". Jacob's support network and community network are interwoven, making him feel like his home, his school and community life are merged into one. This supportive and nurturing environment has led to him having a positive learning-at-home experience.

Marcus utilized his technology skills to navigate remote pandemic learning for Kai (5th grade). For their social needs, Marcus spoke about knowing to set up a zoom meeting for Kai if they wanted to socialize with their friend, then commenting that after a few weeks, "Kai was setting up the whole meeting". Kai said they improved a lot on their illustration skills and would look online for style references. Kai said they would study "how some styles were done, like how to draw [a particular] character in the style it was drawn and would follow along and develop my own style". Kai started integrating a daily practice during the quarantine and continues to do so today. Through their social needs being met virtually and the new morning rituals Kai was receiving from their dad, Kai was reporting a new grasp of approaching learning within this distance learning model. The stress and anxiety around the bullying and the negative culture they experienced at school prior to COVID-19 had dissipated.

Selena's mother also stepped in during remote learning for (5th grade) and has been a significant role model for Peter in his identity formation. He identifies as Latino, "but when it comes down to it, I don't know, American/Mexican," he explained. His mother, Selena, identifies as Hispanic – her mother is from Mexico and her father is from France. While Peter's father is half Cuban. Peter says his roots are from South America, France, Cuba, Italy, Mexico. While Selena's mother speaks English, she communicates with her in Spanish sometimes. During the distance learning model, Selena worked remotely, which was helpful to her and Peter.

However, Selena recalls the challenges juggling full-time work while managing Peter and his learning-at-home schedule.

> Yeah, I mean definitely in the remote learning beginning there was a hump to get over, you know, and I'm lucky in that he's older, so he was 9, I guess. So definitely there's the understanding of hey, I'm on a call or I could be on video you know, with him barging in. But nothing like what I saw of other coworkers, you know. So it's like I knew it's not just me, you know. I mean, I saw plenty of kids running around naked in the background. And those are the ones that I my heart was like, oh, God, I can't imagine doing this with a toddler or baby. I could hear the baby crying. She's like, yeah, I'm nursing, I'm like, oh my God, like those are the moms who I know quit because they couldn't keep doing this work…it was tough moments like the one where I had to like, think and

> concentrate. It was hard to stay focused. I'm also ADHD so for me, I was like, ok, I was going to park myself in my room and lock the door and just blinders on. If you're bleeding like bang on the door, otherwise you're on your own, buddy.

Selena's work demands meant that Peter's school demands became something that Peter needed to address independently. Selena's mother's support and presence was helpful for their family and something they knew they needed. When Peter was in 4th grade, he had experienced bullying at his local public school and the parent explained that the school did not respond appropriately or sufficiently. The school had not recognized Peter's abilities and labeled him as a troublemaker in the classroom.

> Because he's known as the troublemaker, the teacher would call him out because he's labeled as the troublemaker, even if he didn't do it.

"I got framed a lot. I got blamed by my teachers. I got sent to the principal office like eight times," Jacob recalls from his experience at the public elementary he attends from Kindergarten to third grade. This left her no other option but to start her search for another school for Peter. He started 4th grade at a nearby parochial independent school where he subsequently was not challenged enough and reported being bored in class as his academic and social emotional needs were not being met. The mislabeling of 'troublemaker' followed him to this parochial school and his teacher would subsequently place him at the back of the classroom "where it was freezing," in response to her perceived notions of him. Selena then recalls that the COVID-19 quarantine was a blessing.

> So his label for troublemaker kind of followed him. When he moved into fourth grade, it was a different experience because covid was removed…and it was kind of this blessing.

This is when his grandmother would visit and support him while Selena worked. His only other social outlet was with Selena's boyfriends' cousins, who he would meet once per month. Peter was relieved to pivot to 'online school', where he wasn't being mislabeled or mischaracterized as the problem student, and received support from his maternal grandmother who understood him and respected him for who he is.

For so many students in this study, pivoting to remote pandemic learning[2] during the pandemic proved to be a relief and a blessing, as they found themselves in a learning-at-home setting with family members who understood them and their needs, were not being mislabeled as abhorrent, and were receiving special support from community members and extended family who genuinely cared about them and their needs.

Navigating access to external resources

Another factor that influenced these families during remote pandemic learning was their knowledge of their rights, along with their wherewithal to call upon certain organizations who were required to provide them with the support that their children needed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), when their school systems were failing to initiate this process for

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[2] Refer to Definition of Terms for distinction of terminologies 'remote learning, homeschooling, learning-at-home and schooling at home on page 21

them. Cecilia, who works for the school district and understands what her rights are, emailed the teachers and reminded them that Donovan needs to have support systems in place. She told them, "*so you guys need to set up one on one time with him*. And that's what they did. And then when we went to full remote, it was already built into his schedule…whatever is in their IEP, I do know that they have to accommodate it at that level. So even if they don't have the resources in-house, they'll have to outsource those resources". Cecilia is referring to the law called Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that is legislation for students diagnosed with a disability are required to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their academic needs (IDEA, 2004). There are 13 categories[4] of diagnoses that children must be diagnosed with in order to qualify for services. Many parents of children diagnosed with learning disabilities are not aware of this federal law that protects their rights to receive support within the school district. Since Cecilia works within the school district, she has knowledge of these rights. Her children Tasha (7th grade) and Donovan (5th grade) both have IEP's and accommodations, and throughout remote pandemic learning during COVID-19, have had external supports outside of the school system due to Cecilia's network and professional capital throughout her school district community. This kind of knowledge afforded Cecilia and her family the district support they needed during this global pandemic. Cecilia also had flexibility with her work schedule so she was able to help her children during remote learning during their school day. She recalls:

> Donovan sat next to me the entire time I worked, so I was in his class the entire time when we got to it, like in the other room. But I still helped Malia too. And it

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[4] 13 IDEA Categories are: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairments, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment including blindness (https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-main)

> was just a lot of juggling. I also don't start as early as they start school. Most of the time I don't start until like 10. So it gives me time in the morning with them. And then I work. I work more in the evening. So that's when they're done, basically, because I work for a school, but it's during the evening hours. We do have morning classes and I do have morning meetings and afternoon meetings. But it's not as demanding on me in the mornings.

In addition to these resources, Cecilia had developed many community-based and professional relationships.

> I think also what has really helped us a lot, too, is that I've always had a relationship with all their teachers, and we were all on a lot of different things together, equity teams and diversity training together. And we've been at the same school since Tasha was in first grade and Donovan was in Kindergarten. So we've gotten to grow those relationships with all the teachers and with the same principal.

Cecilia, who works for the school district, knew about the local high school offering a student tutoring program with high school seniors. The program had canceled the program due to the pandemic however Cecilia knew about those high school seniors who no longer had a job and her daughter, Tasha, needing additional academic support while learning-at-home, so she reached out to them and arranged this tutoring relationship for Tasha. Tasha met with her tutor three times per week during remote pandemic learning to assist with her homework.

Marla, who is also an educator, recalled their family's journey to Wayne's diagnosis of being on the autism spectrum. Wayne (6th grade) had attended a small, private elementary school in East Bay, where every child's learning profile was embraced, and prior to his 5th grade graduation, there was no indication to his mother or to his teachers, that he was neurodivergent in any way. Marla recalls,

> It was because of his graduation speech. His school has their fifth grade graduates make a graduation speech and it's very sweet, actually. But Wayne was terrified of this. I mean, like out of proportion, terrified of doing this project. And although there had been other clues beforehand during his childhood, that you know, that something neurodivergent might be going on, it was never anything enough to pursue a diagnosis until that moment when I was like, this is a step above just sort of sensory management differences and you know other things that were accommodated at school. This is something that I need to look into and we actually discussed this with his school and I was like, he's not going to be able to do this project in the traditional way. It's going to make him miserable.

The school immediately responded with understanding and accepted the idea of a slideshow that he narrated and pre-recorded. Although Marla thought it required a lot more work and effort than the traditional way, Wayne didn't think so. He said "it wasn't more work because it was fun." After this, Marla found an educational specialist who diagnosed him with being on the autism spectrum. They had received a neuropsychological evaluation that was covered by their insurance. With this, they started the process of accommodations and academic support by the time he entered the 6th grade, which is when the COVID-19 quarantine hit. By the time he was in the 6th grade, he had entered a new school–- a school of the arts in the East Bay. Marla said he had no problems fitting in socially as it was a good fit for him. Due to the pedagogy and culture of this school, additional supports were not needed for him as "this was the culture there.

Everyone was doing their thing". Due to Marla's knowledge and wherewithal as an educator, she had discovered the right school environment for him and he therefore was being supported through his school network, in addition to the supports he continued to receive at home.

Another family had a similar experience with their school community, a K-8 independent school whose teachers had recognized both Jane and Anna's language-based needs in the classroom. By the time they reached the 7th grade, they had been diagnosed through their K-8 school, which was fully funded by the school and the family were not required to pay for any of the supports out of pocket. They met an educational psychologist who performed a full neuropsychological evaluation on them in the 7th grade. Due to this diagnosis that was initiated and funded by their independent school community, Abby and her twin girls, Jane and Anna (12th grade), believed that they were well supported and received everything they needed in order to succeed academically and social-emotionally. During the pandemic, the twins were in their senior year of high school at another independent school in Marin County. Both of their parents are long-time educators and had discovered the right school community for them. Their mother and grandfather were both alumni of this school. They were both diagnosed with language-based learning challenges years prior and they receive accommodations in their classroom such as more time for quizzes and tests, using a computer to submit their work, in lieu of handwriting and were permitted to drop their language class in order to receive more one-on-one tutoring time during the school day. In addition to this positive, school-led support service, the messaging with the support was very positive. Jane recalled that, "since a lot of students may have extra time, I wouldn't be the only one in my class with extra time. And they're usually like a few other students. And then the teacher never forgot." She said it was a positive experience and it felt normalized for her and her sister.

Sarah, who is an educator and whose husband is an educator, has access to many resources for Jacob. In addition to Sarah's knowledge that Jacob qualified for supports such as occupational therapy, she also has access to people resources within her community-based networks, friends, neighbors, and work colleagues. His occupational therapist is a peer family who has ties with the school that Sarah teaches at. Jacob would simply walk to her house as she "lives right around the corner from them".

The families in this study had the wherewithal to navigate the right type of access to resources for their children, whether it was through their professional network, neighborhood community and/or knowledge of where to locate it. Despite the lack of supports some of their schools were providing during remote pandemic learning, these families knew how to navigate the system and knew about their children's needs, to provide the support for them.

Family's sense of knowing

Through families' familiarity, loving bonds, sense of knowing of one another, and sense of family belonging – having an understanding among family members and a feeling of cooperation and understanding–- family members experienced a sense of closeness and belonging with their families and homes during the quarantine. This sense of belonging, which was fostered through families' sense of knowing, was a common element found within these families that promoted positive and supportive familial experiences, something that was necessary during the pandemic. For Cecilia and her family, they had devised a family schedule for their dinner plans. "It was a lot of juggling, which means my husband always made dinner every Tuesday or take the kids out for something.” Within the social realm, they pivoted to meet Tasha and Donovan’s needs.

> So what we did during COVID is that we set up zoom sessions for Donovan and his friends to facetime with each other and play video games. They would call each other between their iPads and their parents’ computers and then play video games together…we set up a lot of those and it worked out great.

For Tasha, they arranged her to meet with friend who lived nearby and they would meet regularly outdoors when during the height of the pandemic, they were ordered to quarantine.

Sarah recalls a moment during the modified quarantine when Jacob demonstrated his protective nature and love for his older brother, who is non-verbal. Despite Jacob being the younger brother, he often is leading activities for the both of them.

> He’ll take on the older brother role sometimes when they're out and about. I'm like, ok go to Andy's market and go get sandwiches together. He does it but thinks of his brother as more of a chore than anything. And then he can be really sweet.

Sarah continues sharing about the time when they were both at the local after-school program associated with their school:

> So they were playing and everything was fine for a couple of days. And then Jacob came home really upset one day and starts crying. He said people were making fun of him…and he said, I got really upset. And I was like, OK, so what did you do? He said I told the teacher and then the teacher went over and talked to them and all that. So I was like, OK, like he did the right thing and he had the

> right emotion to protect his brother and also understood that that was not right. So, he might make fun of his brother when we're in in the house inappropriately, but when we're out and about, I know that he's going to protect him.

Sarah and her husband first adopted Jacob's brother and then adopted Jacob several years later. They share the same biological mother but that is all they know when they were dropped off at the orphanage in Ethiopia. Jacob was just four months old and had pneumonia and chicken pox simultaneously. Sarah shares:

> He was deathly ill when we got him…he was the happiest little baby ever. I already had his older brother and we had no idea how old he was. He was so sick with fragile x syndrome and H. pylori fungal infection all over his body. We changed his age because he was like seventeen pounds at three and a half years old and he could barely walk. We were like, he can't make it in America.

They did something similar for Jacob who was left at the orphanage without a date of birth. The parents believed that given his smaller stature and challenging start in life that resulted in delayed physical and developmental growth, they made the decision to give him an approximate later birthdate which they thought would give him the advantage he needed to succeed in America they believed that if he was perceived as younger than his actual age, it would give him some time to 'catch up' to American developmental and behavioral standards. Although this notion supports the ableist society we live in, the parents knew that this would provide him with more level footing in America if he was at a similar height and body size as other children. The intent behind these kinds of supportive acts by family members contribute to their sense of belonging with one another, and their close bonds as family members. The quarantine and learning-at-home were the ideal setting for these families to demonstrate their existing bonds with one another. For Abby and her twin girls who she had adopted from an orphanage in China when they were infants, their sense of connection and knowing was evident. Both Jane and Anna expressed their comfort and acceptance around their adoptive status. Jane explains:

> For me, it hasn't really affected me. When I identify as Asian or Chinese, it's more based on how I look rather than culturally. I think most people think we are half Asian and half White (because their adoptive father is White). People don't think we are adopted because we look like our mom. So I think people see us as half Asian.

The twins' father identifies as White. Anna adds: "It hasn't affected me that much. Definitely helped having my mom be Chinese and looking like her. So if we are out in public, it's not like we stand out in our family. So it hasn't affected me that much." Then Abby explains, "So it's not a secret. It's never been a secret in our family or with their friends. They know that it's something that we're very open about talking about". Their level of communication and sense of acceptance around their life and life choices seem very aligned within their family values. This is evident in Jane and Anna's college choices. Anna explains:

> I think college-wise, we are a very liberal family. I'm only applying to schools on the West coast. Most of them are liberal schools, thinking about college, I will be siding myself with more liberal people due to how we were raised and how we grew up.

The parent/guardians used their cultural capital–- abilities and knowledge navigating the system–- with their own known resources and access to resources, all to ensure that their children receive the support and resources they need amidst this challenging global time. All parents/guardians utilized their own knowledge and access to resources towards getting their children the support they need during the distance learning model, despite the lack of support they were receiving from school. Marcus shared extensively about the information he gathered from the number of resources he discovered when he researched more about Kai's diagnoses. From the independent research he conducted, some skills he acquired independently were -developing a new morning routine for his kids which included a morning breathing exercise and yoga to help start their day. Marcus' research provided him with the knowledge that he supports sugar breaks for both of his children.

> Sugar body breaks are great. They are great in small spurts for the brain. Better if you can get them exhausted before completely exhausted then starting and going for a short break. Everybody's different. I also start our day every morning doing a whole routine of breath work.

Marcus also discovered newfound knowledge about Kai's diagnoses, as well as his own self-awareness. He also shared his discoveries and knowledge within his community, including with me.

> I definitely want you to know about this. Dr. Russell Barkley. He's got some videos on YouTube that are like an hour long and he gives suggestions to parents. But, man, just so insightful about what's happening in the brain and that was

> important for me because I needed to understand. There’s a 3-hour video called Essential Ideas for Parents.

He goes on to provide me with more tips about OCD and ADHD, two of Kai’s diagnoses. Another observation that was made was within the interviewing process as both Marcus and Kai share an affinity for digital design and gaming. Marcus has knowledge and interest in the games Kai plays. They watch shows together and he explains in great detail about the game Kai has grown to appreciate during remote pandemic learning. Kai talks about their growing interest in Minecraft and Marcus explains the platform in great detail.

> So they host a realm multiplayer server that you can host and people can join. So it’s not some outside server that there’s crazy people swearing and stuff. It’s private so they can all just join and work on.

Families of color are often perceived as not having the wherewithal or sense of knowing to navigate organizational systems such as schools for their children due to the discrimination and racialization that occurs in all organizational systems that marginalize families of color. However, within their complex and nuanced multiply marginalized identities and the intersectional experiences linked to their identities, these families all demonstrated their capacity to provide for their children when schools, the government and society failed them, as evidenced above.

Public, Private and Charter Schools

Given the diversity of the different types of schools that the families in this research study attend, it is important to take a moment to analyze this data. Despite the notion that independent schools are known to have better and more access to resources compared to public or charter schools, this was not a consistent finding within this study. Public schools and some charter schools in the U.S. are also legally obligated under IDEA and ADA to provide support services for students labeled with disabilities. Independent schools and parochial schools are not under this obligation or any other legal obligation that are required for public and some charter schools, which adds another element in the study and the findings in this study, that the type of school the student participants attended did not correlate with traditional data points. The findings showed that there were mixed experiences for the students in this study – some attended public schools, some attended independent schools and one family attended a charter school. Specifically, attending an independent school did not guarantee a positive and supportive school environment for all students in this study. Similarly, attendance at a public school or charter school did not purport one kind of school experience. In fact, there was not a relationship between the type of school attended and the families' remote learning experience.

Three of the six families attended private schools, whose families were required to pay for their school tuition. Families who attended public and charter schools were not required to pay for any school fees. Abby with her twins, reported a positive experience at their independent school community and it was evident that they have a strong sense of belonging with their school community. Jane shares:

> I think the culture is not really negative. That's why a lot of students do have a lifetime of learning differences, like a lot of students and I have extra time. So it's not really seen as a negative. It's like very, very understated, like people don't really judge you for having to learn to fail, and they're very open, and most people will say, I have to go finish my test. It's more like great. Or lucky you. You have more time.

Jane shares her experience with disability labeling in her school and is seen as a privilege to have a disability label because they receive certain endowments or opportunities. For Marcus and Kai, it was a very different school experience for them. Kai had a positive start to their school experience at this school. They started in Kindergarten. But by the time they reached 3rd grade, they experienced bullying behavior from a number of their peers. They recall:

> Some kids were not the best. And they just weren't nice. The teachers were trying to keep me away from them because the other kids knew. But the kids that weren't nice, they caught on and so to make it not as suspicious, they moved only sometimes so they wouldn't think I was getting extra credit in a way.

Marcus went on to explain the teachers' reasoning, "So if I always kept you guys apart, it would be obvious that I was keeping you apart so they would put them back together again." The bullying behavior was difficult for Kai and also for Marcus. So the quarantine and learning-at-home came as a gift to them in many ways.

For Wayne, who attended a private elementary school in Oakland and who also may have had more resources than other Black identified children, had teachers who responded swiftly and positively to his families' needs but only when the parent reached out and initiated contact, which is part of the common private school culture that families and parents/guardians' needs are more readily met due to the tuition requirement. Prior to this moment that Marla had reached out, she saw no indication that Wayne was a 'different learner'. In anticipation of Wayne's 5th grade graduation, Wayne, along with the rest of his graduating class, were expected to write a graduation speech and share at the graduation ceremony. However, it was at this time when Marla had first noticed 'that something was different' with Wayne. Wayne told his mom that he didn't want to write it, it was then that she worked with him and discovered an alternative method that utilized Wayne's strengths and interests using visual slides. Wayne's school responded positively and supported his approach but only upon Marla's inquiry. It is important to acknowledge there the difference in experiences of a family whose child's school institution seeks out disability labeling within a deficit model, often times leading to oppression, mislabeling, inequities, violence. For Marla and Wayne, their experience was more supportive of the parent's awareness and observation that something was 'different' for their child and sought help and resources for an alternative that supported Wayne's needs.

Selena and Peter's experience at the independent parochial school was similar to Peter's experience at the public school where he was labeled as a troublemaker and his teachers hadn't requested that he get diagnosed, despite his teachers clearly misunderstanding him and his classroom behaviors. His current school year, where he transferred during the summer months of 2021-22, was just beginning when we had sat down for the first interview for this research study. This current school is an independent school for gifted learners. Peter was diagnosed as having ADHD and as being gifted. Selena explains the school curriculum:

> So everything is personalized – it's differentiated. It's totally so your speed. You might be really great at reading and this kid might be great at reading. This kid might be great at math. And so the report cards and all that stuff are adjusted to how do we know you and how well do you do in all your subjects? Are you really trying or are you just messing around and you know, you can do better. So it's all about keeping you challenged and it's not about 80% or a B. It's project based and I would hear students prefer to keep working rather than going out to play. I heard one student say they preferred school over home!

Selena continues to explain how they introduce an activity. She says that the way that Peter's teacher offers challenging assignments is giving him a paper with division questions on it. She said, "you can't just throw some stuff at him; there's got to be some guidance. Peter responded by saying "I don't like it because it's too hard" and Selena responds with "well, it's because it's the first time he's being challenged". Both Selena and Peter have a sense about the pedagogy not quite being ideal for Peter as there needs to be some instruction and support with new lessons. However, they hoped this school would suit his learning profile as a gifted learner. However, months after this interview, Selena updated me that Peter transferred back to the independent parochial school he had attended prior to this school because the school focused too much on academics without providing Peter with some help in learning the new concept. Selena said they would just give him a new assignment and expect him to figure it out. She continues to say that it was frustrating for him. She also said the school day didn't allow for much social time for Peter. By the end of the summer, a month after the final interview, he had returned to his previous school to be with his friends." It was not the right fit for Peter in terms of the balance of his social needs and academic learning profile.

The other families attend public schools and as indicated earlier, Sarah is happy about raising Jacob in this school and neighborhood community, given the access to resources for him. Cecilia has also felt pleased about the services Tasha and Donovan have been given, through Cecilia's network and access to her resources. So both Sarah and Cecilia stepped in using their cultural capital and wherewithal to fill in the gaps of the shortcomings of their public schools.

Summary— Surviving and Thriving

Despite what news media and social media was sharing about some families of color and their failed experiences during remote pandemic learning, the families in my study discovered new ways of learning, new discoveries of self, and building on their family and peer relationships. Despite the stories in media about the challenges associated with the pandemic, the families in this study reported so much growth and positive experiences. Marla learned about her children's learning styles and idiosyncrasies. She also learned about some more digital platforms that Wayne started using to stay in touch with his friends, such as Discord, an online chat platform for gamers. She also experienced lots of joy and laughter with her children. She reported some benefits of COVID-19, "where you can just have the time to just learn and explore and you know, hang out and do some things. Those were really nice. There were really nice to have that sort of just family downtime."

Jane talked about learning how to sew masks and had sewed a lot of masks during the quarantine. Anna learned,

> when you have to be inside, like, pretty much all day and you're pretty much stuck with your family for a while and doing things that I wouldn't necessarily enjoy, I found more fun. Like I went on runs, played basketball more with our family. And I tried to bake cupcakes. Oh yes. Good red velvet cupcakes. We get to bring those back. Yeah.

Sarah and Jacob both spoke about their family's increased hiking trips together during the quarantine. Jacob said, "It's lucky that we have trails here or I don't know what I would do. I go to the beach and stuff. Go on hikes."

There are bodies of literature that support the need to create opportunities to integrate the voices and lived experiences of students labeled with disabilities when designing curriculum (Reid & Button, 1995) and building community, de-centering non-dominant, able-bodied privilege and centering multiply marginalized students. Specifically, when lived experiences, storytelling and narratives are heard directly from students labeled with disabilities, the consistent themes of erasure, injustice, and centering white privilege and white heteronormative ableism arise (p. 225). The narratives that are being centered and celebrated in this study are an example of the centering of lived experiences heard directly from students and families. And instead of themes of failure and challenge, the themes of growth, joy, family and wisdom arise. When the paradigm shifts and these narratives are centered, we can begin to give back the power to the families of color who are living their lives in positive and supportive ways when these kinds of stories are centered and celebrated.

Consistent and new academic experiences during remote pandemic learning compared to pre-pandemic in-school experiences

Concurrently with these positive lived experiences and narratives, schools were failing students of color both pre-pandemic and during remote pandemic learning in various levels. The school-related support that families received during remote learning were all due to family navigation, resources, and sense of knowing, as explained in the earlier heading. Students and families used their knowledge, navigation skills, grit and familial resources during this time of global crisis and successfully navigated their way through the remote pandemic learning. This section illustrates each family's school experiences prior to the pandemic, during remote learning and within ableist academic expectations of their school and societal systems, and how the temporal snapshots have reflected similarly and differently for each family.

Pre-pandemic challenges

Prior to the pandemic, schools were, in many ways, failing to meet the needs of students of color labeled with learning disabilities. This was also evident for some of the families in this study. As discussed earlier, Selena and Peter's school experiences led them to feel the need to search for another school community; one that recognized Peter's identity as a gifted learner who wasn't challenged enough in the classroom, as opposed to being labeled a troublemaker by his teachers and consequently being demoted to sit in the back of the room. His teachers hadn't taken the time to get to know him enough to identify the need for a diagnosis. His ADHD coupled with his gifted learning styles meant he is a unique learner with specific needs that his former teachers were unable to support. So not only was he not being supported social emotionally, he wasn't being challenged enough nor being recognized for his abilities in his previous school communities. For Marcus and Kai, their recent school experiences proved to exemplify that not all independent school experiences are positive ones, regardless of the access to resources. Their experiences with bullying by a number of their peers and the challenges posed in their 3rd grade class with the dynamics of a tenured teacher who used punitive approach to learning and was ill-informed by Kai, became a hindrance to their school experiences, both socially and academically. Marcus said that the class actually put the classroom teacher into retirement, and that “it was too far gone because all the culture of the classroom was already in place and it was hard to really pull them out of that negativity, that spiral.” Marcus said they regressed at that point and became apathetic, bored and unchallenged, which led them to turn inward.

> I think that took a toll on [them] emotionally, which then caused, like the stress of being in school with these people or these girls that [they] felt weren’t being very nice or was in our best interest to reach out to anybody. So [they] just regressed in the classroom, regressed emotionally. And then the problem was piggybacking all of those things on top of a kid who was just evaluated with ADD.

Marcus’ also spoke about their families’ socioeconomic status and how it played in their experiences and sense of belonging within the school community. He shares that Kai is hearing about playdates that the other girls are having with one another and they’re not invited. Marcus talks about the socioeconomic divide that he feels and that he imagines they feel. “[They’ve] never really expressed it but I know there’s definitely some sadness. The rich parents sort of gravitate to doing playdates and things like that with other rich parents in the class. They speak about how the school attempts to make families feel belonging and equity but it isn't enough." He continues to share about his discomfort with the socioeconomic divide and experience at this school as a family.

> There's a reasoning behind it and it's my own personal reasons but short of you wanting to hear what that is and I think it's a pride thing where you know, as a person who is receiving financial aid for my child to attend school there. I try not to swallow up resources for other people that I know that the school is deserving could potentially need that. I would rather try to either figure it out myself or.. and this is the first year like where we actually said, look, we're going to utilize these resources now because we're at the sort of the home life, settling in a little bit and trying to provide [them] with just safety and security.

In addition to their feeling of being othered at the school, Marcus talked about Kai's learning style and not getting the classroom supports that they need. He says they are a visual learner and "the teachers know this is [their[learning style but they only sometimes help [them]". This family has been a part of the school since Kai was in Kindergarten and is currently in 5th grade. They receive financial aid and also have a second child who attends the school.

Cecilia's experience at Donovan and Tasha's schools are that prior to the pandemic, she was unaware of what her children were learning until back-to-school night or parent night.

> I didn't know really what the kids are learning other than like if I volunteered in class or back to school night or something like that, or they brought a project home or something because the policy is we don't have homework other than reading. So that's the only thing I did with my kids–- was reading.

This was hard for Cecilia, who is a hands-on parent with her children's educational experiences and support needs.

For other families, their pre-pandemic school experience had been somewhat positive. Marla, reported a positive experience at Wayne's 5th grade year as well as his first year in the arts school, when the pandemic hit. Marla mentioned that before 5th grade, there hadn't been any sweeping indications that Wayne needed to be diagnosed or have interventions in place. She said this was due to the integrated curriculum within the school that is designed to support all kinds of learners. It is also due to Marla's social capital and knowledge around how to navigate school culture. Marla knew this school was the right fit for Wayne, whose current school also has a similar pedagogy, which allows him to work on assignments without any need for accommodations or an IEP. Jane and Anna's school experiences are similar at their private high school in that they do not conduct IEP's and students receive more time on tests and quizzes, or are given other alternatives to complete their work. These kinds of accommodations are normalized in their school culture so there is no shame and it is perceived as being a gift by their peers. These stories are examples of positive anti-ableist pedagogies and practices that can be implemented in schools with ableist notions and practices, in addition to the social capital that both caregivers possessed, which led to securing 'right-fit' schools for their children, and then understanding how to navigate the school processes and relationships. Jane also shared that the teachers read over her profile and meet with her to discuss their learning styles and preferences and suggestions for how to make learning easier in the classroom. For Jacob, he's reported having a challenging time at school and feeling academically inadequate in comparison to his peers' academic abilities. His learning profile is not discussed and teachers do not reach out to discuss his preferences. All of these academic and non-academic factors impacted their all-school experiences as students.

During remote pandemic learning

Schools failed to support many students across the country throughout the transition to remote learning through the lack of tech support, academic support, and social support. For most of the families in this study, any level of support the families received was initiated by the family and family resources, with the exception of Jane and Anna pre-pandemic school experiences. However, during remote learning, students including Jane and Anna, felt they would not receive the support they needed if they reached out - whether it was technical support working on a new virtual platform, academic support within a new framework, or social emotional support and the impact of a new reality.

Jane explained, "since I was online, a lot of it was kind of just like reading and more like lecture style rather than trying to do group sessions in breakout rooms, but those didn't really work that well. People just kept their cameras off and not talk because there isn't a teacher there. They would stick like 10 kids in a breakout room and there is no moderator or anything." Anna shared that she really appreciated her class time, and that she liked the style of class discussions and the group work, and the group projects and how the information was presented in different ways. However, during zoom, "it was a little harder because it was a lot of reading and lectures and google slides, which was harder for me to ascertain the information. So, the work was harder and it was more like me having to research and figure it out myself, which is harder". Abby also reported discovering both Jane and Anna on the couch during school hours watching television when they were supposed to be in class. But due to the decreased expectations and limited engagement, they were 'bored'.

Jacob found his remote learning experiences really challenging, he said. However, he refrained from asking for help because he "didn't want to interrupt" the flow of the class and the teacher. He didn't believe his needs were important enough and found it hard to self-advocate in the classroom. This kind of oppression due to the messaging around the racialization in America is commonly reported. In the podcast, 'Things I didn't learn in school' by Paul Podolsky, his guest and old friend Gary comments, "You just have to be polite even if you are being disrespected at the time. You say yes sir, no sir" (NPR, 2021, 13:02). Gary refers to living with racialization within this era of the pandemic. So, the role that his grandmother had on his identity development as a learner and a student was instrumental in providing him with a positive remote learning experience. In addition, his unique intersectional identity as a Black student adopted by White parents, while growing up in a predominantly White suburban neighborhood is important to acknowledge.

For Cecilia's family, moving to a virtual platform was a lot for Tasha and Donovan, as well as for their mother, Cecilia. Cecilia found herself spending a lot of time assisting them with their assignments, helping them submit their work and attach it, and monitoring their progress, that Cecelia said was not something she was doing prior to remote pandemic learning because her children's teachers were assisting them in school. "I didn't want to be a teacher. It's too much work and just too many assignments. It was just too much stuff to juggle. So, the accommodations not only alleviated stress for Tasha but it alleviated stress for us". Tasha expressed that she preferred to be at school in person for the academic support as well as the social experiences, however, the pivot that Cecilia initiated for both Tasha and Donovan seemed very beneficial to her and her needs–- arranging the high school student visits through the community service program at the local high school multiple times per week and the continued accommodations that she demanded from the school, in addition to the flexibility in her work schedule and her husband stepping in on certain days to assist with homework.

For Kai, when they were asked the question about how much time they thought they spent focused on the class during remote learning, they reported 40% of the time. In the absence of their school's support, Marcus' approach was to provide a positive social emotional setting for his children with morning breath work and access to social experiences in Kai's preferred digital platforms.

Although Wayne's school culture is one that is accepting of students' unique learning profiles, during remote learning, Marla reported that the new concept for submitting online work through Google classroom was something that wasn't fully taught, so Wayne would think he was submitting work by clicking on the 'submit' button, without attaching work. "Yea, it was a totally new skill and it showed up even more in the academic stuff where we had ongoing months of issues with Google classroom. You know, there's a way where you can click 'completed' on a google classroom task but there will be nothing attached and nothing will have been turned in. You will get a zero." This was not fully understood by Wayne and a common response for many learners but the support was limited due to the platform.

These kinds of decreased classroom experiences of engagement, lack of school supports, and limited access for students to self-advocate for more support was a common theme among students in remote learning. Schools did not initiate conversations with families around support for their child and were failing families and their needs, as many of them were scrambling to continue to function as a school system within this new platform as well as manage their own personal needs and experiences with their own families' school, health and financial shifts. Families, therefore, found themselves in the position to step in and take the initiative where schools were failing them and the result was that they were in essence saving the institutions.

Summary – Ableist academic expectations

The remote pandemic learning during this global crisis perpetuated ableist notions, standardized inequities and the centering of white heteronormative framework that families of color were functioning within prior to the pandemic. The families in my study reported positive remote learning experiences overall however, media reported 'learning loss' (NPR Morning Edition, 2020, :34), this study calls to the attention the distinction of what makes a good student and what makes a good learner, in addition to what framework is centered, and whose needs and narratives are invisible. The country's emphasis on the expectations of grades within a standardized model and ideal class engagement pre-pandemic, while centering white able-bodied voices and identities in curriculum, was perpetuated during remote pandemic learning for so many multiply marginalized students. *What would it look like if the focus of education was on student's growth and learning, rather than on the expectations of them? How can schools look to families and students for advice on how to support their unique needs rather than expecting them to fit within the standardized mold?* These kinds of questions are at the heart of dismantling ableist white supremacist and heteronormative notions of what it means to be a good student and therefore whose identities as centered and celebrated. Within a DisCrit framework, these traditionally ableist notions are challenged, dismantled and decentered. During remote pandemic learning, families were expected to step in where schools had failed them. For parents/guardians who were then forced to continue working and making an income while juggling homework checks, tutoring their children, monitoring their classroom engagement. Many students were left to their defenses and were found sitting in front of the television during school hours or laying in their beds. Marla explained it succinctly when she said “there was this sort of built-in assumption that most people were at home and kind of, you know, doing things ad hoc and maybe I was busy and I didn’t have time to supervise stuff.” Schools had assumed and expected that families were stepping in to assist their own children, which was a huge burden on families.

An anomalous finding was discovered within one family’s story in this study and their remote learning experience. Although Jane and Anna explained that they weren’t receiving the supports they needed from their school and felt like they couldn’t ask for the help they needed, since they needed in person group work time as well as more in person engagement, they continued to consistently receive ‘A’s in their classes. The school culture at this independent high school continued into the remote learning model. So just like the curriculum was adjusted to fit each student while they were in person, the same differential instruction was applied for the remote learning model for them. For Jane and Anna, who were diagnosed with language-based learning differences, the adjustment during remote learning was the expectation to read two to three books as opposed to three to four books. They were given more time to complete tests and quizzes. “It was like I could do it at midnight so we do it whenever we wanted and pretty much take as much time as we wanted, which was definitely nice since online they shortened our class like how much time we were actually in class.” They also talked about their teachers creating space for self-advocacy. “Our teachers are super supportive. And my understanding is like we need an extension or if we need it. And like you, I could email like most my teachers or meet with them during tutorial and like talk to them if I needed anything, which was really nice," Anna shared. This approach to instruction for this independent high school was student-centered and outside of the ableist paradigm and expectations. The result was that Jane and Anna's identities around their disability labels were not based in shame or abhorrent, but rather based in self-acceptance and normalization. This model is an exemplification of how students can feel accepted, centered and celebrated with their neurodivergent identities. Freire challenges scholars to think about how school personnel can use transformative praxis (1970) to actively dismantle dysfunctional education ecologies through a shift in both their epistemological and axiological commitments to develop functional ecologies of learning by enacting a DisCrit Classroom Ecology (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). In the lived experiences of five of the six families, this kind of dysfunctional school system is the foundation in which their expectations and paradigms function.

Home-based identity and home-based messaging in relation to identity and messaging in school contexts

Another emerging finding was that students of color who were receiving positive messaging, acceptance and conversations at home resulted in a sense of belonging at school contexts, school connections, and awareness of self-identity. The strong sense of identity created a sense of self-identity that carried over into the school community, despite the lack of support and fostering of positive acceptance of identity. Additionally, contradictory to these findings were alternative findings that students' experiences of inequities were perpetuated in the home/school correlated messaging for some students and families.

Merging home/school experiences and messaging

Home life and messaging is a large proponent of students' overall self-acceptance and identity formation. Students whose home messaging was positive, reported having a positive sense of self in school environments. In other words, students who had a positive sense of self in school environments pre-pandemic and during the pandemic were also receiving positive messaging at home around gender identity, their labels of learning disabilities, and their socioeconomic identity Marla spoke about her family's identity and acceptance of both their gender fluid identities and their 'whole family's neurodivergence". Marla and Wayne integrate the pride and celebration of their neurodivergent and gender non-binary identity at home, as well as his neurodivergent identity at home.

> That seems perfectly reasonable to me, right? He's made an assessment, he hasn't been given enough data to make a different assessment other than I don't feel like it. I don't see the value in this task so therefore I'm not going to do it seems perfectly, you know, seems a rational decision to me. I mean, it's just not compliant, right. And so, you know, it's not hard to get but it needs to be there and we'll do it.

Marla explains her support around the rationalization that Wayne makes when he decides he doesn't find value in the assignment he has been assigned but that because of the standardization model set forth in schools, he is obligated to do it and his value as a student is based on his performance on these expectations. Selena and Peter talk about his labels of ADHD and being gifted, referring to his school as a ‘smarty pants school’. They also talk about his Hispanic identity. Peter recalls, “I remember a couple years ago, we had to do some reports on our ancestors. Where are they from? (to mom) South America, Cuba, Italy, Mexico”. Abby, Jane and Anna have all shared the acceptance and normalizing of their adoptive identity and background, as well as their ‘language-based learning disability’ that they have a positive association with and don’t feel shame around. These messages have also been accepted at school. Cecilia shared her family’s background and identifies as multi-racial with Native American, Puerto Rican and Irish Black. She believes her identities influence the way Tasha and Donovan identify. Tasha identifies as Black, Latinx and multi-racial. Donovan was unsure and did not answer.

These oppressive notions of white heteronormative dominance and power are further perpetuated in societal racism and injustice in the dominant discourse and messaging for students of color, those with disabilities and other multiply marginalized identities witness everyday (Muller et al, 2019). The result is that students of color and those multiply marginalized students who have been labeled with disabilities tend to be misperceived and treated as sub-human and ill-equipped, rather than seen as unique learners. Furthermore, the cultural capital of families of color are not centered, celebrated or even acknowledged in schools or in society. The stories of rich culture, and the pride of their families and way of life are often erased, decentered and stereotypically demonized as stories that are negative, troubling and undesirable. Thus, their unique approaches and responses to navigating the distance learning model have been perceived as challenging and negligent. Yet, the richness of culture of the families of color in this study demonstrate a solid support system, access to familial resources and sense of knowing that has been a huge support for the children of color in this study. This is a powerful message that exemplifies the power of culture, family bonds and sense of knowing for these families of color.

Furthermore, positive identity formation leads to greater satisfaction in school environments and experiences. These positive identities may lead to belonging at school and when discovering their community circles.

Perpetuation of inequities

For some students and somewhat contradictory to the above findings, learning-at-home experiences perpetuated the inequities and messaging at school with ableist paradigms and expectations. Although this may be more nuanced with students of color labeled with milder learning disabilities, school systems are founded upon standardized models that are reductionist in nature. It is reductionist in nature because under scientific, medical and psychological discourses, the very process of ruling out or confirming a learning disability is pathologizing and problematic in that it dichotomizes normalcy (versus being abnormal) and individualism, as these differences are being studied from a deficit model. These dualisms perpetuate the sense that extend deep within the student's "most private deliberations about their worth and acceptability" (Reid & Valle, 471), incurring lasting, lifelong impacts on the individual student and their families. The learning disability label in schools are perceived as erroneous and inadequate. Parents and families also internalize the oppressions of these ableist notions that have been taught in schools and in society especially for students of color who are multiply marginalized and experience erasure in society.

Families also succumb to the standardization and ableist notions of education, because this messaging is so pervasive, so deeply immersed in our societal and academic institutions. It is this cognitive dissonance that occurs within the best of us for we all buckle down to the systems we live in. When we as parents/guardians have expectations for our children to strive for A's and

B’s on our report cards rather than hear from them what they think is working in the classroom, or when we remind our children to sit still and focus on their homework rather than reminding them to take a body break, or when we ask them to ‘try harder’ as opposed to having expectations for their teachers to re-evaluate the teaching model for your child.

There is a lack of narratives of students of color in schools. Families are unaware of how to approach interrogating multiple viewpoints, or to seek out silenced voices or to advocate for counternarratives to the dominant discourse in schools and classrooms. Families are unaware of disability rights movements as they are not openly shared in the public sphere, in media or in any institutions. Families are unaware because of the lack of exposure, the lack of counternarratives of families of color and those labeled with learning disabilities. Many schools, society, and institutional systems lack the knowledge and means to decenter white ableist paradigms, stories and voices. So, our communities – both local and global–- have this need to shift this focus when mainstream media and community leaders, governments and large institutions have failed to acknowledge these inequities of those labeled with disabilities and those who are multiply marginalized.

Analyzing discourse

Analyzing discourse refers to the way that I, as a researcher, analyzed the way that families and students expressed themselves and the types of words they used to describe their experiences. This analysis helped provide insight into their own paradigmatic lens and their lived experiences, and the terminology and language that families use to describe disability.

All of the families in this study demonstrated a true love and care for their children and the well-being of their children. It was so evident that they wanted only the best for their child’s academic, social emotional and overall needs. However, there was no discussion of disability rights movements that their family had knowledge of. As Morrell (2008) writes, “Theorists and social scientists all content that we are socially constructed, linguistically mediated being. We define ourselves largely through our interactions with ideologically laden language and texts” (p. X). The heart of a DisCrit framework is that students and families may gain a sense of liberation from their own and others’ constricted views. Without exposure to the focus and acknowledgement to the inequities of the multiply marginalized, without the focus on sociopolitical issues, without community leaders modeling how to analyze how people and ableism is positioned and constructed in media and society, we are then stuck to the confines in which our society and systems function.

When we look at the framework in which ableism functions, it is pervasive in our society, including our school systems. Standardized and state mandated curricula are designed using a medical model of disability – that learning differences are diagnoses that are abhorrent and need to be corrected. When school systems are built upon these ableist notions, it is hard for us all not to fall victim to it. In Chapter III, I discussed social, community and on-the-ground movements that are powerful ways to acknowledge and celebrate the counternarratives of the multiply marginalized.

Summary – Centering narratives of multiply marginalized students and families

As mentioned earlier, it has been my hope and goal for this study to begin to counter ableist notions and center the voices of those who have been labeled with learning disabilities, in order to achieve racial, socioeconomic and gender justice especially in the age of COVID-19. The centering of these voices can be achieved through the interviews with these families in this study, exploring the unique experiences of these students and families, and building a platform for them to amplify their narratives. This is one way to shift the voice of power and dominant narratives, and begin to understand their lived experiences as a way to decenter and dismantle white privilege, white ableism and white supremacy. The multiply marginalized identities of the families in this study are unique to each family and student. Given their working class to middle and upper-middle class identities, intersecting with their traditionally oppressed racial, gender and disability identities, their experiences are unique. These families were not in a position to hire full-time tutors or have a parent stay at home to manage remote pandemic learning, as they were all juggling their full-time professional roles along with their children's distance learning needs. Still, their social status may have influenced their access to resources while living in predominantly higher median income neighborhoods in Marin County and East Bay, in comparison to other neighborhoods across the country.

It is my hope that academic institutions can shift the paradigmatic lens in which the systems and teachers provide the messaging of ableism and disability labels. It is my hope that these counternarratives can show up more in teacher training and be integrated into school curriculum. It is my hope that schools acknowledge their role and influence on families of color and all of the nuances associated with their unique intersectional identities, and function within a safe space of love, authenticity and advocacy. In this way, students and families can feel a true sense of belonging and acceptance of all of their identities.

Findings based on research questions

In addition to the thematic findings that were uncovered from the data, I wanted to return to my research questions to seek the answers to them and whether these answers were discovered through the articulation of my findings. What I discovered is that the thematic findings presented align with the research questions that guided my study. I address each research question below and discuss the findings related to each.

Findings for Research Question #1

1.) (a) How did children of color, who are labeled with learning disabilities, and their families navigate schooling at home as a result of COVID-19?

(b) What challenges and/or opportunities were created for these children and their families while schooling at home?

Overall, the families in this study reported as having positive remote learning experiences, learning new skills, pursuing interests, and having the freedom and the space to learn in their own unique ways. Within a DisCrit framework, the questions that guide this research study seek to discover the unique experiences of families of color while centering their voices. This first research question seeks to do just that. Each family in this study shared their learning at home experiences, and the challenges and opportunities during the distance learning model during the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Marla and Wayne had a positive learning-at-home experience overall. During the onset of the distance learning model, Wayne finishing 5th grade at the private school in East Bay, where Marla and Wayne had a wonderful school community experience. They worked with her and Wayne to ensure a positive experience. Marla then moved Wayne to a charter arts school in East Bay that proved to be a very good fit for Wayne, academically, socially and with identity development. Marla commented on his academic evaluations as being “low and barely passing” however, this was not important to Marla. What was most important to Marla is whether Wayne is enjoying his school experience. Wayne reported as enjoying his school experience both pre-pandemic and during the learning-at-home model.

Abby, Jane and Anna also reported having a positive learning-at-home experience as well as a positive pre-pandemic experience. Jane and Anna both attend an independent high school during the pandemic and learning-at-home model. They reported as having both a positive academic performance as well as positive remote learning experiences both socially and academically. Although they didn't initiate additional support during the remote learning, their reasoning was due to their belief that they wouldn't be served. Their teachers recognized the need to lower expectations for academic performance during the remote learning and accommodated students' needs within their limited capacities.

Although Selena and Peter had a rough start with the distance learning model and also having to switch schools for Peter during the pandemic at-home model, Peter felt supported and comforted learning at home with his mother who worked remotely and his grandmother who frequented his home to support his needs.

Marcus and Kai reported challenges pre-pandemic, around the lack of supports they received from the independent school Kai attends, as well as the bullying experiences they had pre-pandemic. The learning-at-home model proved to be a blessing for Kai. Kai's father, Marcus, worked hard to support their needs during remote learning through his own research on their diagnoses, as well as giving them the space they need to grow and exercise their independence through their online gaming community, their digital art and their social needs.

Sarah and Jacob also reported a positive learning-at-home experience. With Sarah's community and network, and Jacob's affinity with his maternal grandmother and her ever-present support, Jacob reported as having a much better experience with remote learning than he did in-person at the local public middle school. He learned how to appreciate his natural surroundings in Marin County through the family hiking they did together, his frequent exploring in his neighborhood on his electric scooter, and his relationship with his grandmother.

Cecilia, Tasha and Donovan also reported as having a positive learning-at-home experience. Although Tasha commented on wishing she was in person for both the social aspects as well as the academic supports she received, Cecilia utilized her community networks and knowledge to provide the support her children needed during the remote pandemic learning. Both Tasha and Donovan got their social needs met through the wherewithal of their mother, as well as utilizing digital platforms such as Facetime and Zoom, so Tasha and Donovan could continue to connect with their peers and neighborhood friends. Through the support of their parents as well as the resources Cecilia rounded up, both Tasha and Donovan received additional academic support while learning-at-home, despite the lack of support they received at school.

Findings for Research Question #2

2.) How did schools and districts interact with the families of children of color who are labeled as having a learning disability to provide support and how closely did this support match the needs of families while schooling at home?

Although schools and school districts were not in a position to offer specialized support to students during the remote learning, families were being supported through their own network of familial resources and the feeling of knowing. The findings related to this research question were delved deeply in the thematic findings discussed earlier. Each family’s experiences with their schools were unanimously similar in that the parents and students did not feel supported during remote pandemic learning. The needs of the families and students were not in alignment with the support that schools could offer to families. This is not to minimize the experiences of students in general education during this global pandemic. Schools, overall, were not equipped to offer the support that families needed, and families were well aware of this, as evidenced in the thematic findings above. Many families such as Sarah and Jacob, and Cecilia, Tasha and Donovan were receiving the supports they needed through familial resources as mentioned above whether it was academic in nature or in other ways through the families' community networks. While families such as Marla and Wayne, and Abby, Jane and Anna were not receiving any additional supports from their schools because they did not initiate any conversations to receive additional supports from the school during remote learning. Jane and Anna did not believe their school was equipped to offer additional supports during the remote learning and the unique platform students were using that had limitations. Jane said she didn't ask for additional help, "because my request would probably be more group work, but I understand that that's not really possible". Marcus and Kai did not ask for support because their pre-pandemic experience was challenging and they did not believe the school could provide the kind oof supports they needed. Marcus designed a daily ritual for Kai and their sibling to create an at-home learning environment that fostered positive learning-at-home experiences such as a morning stretch, body movements and meditation/breath work. The families in this study recognized the limitations and pivoted in order to meet their own needs.

Findings for Research Question #3

3.) (a) How have students of color and their families labeled with disabilities by schools come to understand their identities as learners in new ways as a result of distance learning?

While all of the families in this study found some aspects of remote learning challenging such as the adjustment to a new digital platform with little supports and multiple devices adding more wireless fidelity (wifi) traffic, they also discovered new ways of learning during remote learning. Tasha discovered new ways of illustrating and digital platforms, while also learning more about her preference for learning in a group setting as opposed to independently. Kai improved their illustrating skills as well as bonding with their father while learning-at-home, as they all schooled and worked together at home. Jane and Anna also spent more time refining their non-academic skills such as learning how to sew masks. Jane recalls, “oh yea, she sewed a lot of masks”. Anna did some baking – “good red velvet cupcakes. We gotta bring those back”. They also went hiking and learned how to come up with new ways to stay in touch with friends. Anna shared “doing things that I wouldn't necessarily enjoy, during covid, I found more fun. I went on runs and we played basketball more with our family.” Jane also said that the pandemic reminder that she’s a very hands-on learner and enjoys group projects best.

All of the families in this study discovered their pre-existing abilities and skills around adaptability, resourcefulness, and family closeness and knowing. The parents/caregivers demonstrated their feeling of knowing of their own children best and their children learned more about their own needs and factors to support a positive learning environment for themselves. They learned how to be resourceful in their own ways – finding and securing their own supports systems, for example, meeting their social needs through digital platforms like Discord, Minecraft and Zoom. They also knew that they could count on their own family members for support because they know them best.

(b) How can schools learn from families to create a rehumanizing post-pandemic school context for students of color labeled with disabilities?

These families knew what their children needed and had demonstrated a deep sense of knowing of one another. Both the parents/caregivers and their children know one another's needs and acted upon them during this newly challenging time during the global pandemic. As a researcher, it was so humbling to witness. It was also a necessary reminder for me as a mother to remember that I'm not in this alone. There are so many other caregivers and families who are constantly advocating for their own children when schools and systems are not. It is these kinds of conversations that must happen in schools, in classrooms, in parent-teacher conferences, in the hallways, at lunch. Keeping these conversations is the start to awaking the shift that needs to happen in schools and classrooms – in all schools and classrooms, especially those where families of color who are multiply marginalized. Not only will the reductionist paradigm may shift in classrooms and in schools, but this is the way to truly building community and belonging for these families who have been excluded, othered, minimized, erased and discriminated against. All families deserve to feel safe and supported in their school communities. All families deserve to feel loved and share love in the ways that are familiar to them and speak to the core of their hearts and spirits. Amplifying the stories of families of color, centering their stories of culture, knowing and love in classrooms, and having opportunities to learn how to advocate for more of this is a start to rehumanizing educational spheres.

Marla shares succinctly:

> So, this is what I'm focusing on is the work load, right? I'm really hoping that the fact you're giving them too much homework. You have to stop. And they did change things. Can we keep that? We could rethink at the very least, if we're not going to overhaul the entire curriculum for next year, can we at least think about what we’re asking our kids to do every day?

Marla is referring to schools rethinking the way they are teaching students to be about the core of what we are hoping our children will learn. Having students do a load of homework every night creates students who are reaching high levels of stress and others who are feeling defeated. This is not the message that schools should be sending to any child.

Marla continues to share her own experiences within her own doctorate program she is enrolled in during the pandemic. She speaks about an asynchronous study group that was created in response to the remote pandemic learning at her university.

> In reality, it kind of became a weekly group therapy for a doctoral student, but in a good way. We got to talk about whatever was going on in our lives and how it did or didn’t relate to what we were learning in class. We really have that space where we could be really genuine. It was that was it was really cool and special for sure.

When schools create and sustain spaces that are truly authentic, equitable, inclusive and just for all, these spaces can potentially become an extension of the loving, caring, knowing spaces that we have at home. This is a start to rehumanizing education for all.

Synthesis of Findings

While there is a deep pool of scholarly literature with a focus on academic performance of students labeled with disabilities, there is a dearth of literature that explores counternarratives and school experiences for families and their children labeled with learning disabilities. This research does just so. This scholarly research study explores the counternarratives, the lived experiences, voices and identities of families and students of color labeled with learning disabilities. This study explores their school experiences, their identities, their home life, their family, their sense of self and sense of belonging in their home communities and school communities.

School is a place that carries a sense of belonging – that is, it can be. This concept of 'belonging' is an integral part of building positive student identities at school (Pandya & Avila, 2014). But for many students of color labeled with disabilities, this is far from their reality. The identities and narratives of multiply marginalized students at schools are minimized, erased and absent from most curricula. Despite this, the families in this study rose above and discovered new ways of learning and living pre-pandemic and while remote learning.

Part of the school experience is the family/school partnership that occurs, which also fosters a sense of belonging. Yet for multiply marginalized students, this family/school partnership is one that is rare, misunderstood and hardly supported by the school, administrators or the school community as a whole. Additionally, language and cultural differences between the family and school influence familial engagement as families experience culture shock and lack of opportunities to learn and understand school culture and expectations that are often times very different from their motherland school culture (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007; Klein, 2008; Li, 2006; Wang, 2008). The result is that caregivers are perceived by schools as disengaged, uninterested, uncaring and angry (Beauregard et al, 2014; Cooper, 2009), when they should be a source of knowledge and a resource for schools in how to best support their students. In the case of the families in this study, many of the caregivers had the ability to communicate with their school constituents without any comprehension challenges and had the cultural capital to navigate their way through the pandemic.

Despite the small pool of families in this study, it only takes one family to contextualize their experiences within the ocean of experiences that many families of color in our country experience, those that reverberate within the stories in news media, social media, our communities that are perceived as negative and challenging. Often, this ‘single story’ perpetuates stereotypes, racialization and erasure that too many families and students of color experience in schools and other institutions. It is time to celebrate the stories and experiences of multiply marginalized families like the families in this research study.

The families were making things work and continuing to utilize their own families’ resources and cultural capital to provide their children the support they needed pre-covid. These resources included reaching out to extended family members such as grandparents, reaching out to friends and neighbors for academic tutoring or childcare, utilizing their knowledge of the school system and district to provide tutoring or accommodations for their children. During the pandemic, families knew how to navigate the system through previous experiences, were more involved and actively worked on getting their children the support they needed within the new learning platform and setting, along with the additional covid-related challenges. Students reported a preference for learning at home if they were getting support that their families initiated. The families of color were not only self-sufficient, and having the familial capital to navigate the support systems, but families were also reporting positive learning-at-home experiences during remote pandemic learning. They were having improved experiences at home where families understood them, understood their needs and whose messaging around their identities were overall positive. Their children's positive experiences were due to their families' efforts and ability, not due to school supports or systems. Given the racial and social gaps in positive academic performance and graduation, incidents of discipline and incarceration rates, along with vast over-representation of students of color in special education and the lackluster achievement rates within many programs, we must critically examine why so many students labeled with a disability particularly students of color are either experiencing failure or being perceived as failing. (Annamma et al, p. 14). Schools continue to fail our multiply marginalized students over and over, due to the dysfunction education ecologies within our school systems and societal systems. How can schools use transformative praxis to actively dismantle these dysfunction education ecologies (Freire, 1970)? How can schools shift their epistemological and axiological commitments to develop functional ecologies of learning by enacting a DisCrit classroom ecology (Annamma & Morrison, 2018)? Ultimately, we believe that working within a DisCrit framework gives us the tools to help clarify our thinking, critique existing exclusionary practices, build alliances with the Disability Rights organizations and collaborate in a movement that envisions international possibilities to improve the lives of all students and educators with and without disabilities (Connor et al, 2008). My third research question–- how can schools learn about rehumanizing school experience for students and families of color? – is a question that educators and lawmakers should be asking and acting upon in order to dismantle the deeply embedded ecologies working within our systems to intentionally exclude, erase, reduce multiply marginalized students and families. We must look to the richness of the resources and knowledge of familial resources of families of color and their cultural capital, their grandmothers and knowing of their own flesh and blood of their children. This shift in centering and amplifying the narratives of students of color labeled with disabilities within school environments may lead to the kind of rehumanizing education movement that is needed now.

PART V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study, which is both phenomenological in its thematic findings, and narrative within the stories of these families, is to record and learn from the lived experiences of families and students of color labeled with learning disabilities, to inform school systems and lawmakers with research and knowledge on how best to support these families, and to contribute to the gap in the literature about multiply marginalized families and their experiences especially during the distance learning model during the pandemic. Sitting with each and every family in this research study illuminated their academic, social-emotional and overall experiences during their learning-at-home model in this global pandemic. Being privy to the sharing of their unique experiences truly felt like a privilege to hold onto, to reflect on, to digest, and to experience through with my lens as a researcher, a multiply marginalized woman of color, and as a parent with a child labeled with learning disabilities.

Out of this iterative process of analysis, what was uncovered was data that I hope provides insight into enhancing the school experience in any environment for students of color, and providing insight to all stakeholders in a supporting role – government, institutions, school districts, school boards, teachers – and building fertile ground for the shifts in paradigms, pedagogy, approaches and in community.

Discussion of Findings by Research Question

This section focuses on the discussion of the overarching findings that answered each research question, which are also in alignment with the thematic findings of this study, will be discussed below.

Research Question 1 Findings: Surviving and Thriving

Research question #1 is:

2.) *(a) How did children of color who are labeled with learning disabilities and their families navigate schooling at home as a result of COVID-19? (b) What challenges and/or opportunities were created for these children and their families while schooling at home?*

The data from this study uncovered that despite the challenges, families had overall buoyantly positive remote learning experiences that these families and children were reported as having, despite the lack of support they reported as receiving from their schools. During remote learning, the families and children in this study reported as having opportunities to learn new skills, pursue interests, and have the freedom and the space to learn in their own unique ways. This was in contrast from the experiences they reported about their in-school experiences prior to the remote learning. This data points to the traditionally oppressive school settings that these students and families typically experience in schools, a norm that multiply marginalized students and families have been experiencing for centuries in both school environments and in societal settings, due to lack of sufficient teacher training and the inequities multiply marginalized families experience. Today, schools and educators are recently expected to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students with little or no preparation (Annamma, 2015: Sleeter, 2016; Wynter-Hoyte et al, 2018), leading to a further perpetuation of inequities, oppression, and erasure in school settings, which can be experienced very differently for each intersectional identity, for example a Black family's experience would be different from an Asian family's experience. In the pandemic-fueled remote learning crisis, all of the students in this study reported as withholding their requests for more support from their school institutions despite their need for it. School faculty and staff were also struggling and withholding requests for more support as well, many also managing their own children's needs. Kai was having a challenging time in school pre-pandemic with experiences of bullying from their peers as well as lack of understanding of Kai and their family's needs from the school institution. Peter, who was diagnosed as gifted, as well as having ADHD, was placed in a school with other gifted children, in response to the lack of support and mislabeling he received from his teachers in his previous schools. He reported as feeling 'stupid' in class, and was not being supported in his learning or sense of belonging at his new school. Both Peter and Kai preferred learning-at-home as they were feeling supported at home through understanding and sense of knowing from family members who understand their needs. Of the families in this study, Peter and Jacob both had grandmothers who happened to be former school teachers, assist them with their academic needs during remote learning. Kai, Tasha and Donovan had family members – mothers and fathers – who took additional steps and pivoted during remote learning to provide their children with the support they needed, such as researching new information based on their child's disability labels, or utilizing their social capital to solicit tutors and school districts for help. Wayne had the privilege of 3 parents or caregivers who regularly supported him. Jane and Anna, who were the oldest student participants in this study, utilized the support of their friend groups for the support they needed.

The ableist and inequitable expectations schools have on students of color labeled with “mild’ learning disabilities stem from government and state-imposed standards, as well as societal perpetuated inequities hailing from societal systems of oppression from slavery, which impact Black cisgender boys differently than it impacts Asian cisgender boys for example. I want to acknowledge the scholars and educators who are trying to create initiatives to put structures in place for a shift in perspectives towards a more strengths-based model that relies on more guidance from families and students themselves, rather than the traditional deficit model that has been consistent in schools that place the onus of remediation on treatments, interventions and services (Nevin et al, 2008). The families in this study have exemplified the positive impact that home-based resources and support – which included family support, family availability and time–- can have on students of color labeled with learning disabilities. The students in this study have shown the importance of centering their voices and narratives involving them in their academic needs, as was modeled in this recent remote learning crisis. I also want to acknowledge that even when students have been feeling supported in the in-person learning environment, for instance Jane and Anna, they were not exempt from the need to receive more support in remote pandemic learning model. The educators and education administrators have all been impacted by the pandemic in professional and personal ways. They have undoubtedly been working hard trying to support their students and their own families. Many of the limitations are deeply embedded in the institutional, organizational, and societal structures that are centuries old. This is a call for lawmakers and educators to shift ableist, racist, gendered and classist paradigms alive in schools, embrace the power of intergenerational culture and learn familial knowledge in supporting students of color in their academic careers and school communities. When students and their families' stories are centered in school environments, there is more sense of belonging for students of color labeled with disabilities, which may lead to positive school experiences (Vaccaro, A et al, 2016). This warm and loving acceptance of students' narratives at home during remote learning, along with additional supports and resources that the families had worked hard to acquire for their children, led to supportive and positive experiences learning-at-home. In the spirit of Paulo Freire, when we challenge governments and school districts to think about transformative praxis (1970) to actively dismantle dysfunctional education ecologies by enacting a DisCrit Classroom Ecology (Annamma & Morrison, 2018), we can gain the richness of knowledge directly from families of color and their centuries old wisdom that has been passed down from generations, as opposed to the pressure for them to forget their powerful familial ecologies.

The socioeconomic status of these families also played a role in their pandemic experiences. As early as the 1970s, it was recognized that learning disability labels were actually more likely to be diagnosed among White, middle-class children than among poor and minority children (Ong-Dean, 2006, p. 92). In this finding, socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination were not the causes of diagnoses among relatively privileged children. Indeed, the intersectional identities of the families in this study, including their racial and gender identities play a huge role in their experiences and outcome during such a crisis. But as Ong-Dean explores, Black and Hispanic students becoming increasingly likely to receive a learning disability diagnosis as compared to White students owing it in part to parent and caregiver interventions and resources (p. 102) in addition to diagnoses becoming increasingly institutionalized over the years.

Research Question 2 Findings: Ableist academic expectations

Research question #2 is:

3.) *How did schools and districts interact with the families of children of color who are labeled as having a learning disability to provide support and how closely did this support match the needs of families while schooling at home?*

The findings in this study demonstrate that although schools and school districts were not in a position to offer specialized academic or social emotional support to students during the remote pandemic learning, families were being supported through their own network of familial resources and sense of knowing. Jacob, Peter and Kai all reported as not receiving academic support from schools but not wanting to request the support they need. Their choice to refrain from requesting support was based on their previous school experiences and their school's traditional ableist expectations of them. Jane and Anna also reported that they refrained from requesting more support from their school as well. Their reason was due to the limited functionality of the digital learning platform because they worked best with in-person collaborative work and class discussions. Jane and Anna reported having positive school experiences pre-pandemic. They attended an independent K-8 school in Marin County, and attributed their current school success to the early support and programming they received at their K-8 independent school. Their current independent high school has continued this type of robust academic support and culture around their learning disabilities, and they have reported positive messaging of acceptance around their language-based disability diagnosis. It is known that students who attend K-8 schools do report better academic outcomes than their middle school peers (Weiss, C & Kipnes, L, 2006). This has been partially attributed to K-8 schools being whiter and wealthier than their middle school counterparts. K-8 schools operate as enclaves of privilege perpetuating inequities around race, class and ability (Ashby et al, p. 357). For families whose identities may not be framed around traditional white heteronormative ableist-based notions of privilege related to race, gender, class or ability, their experiences may be further negatively perpetuated due to the lack of identity representation in their schools. It is important to acknowledge here that White and Asian students have disproportionately different levels of oppression and inequities than their Black, Latinx and Indigenous counterparts (Hope et al, 2015). Furthermore, it is known that general education teachers who continue to teach students labeled with disability in the same way they do their non-disabled students, they continue to fail students labeled with disability (Zigmund & Baker, 1990). Kai reported as having a negative experience at their K-8 school pre-pandemic. When Kai was forced to learn at home, they flourished in their non-academic learning and was able to explore their gender, racial and ability identity in a safer environment – at home and with family – which is not always the case for all families, and schools may sometimes be a safer conduit for these families. Since the interview process during this study, Kai has been counselled out of the K-8 school that they have attended for six years, their entire schooling career. Kai reported as having positive relationships with many of their teachers but their school was unable to fully support Kai in the repeated acts of bullying that has deeply impacted Kai's sense of identity and belonging at the school. Instead of counselling out students such as Kai, schools can learn more about their students through familial resources, building deeper relationships with families of color and those with multiply marginalized identities. During the 1989 education reform when then President George H.W. Bush and Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton developed the core tenets of education reform–-accountability, goals, competition and teacher quality (Pandya, 2013), it was developed and solidified by business stakeholders who have little understanding of students' real educational needs. A paradigmatic and structural shift must be made to move from a reductionist model and framework to a constructivist model that disability is a social construct. Schools and districts must embrace learning from families and students of color, hearing out parents and their understanding about their own children, providing a platform for true collaboration to ensure students of color labeled with disabilities and their many unique identities are embraced, centered and celebrated. School systems must trust home relationships and improve caregiver/school partnerships, while building and sustaining dialogues in order to support each unique child and family. In sum, this paradigmatic shift in schools moving from a reductionist model to a more constructivist model of love and understanding may lead to more positive school-related experiences for students of color labeled with learning disabilities as well as a shift in the focus and expectations on their value as a student to a focus on their importance as a unique learner who can contribute to their school community in their own, unique ways.

Research Question 3 Findings: Centering narratives of multiply marginalized identities

Research question #3 is:

4.) *(a) How have students of color and their families labeled with disabilities by schools come to understand their identities as learners in new ways as a result of distance learning? (b) How can schools learn from families to create a rehumanizing post-pandemic school context for students of color labeled with disabilities?*

The data from my study demonstrated that while all of the families in this study found some aspects of remote learning challenging such as the adjustment to a new digital platform with little supports and multiple devices adding more digital traffic, they also discovered new ways of learning during distance learning. The students were comforted by their family's familiar ways of knowing and positive messaging around their multiple unique identities around their race, gender, socioeconomic status, and abilities. However, there is the disconnect between knowing what they need to feel supported at school settings and not being given the opportunities to feel supported in school settings. In addition to the fact that many teachers had never taught online before, this is also due to age-old structures, expectations, paradigms, curriculums. This historically positivist and reductionist paradigm is heavily perpetuated in schools with teachers not receiving the sustained training to support their students' multiple identities. This oppressive paradigm and the erasure that students feel results in a higher percentage of failure in academia and a lower sense of belonging in multiply marginalized students and families in school settings.

Disability studies, in its very nature, aims to decenter and dismantle these traditional Eurocentric and heteronormative notions of traditional schooling practices. Disability studies gives a voice to those labeled with disability, by contextualizing disability within political and social spheres, promoting social justice and inclusive opportunities for those labeled with disability and rejecting deficit models of disability (Ware, p. 261). These tenets lead to asking these kinds of questions to apply these theories into school communities: *How can we see more of this constructivist scholarly paradigm in our everyday lives, including school environments? What do we actually talk about when we talk about disability in K-12 schools? How can disability be considered in the K-12 curriculum? Why are changing cultural meanings of* *disability relevant now?* (p. 261). Jane, Anna and their mother Abby, expressed their experiences at their independent K-8 school as well as their current independent high school, both in Marin County. They reported that their teachers and schools embraced their stories and identities and as a result, they felt a deep sense of belonging in their school communities. These identities were also fostered at home and within their familial communities. When the voices of caregivers are invited from school communities as an informative tool with which to guide schools, it creates spaces and culture for their perspectives and their actions, in turn inviting more discussions and more opportunities for belonging. Centering their narratives and encouraging storytelling in school settings creates more empathy and understanding amongst school professionals, and also helps schools unpack the misalignment between school's perceptions of families of color and families' experiences within schools. These opportunities can be events that are planned ahead such as regular community roundtables, affinity spaces, meetings with board members and trustees. Having regular and ongoing planning meetings as well as creating and sustaining a culture where spontaneous meetings and discussions around centering the stories and voices of families of color labeled with learning disabilities are encouraged is necessary. With more of these kinds of authentic opportunities for families of color to share their authentic selves in school environments, the voice of power shifts from school professionals to the multiply marginalized voices of students of color and their families, which is a step towards dismantling institutional inequities and oppression towards multiply marginalized students and families.

As I reflect on the short term and long term impact school communities have on multiply marginalized families, one overarching and fundamental factor plays a significant role–- the "simple yet powerful emotion of love invites us to pay attention to our feelings as legitimate ways of knowing" (Adrienne Maree Brown, 2017). Brown emphasizes how love and joy are the actual tools we need to move against a culture of fear and scarcity (Brown, blog, September 18, 2015). This fundamental need is the interwoven sense of warmth, knowing, safety and security that was found in every family unit in this study. It is the basic yet profound link that unites all living sentient beings. It is also something that tends to be the missing link in fabric of institutions. bell hooks (2000) talks about the supreme value of love as an action rather than a feeling, which implies responsibility and accountability in relationship to others. These holistic and maternal integrative frameworks can be fused into the fabric of the school institution just as they are in familial units. When the action of love is integrated into school communities, our children's second community outside of the family community, stakeholders can move forward with grace when providing a platform for multiply marginalized voices and lived experiences, promoting social justice in schools and school communities, and providing inclusive opportunities for all students of color and those labeled with learning disabilities. These action-oriented ways of rejecting deficit models in traditionally ableist school structures are the bedrock of DisCrit, the theoretical framework that informs this study.

Discussion of Thematic Findings

When this study was in the pre-recruitment phase, I had casually reached out to a parent to gauge her interest in this study. Once she heard the purpose of the study, she was really excited about working with me. She was eager to share her positive stories and experiences about her son and herself as a family of color/non-dominant family within the public school system of a Marin County school district. Several months had passed when it was time to begin the official recruitment, and she opted out. At that point, it was summer of 2021 and she had believed that her son would benefit from summer school however, she told me that the school system said he did not qualify. She was really disappointed and frustrated with the school system who did not her perspective as the parent and did not honor her request to support her son. Who has the right to decide whether a student qualifies to participate in a summer program? If a parent believes that their son, who receives an IEP and accommodations, would benefit from attending a state-funded summer program, why wouldn't the parent and child be given the right to make this decision? In our current system, parents/guardians are entitled to certain rights under ADA and IDEA, but all too often, parents are steered in a different direction or misinformed. Perhaps the school failed to inform this family of their rights. Perhaps inherent bias and/or discrimination was involved. Perhaps there were other underlying factors involved. This parent, a Black parent with a Black child, chose not to participate for fear of being further ostracized or she did not want to support a system (and thought I was part of it) that did not support her child. Or perhaps it was another reason. Whatever it may be, this one family is one family's story among so many families of color whose needs were not being met by the system, who felt unsupported and misunderstood, whose trajectory was impacted by the misalignment of their beliefs and opinions, and whose school had made the final decision for her son's summer academic plans.

This family's experience, amongst the unique experiences and stories of each family in this study are all rooted in strong familial bonds and familial sense of knowing, while navigating within their own community microcosms deeply affected by the greater institutional and social paradigms that are interwoven into the fabric of their lives and intersectional identities.

Intersectionality of race, class, gender and dis/ability

To truly understand dis/ability within the context of families and children of color within school environments, we must unpack the intersectional identities they live within. The term 'intersectionality' is a term that was coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw as a way to help explain the oppression of African American women. It quickly became identified, and used to define and describe oppression within multiply marginalized groups.

The multiply marginalized intersectional identities of race, class and gender, within the marginalization of being labeled with a learning disability adds deeper marginalized complexity. Learning disability is not a synonym for special education. The ideologies and practices cannot be interchangeable but it continues to be used and defined in this way within school environments. The families in this study who have the means – not necessarily the financial means–- but the wherewithal to provide for their children, feel the impact and weight of their multiply marginalized experiences. They live and work within the confines provided by society and institutional structures. They continue to advocate for their children, navigating their way through the institutional confines by connecting them with other advocates – supporters, other friends, teachers, coaches, therapists – all those who live and work within their communities, the threads of their make-up, integral players in their lives. Despite the bias and discrimination that may be placed on these families for their multiply marginalized identities, they have learned how to thrive, maximizing the resources they identify within their communities. DisCrit theorists, in particular, (Gilborn et al, 2016) have an explicit focus on race and class, and how it intersects with dis/ability in the lives of families, as witnessed within the lives of these families. The majority of the families in this study happen to identify as middle class or upper middle class. This was not planned or targeted. There were two families who chose not to share their identity associated with class. For these families, the impact of their intersectional identities are complex and nuanced in so many ways, including the finding that class identity did not necessarily affect their family's ability to navigate support within their communities as this was not dependent on financial capital.

Unfortunately, this racist and white supremacist legacy of distorted historical beliefs about class, race, gender and ability have become intertwined in complex ways (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 9), in the way schools function, the way students of color are mistreated and misdiagnosed, the way society is built upon injustice and inequity based on the intersections of one's identity. The impact of the intersectionality of these identities is a conversation that must be placed on the forefront of discussions, policy changes, school communities and families, in order to bring about change. Amidst the backdrop of a racial reckoning with the social movements like Black Lives Matter and Stop API Hate, we cannot discuss the intersection of race and dis/ability without discussing disability rights movements, activism and advocacy. While DisCrit continues to be an emerging field that was propelled by the movements of feminism and women's rights in the 1980's, the theory and work behind the disability rights movement and DisCrit in particular continues to evolve.

Race and dis/ability

Disability rights scholars Linda Ware, Subini A. Annamma, David J. Connor, Beth Ferri, along with others who have been referenced in this paper continue to advocate in scholarly spaces, academic journals, educational spheres, community circles, and beyond. On-the-ground activists like Lydia X.Z. Brown and Mia Mingus have moved the needle into more community spaces, promoting knowledge, advocacy, demystifying myths and providing a model and platform for other advocates. Society continues to misportray people of color labeled with disabilities in a skewed perspective while offering few positive images of multiply marginalized identities in media sources such as books, movies, social media and media in general. From time to time, media may display the beautiful and sparkly image of a disabled fashion model. This kind of inspiration porn begets the reality of the everyday life we live in. Disabled people of color are oppressed in droves, discounted in schools, absent from required reading. These epistemological inequities manifest throughout our educational institutions, communities and society as a whole, and attempt to destroy the lives of dis/abled people of color.

Race, class and dis/ability

It is widely known that middle and upper class families have more resources to support their children and exert their influence within their school's decision making and direction, whereas poor and working class families have far less power (Olivos, 2003; Wells & Serna, 1996; Yonezawa, 1997), and there are more overt differences in social class when race and dis/ability intersect with family identity. Of the families and children in this study, three out of six families identified as middle class, one family identified as upper middle class and two families refrained from responding. As evidenced in the findings, their social class wasn't necessarily indicative of their reports of positive remote learning experiences. However, of the two families who did not share their socioeconomic status, they were the only children in the study who had transferred out of their schools during the pandemic. One family transferred to a different school during remote pandemic learning while the other family transferred during the return to in-person learning. These two families were navigating the distance learning model and provided support for their children through their own familial resources including extended family member supporting the child academically and the parent researching alternative resources outside of the school system. Of the families who identified as middle class or upper middle class, they also navigated remote learning while providing support for their children through their own familial resources, including utilizing educational professionals in their network to support their children, utilizing their professional capital – many of them worked were educators or worked in the school district – to locate additional services and supports for their children in the absence of support from their child's school. Although the families in this study generally reported positive at-home experiences during remote learning, there were certain nuanced differences between the families who hadn't reported their socioeconomic status and those who had. Of the two families who reported unknown socioeconomic status, they both made the decision to leave their child's current schools due to the lack of support they were receiving. This undoubtedly had profound impacts on these children and their families.

In one study that was conducted on Black middle class caregivers and their children, the consistent thread in their narratives was not about the focus on the over-representation of Black families in special education classrooms, but rather a common thread was based on the experiences of these Black middle-class caregivers and their children as they encountered negative and stereotypical labels that were used against them (Annamma et al, 2016) based on their class and racial identity within the context of their dis/ability. Although this study did not include any Black identified families, Jacob, who is an adopted child with a White mother, Sarah, shared conversations she had with Jacob about the kind of inequities he would experience due to the color of his skin, in order to prepare him and protect him from societal inequities and biases he may encounter.

> We have a lot of conversations about being a Black person in America and how you are going to be treated differently. And you cannot do things that your white friends can. It sucks, but it's what it is. When you go to a grocery store that nobody knows you, your hands are not in your pockets. If you have a hood, you take it down before you go inside. And I said, I

> know it's wrong. I know it shouldn't be this way but I want you to be alive. [We] talk about getting pulled over, [and] talk about at night. Like I don't let them go out at night a lot of times because I'm just worried if people think you're doing something wrong and you're Black and something bad might happen, it's not worth it to me. So in that sense, we talk a lot about him being Black and having to navigate the world differently. He is in this cocoon of [this neighborhood] where so many people know who he is that I feel like he hasn't been treated differently because I feel people just love him.

While both Sarah and her husband work as teachers, they are on a teacher's salary. They understand their special access to resources and knowledge of how to navigate through the systems to provide the right support for their children. Sarah also recognizes that their positionality and intersectional identities in the community also positively affects Jacob and his treatment in the community because "the teachers at his school know us so he's going to be labeled a certain way". Sarah identifies as White, middle class, heterosexual and is educated as a teacher. She is aware of her privilege and uses this privilege to support for and advocate for her adopted children who identify as Black.

The participants in this study do not identify as poor or as frontline workers, and despite the societal inequities they experience based on their multiply marginalized identities, they were all navigating remote pandemic learning using their resources at hand.

Gender, family structure and dis/ability

Many of the participants in this study identify with the sex they were assigned at birth and use gender pronouns associated with their sex identity. These families and their children do not experience biases or oppression based on their gender identity. One parent in this study, Marla, identifies as gender non-binary and uses she/they pronouns. Marla's child, Wayne, who was female assigned at birth, identifies as male, and uses he/him pronouns. Marla reported that she has not experienced any overt discrimination from Bruce's school community based on their gender identities. Marla recalls when Bruce started his first year in his new middle school, she wanted to ensure he was being well supported socially. She reported not having to do anything different. "He didn't need any social support. He fit in fine. I'm presuming because it's an art school and everybody was doing their own thing. That was the culture there. Everyone was doing their thing. He just kind of smoothly fit in sixth grade and made friends and hung out with folks." In a similar way that culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings) provides teachers with the tools to understand their students' unique cultural and familial background so they can build authentic connections with their students, having gender and familial relevant knowledge allows for more teacher/school connections with their students and families. Marla and Bruce both reported this kind of familial connections at Bruce's school community. Furthermore, the deep connections that have been made in Marla and Bruce's family structure and culture allowed for positive acceptance and messaging around Bruce's identity acceptance within their family, which seemed to extend beyond Bruce's home base and into his school community and peer communities.

Centering and celebrating intersectional identities

When we expand awareness and opportunities to center non-dominant narratives in educational and societal contexts, we can help broaden the scope of whose voices are being heard in these spaces. Centering the narratives of multiply marginalized families of color/non-dominant families in scholarly literature and school contexts can help shift the voice of power and privilege. Amplifying the unique stories of these families and celebrating their uniqueness, their familial knowing, their ancestral gifts can decenter traditional white heteronormative and ableist notions in school contexts. We must continue to unpack our inherent biases, challenge public policy and structural norms. We must realign beliefs and approaches within academic and social settings. We must participate in democracy by continuing to vote for politicians of color whose missions is to propel and advance communities of color through advocacy, law reform, and more access and equity to resources. The intersectional identifies of multiply marginalized families are the forefront of how they navigate their lives, how they live within social barriers and limitations, how society identifies and targets them, how schools, institutions, lawmakers, police perceive them. We must continue to push for equity, center these voices, advocate for their rights and celebrate their cultures.

School and family partnerships

Second to the home and familial unit, school communities are our children's' most influential community from which they derive their narratives of self, society and the world around them. Schools are where our children form their social networks, build bonds, and develop their identities. These are based on the treatment and perception of their teachers, their peers and from messaging in classrooms and the centering of identities in curriculums. Thus, for families of color and those with multiply marginalized identities, these school-based experiences are negatively impacting their sense of self and identity formation.

A child's academic performance is often central when evaluating the students' success at school. However, the level and quality of the school/home partnership affects school success. One major factor that impacts this school/home partnership is the family's social capital. Social capital – the sum of all resources accrued, including economic resources, that are gained through a network of social relationships – is essential to the makeup of a families' social mobility (Bourdieu, 1973). This social capital tends to disadvantage families who have low socioeconomic status (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994b). Although schools are institutions that are meant to serve and support our children as students and learners, schools traditionally expect families to participate in their children's education by communicating with them and assisting them with school-related responsibilities at home. This may seem like a fair and balanced partnership with the students' needs at the forefront. However, these norms and expectations are based on a Eurocentric middle class model. This often means that middle and upper class families establish the standard for what is defined as successful family involvement and school/family partnership (Lewis & Forman, 2002). The families in this study seemed to have fit within this expectation and thus were reporting as having positive school experiences. For many families of color/non-dominant families including some of the families in this study, there are challenges and barriers that prevent effective home-school communication (Marion, 2017). Family home cultures may be at odds with dominant culture norms, leading to misunderstandings and tensions in family-school relations (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994b). This often leads to further ostracization and perpetuation of societal biases and inequities. For Kai, who had ongoing experiences of bullying behavior, which the school was unable to resolve in a way that was sufficient to Kai's needs, this may have led to their family's leave from their school. For Peter, whose teachers had labeled him as a 'troublemaker', had to disprove his false reputation, which culminated into his family's need for him to leave his school in search for one that served his needs and understood his behaviors. There is little research that examines the ways in which schools can truly partner with families of color and those with children labeled with learning disabilities. However, one study (Cadleux, Crooks and King, 2019) examined the family school partnership and focused on ways to strengthen it through providing a program in order to give families unconditional support and guidance to help them communicate their perspectives in a meaningful way. This requires a paradigm shift in the way schools approach families who may not fit within their school's expectations, but rather working with each family to meet their unique expectations of the school. This kind of shift moves the onus from the family and their expected involvement to shifting the onus on the shared partnership that requires ongoing communication, guidance and follow-through from all constituents with the student, family and school needs in mind.

Additionally, recognizing that the goal of caregiver involvement, and family/school partnership is not only about raising student achievement but also enriching and expanding educational opportunity and equity for all students (Auerbach, 2007, p. 245), including whole student and family experiences. For the families in this study, there was only one family who reported the school's attempt to understand cultural and racial identities. This one school held affinity spaces for students of color once they returned to in-person learning. This affinity space was a new community initiative that was initiated by a current family of color whose professional work was involved in diversity and inclusion within corporate workspaces. There is so much work to be done in schools and so much to be learned about how to improve family/school partnerships and family involvement in schools for those who identify as families of color and those with children labeled with learning disability.

During remote pandemic learning, the families reported even less opportunities for families of color to gather and discuss their lived experiences in their school communities. Amidst the widespread media reports about the increase of academic loss, and widening racial and intersectional disparities during the remote pandemic learning crisis, there were also reports of families of color who were benefiting from the distance learning model during the pandemic, including the families in this study. Despite the academic limitations during remote pandemic learning, students were spending the majority of their time in their homes with their families in a space that was familiar to them both culturally and familially. The students in this study expressed positive learning-at-home experiences due to this proximity to their trusting and comfortable home environments with their loving family members, extended family members and trusting community members. The simple yet powerful notion of this shift in paradigm and approach in school curriculums can create powerful shifts in the way students of color and those multiply marginalized students can be perceived and treated in schools – with uniquely identified supports and needs that stem from the notion that all students deserve it equally.

Remote pandemic learning

While there is still very little known on students labeled with disability and their experience with remote learning, there is a dearth of scholarly research on students of color labeled with disabilities. Throughout this discussion, we know there is so much more to be discussed within the remote learning crisis and what students of color need. The limitations on access to technologies – undoubtedly leads to limitations on access to opportunities for engagement, opportunities for connection, opportunities for further understanding of each family of color with children labeled with learning disabilities. We do not know if and when we may be confronted with another global pandemic or other global or national crisis that requires us to move to a remote learning situation. We may be challenged to move to a remote learning model on a much smaller scale. The narratives and lived experiences we have captured from the multiply marginalized families of color during this historic moment in time are nuggets of gold that can be studied and examined and further probed to give us more insight into how we may authentically and lovingly support them. We have seen that when we turn to families for their insight and knowledge, when we commit to regular check-ins and have authentic conversations that stem from the simple yet powerful emotion called love, it can lead to a new kind of societal norm – one that stems from a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust (bell hooks, 2001). This societal norm can stem from recognizing difference differently. The powerful and sensible writings of Audre Lorde ring true - "in our work and in our living, we must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth, rather than a reason for destruction. It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences" (Audre Lorde, 2017, p. 120). The highly individualistic and hegemonic society we live needs more wisdom from the writers, philosophers, scholars, artists, advocates, activists, children, youth from communities of color around the world.

On-the-ground praxis

The families in this study are doing the work. They are promoting love and positive messaging to their children and communities about how their child's needs are important, about how their child's identities are unique and how they deserve to be celebrated. To encourage more cultural and social understanding of caregivers and children of color is through encouraging storytelling in all environments – at home, in schools, in all communities. The voices of families should act as an informative tool with which to guide the schools, their perspectives and their actions around inviting caregivers of color to participate in authentic, mutually democratic relationships with shared decision-making power (Howard & Reynolds, 2008). As Ladson-Billings (2009) writes, "when schools and teachers develop an understanding of their students, their families, and their cultures, they can be willing and able to see situations from varying perspectives other than their own" (p. 136). In this approach, they are better able to avoid making untrue assumptions, which can start with encouraging storytelling. Storytelling in many forms has been a core element in many cultures throughout civilization. The simple yet powerful act of taking the time to learn about somebody's story can dissipate previous inherent bias and learned stereotypes about that person based on the way they look or act – their identities based on their racial, cultural, gender, social and ability traits.

Within the framework of DisCrit, the work is rooted by people of color and those with dis/abilities. The work of DisCrit is designed to counter hegemonic knowledge-claims about the meaning of race, class and dis/ability in society (Annamma et al, 2016). The path of this work is laid by scholars of color, those with disabilities, those with multiply marginalized identities and those allies to help inform others about the unidimensional notions of identity (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 1). The families in this study also doing the work of advocacy. Although I only interviewed one family member of the child of color labeled with learning disability, these children have family members and community members who have also been doing the work, advocating for them, celebrating them and their unique traits. Grandmothers were committed to their grandchildren, driving several miles to support them in their at-home learning, to be playful when they recognized that was necessary, to provide other needs such as food, snacks, body breaks and all using the knowledge they have of their grandchildren through the work of spending time with them and really knowing them. Community members supported these students in this study through their connections with their families, their knowledge about their families' needs, through their care and love for their family as connected community members. These kinds of relationships are being built in communities and between extended families all the time. These kinds of relationships can also be built in school communities in much the same way. Much like the voices of these children are amplified and centered in families on a daily basis, they can be centered and amplified in schools on a daily basis. In families, it occurs during dinner time, family visits, in the car, story time, weekend excursions, birthday parties. In schools, this can occur in group work or one on one work, in lunchrooms, in class discussions, on the basketball court, in the hallways, in affinity spaces, when discussing social media. The centering of their voices are the counternarratives that allies, activists of color, scholars of color share from their positionality as people of color and in their intersectional identities. Their counternarratives are their sharing of their lived experiences, their self-reflection, their agency. Their counternarratives are their acts of resistance in small yet powerful ways. The continued impact of this kind of on-the-ground work that happens in our communities is one way to dismantle the institutional hegemony and oppression and inequities on communities of color and their intersectional identities.

Implications for Research and Practice

Given that there is still so little known about remote learning practices and even less known about remote learning conditions for families and students of color labeled with learning disabilities, there is much to explore and pursue, as discussed above.

From a macro level approach, policymakers and politicians of color must continue to advocate for the rights of multiply marginalized communities – families of color, students of color, students of color labeled with learning disabilities, lower socioeconomic families of color, families of color with different family structures, adoptive families – these families need unique supports based on their unique needs. Specifically:

1.) In addition to the laws in place – ADA and IDEA – there needs to be a deeper focus on policy and practice on a local, state and national level that preserves and protects families and students during unique learning situations, both on a community or global level and individual family level. Municipal districts and lawmakers can continue to advocate for these compassionate practices with the student and family needs in mind.

2.) District politicians must either be politicians of color and others who can advocate for the rights of families of color/non-dominant families and understand their needs, especially the needs of students of color who are at an even deeper disadvantage with their multiply marginalized status and treatment from communities who may not understand their needs. These families and their unique intersectional identities must also be supported.

3.) On a federal level, monies, policies, advocacies all must continue to work for families whose needs are traditionally ignored.

Within the school environments, on a classroom level, when school districts are planning and re-evaluating school systems for teacher training, workshops, professional development, there needs to be an emphasis on challenging traditionally ableist notions, decentering white heteronormative voices, dismantling hegemonic policies and paradigms. Specifically:

1.) There needs to be more diverse representation in classrooms amongst teachers, storybooks, curricula with parts of curriculum in place to support students should another remote learning circumstance arise.
2.) There needs to be more community spaces and affinity groups and student/family-focused opportunities for authentic and caring discussions with their needs in mind. What are the unique needs of each student? How can issues and concerns be best addressed during in-person models and remote learning models? These and other questions can be applied to all families like the families in this study.
3.) There must be more teacher/parent partnership where the voices of the parents and students are amplified and the culture is fostered so families feel welcomed and a true sense of belonging in schools. As evidenced in the data, families and students were not confident about seeking help from their schools. How can they feel safe enough to reach out to school advocates when they are in need?
4.) There must be authentic feedback and communication from teachers and administrators in conjunction with families to develop and recreate new systems to support all students and families in the classroom, not just those who have always and traditionally been supported. Further research on process and protocol is necessary for ongoing relationship building and praxis.

On a community-based level, sitting with these families and hearing them share their family’s unique experiences was a personal reminder and opportunity for me to check in with my inherent bias, my positionality as a parent of color and as a researcher, while being reminded of my status as a cog in society. I couldn’t help but see the ways in which my parenting style and the things I had hoped for in my children were influenced by societal ableist norms and expectations. Specifically:

1.) The onus for change should be on the institution and on policymakers as societal norms and expectations trickle down from a macro level with a top-down approach into institutions, communities and families. However, motivation and encouragement from family members and community members are an opportunity to reflect and question the ‘why?’ behind our actions and thoughts. While the families in this study had encouraged me as a parent to reconsider my parenting desires for my own children, it allowed me to see how influential community members can be when sharing their beliefs, positionality and insight.
2.) Every community-based organization and grassroots movement has the potential to influence anybody that they cross paths with. If the framework of DisCrit can be shared with one more parent or one more child, that thought can reach many more through the natural ways communities connect.
3.) Within family and friend networks, if a tenet of disability studies is shared amongst a conversation between parents, that seed can grow and spread.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the dearth of existing research centered on the purpose of this study, and what we know about the theoretical framework of DisCrit, there are a number of recommendations for future research.

1. *Temporal* – Given this unique moment in time when our entire civilization has been captured in a global crisis and pandemic, there is still so much to learn about not just education models within a remote learning landscape, but also an examination of how our society has responded to such a crisis and what has been uncovered as a result. This includes examinations of our political landscape in relation to racial and social movements and how it impacts schools and school communities. There may be another time in the future where we may be faced with having to move to another remote learning situation. Further research can give us insight on how to best move forward while supporting and managing the needs of families of color, namely those multiply marginalized families.
2. *Post-remote learning* – I was privy to learning the intimate lived experiences of six families during remote pandemic learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are still more questions and answers to learn about these families and a follow-up interview would provide a richer and more nuanced insight into how we can best support families post-remote learning and with the transition to the in-person model. The families in this study persisted with remote learning with many of the students having a preference to learning-at-home despite the limitations. Furthering research within this framework and participant pool would garner deeper analysis.

3. *Deeper dive with findings* – The families and children discovered new ways of learning, exploring interests that would typically not be fostered within a traditional academic setting. Further exploration and study may lead to discovering new data points within this particular demographic.
4. *Praxis within a DisCrit framework* – To have further discussions with each family participant around a DisCrit framework and how it may be reflected upon within each of these families' lived experiences would be such a special gift to explore together and in community, and potentially to pursue more collaborative scholarly research such as Participatory Action Research (PAR).
5. *More praxis on a community level* – Within a DisCrit framework, creating and fostering an online social media community by continuing to center the lived experiences and narratives of families of color and those who have children labeled with learning disabilities can further the DisCrit mission of centering and amplifying the voices of those labeled with learning disabilities.
6. *Participant pool size* – While this study included the voices and stories of six uniquely incredible families, including a larger participant pool would undoubtedly grow the impact of centering the voices of families of color and those labeled with learning disabilities. It would also provide a richer context within the lived experiences during this unique learning-at-home model.
7. *Varied ages and grades of student participants* – Having a more diverse pool of student participants who are in different grades from kindergarten to twelfth grade would provide richer context.

8. *Replicating in different platforms* – While this scholarly research format is very necessary amongst a field of study that has a gap in this type of research, expanding into different formats would offer a distinct perspective and reach different community members within a different social class, which would diversify this participant sample and further examine the ways in which lower income families and students navigate within this context. Furthermore, recreating it in a social media handle or sharing it in a news media feed or discussing in a K-12 school classroom or unpacking it in a community-based activist organization would further illuminate the experiences of these non-dominant families.

Conclusion

While this study sought out four succinct purposes,

1. To provide a space for the stories and narratives of K-12 students of color labeled with disabilities and their families.
2. To provide a space for their families to share their specific lived experiences with their school districts and school communities prior to the onset of the pandemic and during the pandemic.
3. To explore the experiences of students of color and their families in direct relation to their intersectional identities between their race and dis/ability.
4. To contribute to the dearth of literature that explores the perpetuation of marginalization for families of color and the further implications of those labeled with disabilities and lower socioeconomic status and their experiences within a global pandemic such as COVID-19.

it met all four of these purposes in addition to facilitating discussions on the state of our school communities, the well-being of these families, and potentially fostering a deeper sense of community and advocacy for these families and children labeled with learning disability.

As I continue to reflect on the impact this study has had on these families, I cannot ignore the impact this journey has had on myself as researcher, scholar and parent of color with a child labeled with learning disability. Being in this community with other parents experiencing the pandemic holistically provided me with the sense of togetherness, the opposite of 'otherness' that we are so accustomed to experiencing in this ableist, racist and white dominant society. This duality allowed me to share my own counternarratives like the families in this study and like other scholars of color, caregivers of color, and students of color like Dr. Hernandez-Saca, Anna, Michael and Pedro whose stories I referenced in Chapter III. Our narratives are a result of our lived experiences, our necessary moments of reflection, and our agency. It is in the power of these counternarratives that we share within our many spaces – scholarly, societal, community – that are our small but powerful acts of resistance against white hegemony.

I began this journey with the sharing of my *oppa*'s lived experience within the limitations of my own knowing. He is not here to share his counternarrative himself and I cannot share it for him in its authentic entirety. But I know that it is not in vain and that if his voice is heard by one young person of color who is facing challenge, his story can be passed along to others who may need to hear it. I continue this journey of reflection and resistance through the duality of my work as both a disability rights scholar and a parent of color with a child labeled with learning disability. My own child, Rhys, just celebrated his thirteenth birthday. As his parent, I have shared in his personal celebrations within the context of this ableist world. With that, I also carry the burden of the juxtaposition of celebrating his 'achievements' that are perceived as achievements within ableist notions – getting an A on his writing project, participating in the school-wide holiday performance, ignoring his neurodivergent needs in order to advance as a student as opposed to advocating for his rights as a learner and integrating his self-knowing with the tools provided by educators. Disability is a social construct that is created by our social environment and the expectations, biases and social norms that were founded on centuries-old inequities. "It is our collective responsibility of society at large to make the changes necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life" (Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 28). In a similar way, it is our collective responsibility to make the changes necessary for the participation of the immigrant family and its members. It is not the responsibility of immigrant families and other non-dominant people of color to assimilate into an ableist and white heteronormative society that oppresses and erases 'the other'.

While on this journey, I continued to reflect on my family's story of assimilation and oppression while living in the United States. I also prompted discussions with my parents about our upbringing and my brother's struggles in particular. I found it very difficult to find the right moments to bring it up. There never seemed to be the right moment. But when I bit the bullet and decided that opening up these wounds could be healing and bonding, the conversations ended soon after they began. When I asked my father about my brother and what his thoughts were about him as a young child, my father had very little to share. He said that he wasn't sure and that he seemed fine as a young boy. He said that things started to change when he was in high school. After my initial reaction of disappointment from his brief response, I knew that I was hearing my father's deeply embedded will of survival and need for assimilation. My parents lived the majority of their adult lives fighting to assimilate, hiding their true selves in society and working tirelessly to live the 'American Dream'. Their life-long struggle to blend in and not bring attention to themselves, was disguised within their silence as their way of protecting their family and their loved ones, while honoring their sense of identity privately. Surviving and raising four children of color in a small suburban town in Texas in the 1980s and 1990s was a true testament of their will for survival. They worked hard to live within their social class getting by with the little English they spoke, the very small Korean community they banded with, the daily oppression and inequities they experienced while providing basic needs and a sense of family in our home. I do not recall any traumatic racial, social or cultural incidents as a young child growing up in Texas. However, I do recall having positive memories as a young student and recognize that these were due to the positive relationships I had formed with my teachers and peers. I do not identify as a person with learning disabilities and believe that my positive able-bodied classroom behaviors made space for these positive experiences to occur.

Today, as a parent to my son whose experiences have been much different than mine growing up, I interviewed him as a pseudo-participant in order to allow for deeper introspection and more nuanced data findings. He had very little to share and I believe that this is partially due to his personal comfort level and neurodivergence, in addition to the very little opportunities he has been given to reflect on his own lived experience. Over time, I learned to ask him questions more candidly and received more genuine responses where his natural sense of humor and wittiness would show up. He joked, “mom, if I answer all of your questions, will you let me play my games for another 2 hours?” He anticipated my answer and knew I would object. It is in these moments that opportunities sprung to exchange ideas, inquire more about his preferences and thoughts, and check in with him on how he’s really doing. Over more time with these candid conversations, I learned about his conversations with friends on discord, a social platform for gamers, and how his true self comes through when he shares about his personal interests, the intent behind his choices and the online social networks he's gravitated towards.

External to this research process, through the many conversations with Rhys' teachers, counsellors, learning specialist, academic tutors, friends and siblings, I gather his sense of belonging at school and within his friend networks. His relationships with his teachers and his peers are growing and evolving now that he has moved into in-person learning. When I asked him about his thoughts and experiences while learning-at-home, he expressed his preference for learning-at-home despite the academic challenges around re-learning school expectations on a digital platform. He felt a sense of safety at home during remote learning. Today, after six months of in-person learning in this academic year, he shares his joys of being back to in-person that reflect his social growth and his academic needs being supported through his IEP plan and relationship that has grown with his 7th grade learning specialist and other academic teachers who have learned more about him as a learner and as an individual. Being a parent who understands how to navigate the school system, I am aware of how my social capital led to many conversations with his teachers and his school, provided more context for them to understand him as a learned and has led to further support around his academic, social and societal needs.

Through the candid questions and conversations I have had with Rhys as a researcher and as a parent, I have learned that he attests to being a visual learner, that he wants to make a living as a videogame player and wants to one day go to college. These are all things that I know to be authentically true to him. As a reforming ableist parent, I am learning to accept him fully and let go of my fears as a parent. I ask myself, *what would it be like if society supported neurodivergence, if society supported immigrant families with integration, if society supported parent partnerships? What would it be like if oppa had a different teacher as a young learner?*

What if this teacher was trained to accept him as a unique learner? What if this teacher had the structural support from their school and school district? What if my parents were included in the conversation and given support on how to work as a collaborative team to support him?
Through the centering of these counternarratives, I felt closer to these individuals and felt compassion and empathy for their struggles as well as their celebrations. We must continue this work to give power to the voices of dis/abled students and families, to shift the ableist and white heteronormative paradigm and bring the praxis to policymakers and communities. The impact of inequity and oppression while living with our multiply marginalized identities is so layered, unique and traumatic. Yet, we as multiply marginalized people, fight for our will to survive and adjust to the life we have been given, based on our social status. As I made the intentional decision to embark on this doctoral program, unbeknownst to me, I also cleared the path for self-healing, gaining deeper intergenerational knowledge and formed new pathways for future generations. It was so instrumental for me to read scholarly literature about others' immigrant and first generation experiences, to delve deeply into the work of Paulo Freire, early women's rights activists and Gloria Ladson-Billings. It is my hope that the impact of the epistemologies and theoretical frameworks about disability justice and DisCrit move other new and future scholars in the same way it has moved me to first re-evaluate dominant social constructions, resist white hegemony, dismantle traditional social norms around ability, race, social class, gender, and have action for social change and continuing praxis.

Closing

This is a moment in history and in this generation as we know it, where we as a human race have experienced a global shift during this pandemic. This research captures a snapshot in this moment. I hope we continue to share spaces of power, amplify counternarratives, and celebrate stories of family and children of color and those multiply marginalized communities. It is time – amidst this global shift and the current racial reckoning – to promote our intersectional identities and conspire our racial, gender, class and ability differences for change in paradigmatic thinking and action. For it is in the process of discovery, the journey of self-reflection, and the commitment to action that has the power to move people, thoughts and communities in support of dis/ability rights, and racial, social and gender equity in our unmistakably divergent existence on earth.

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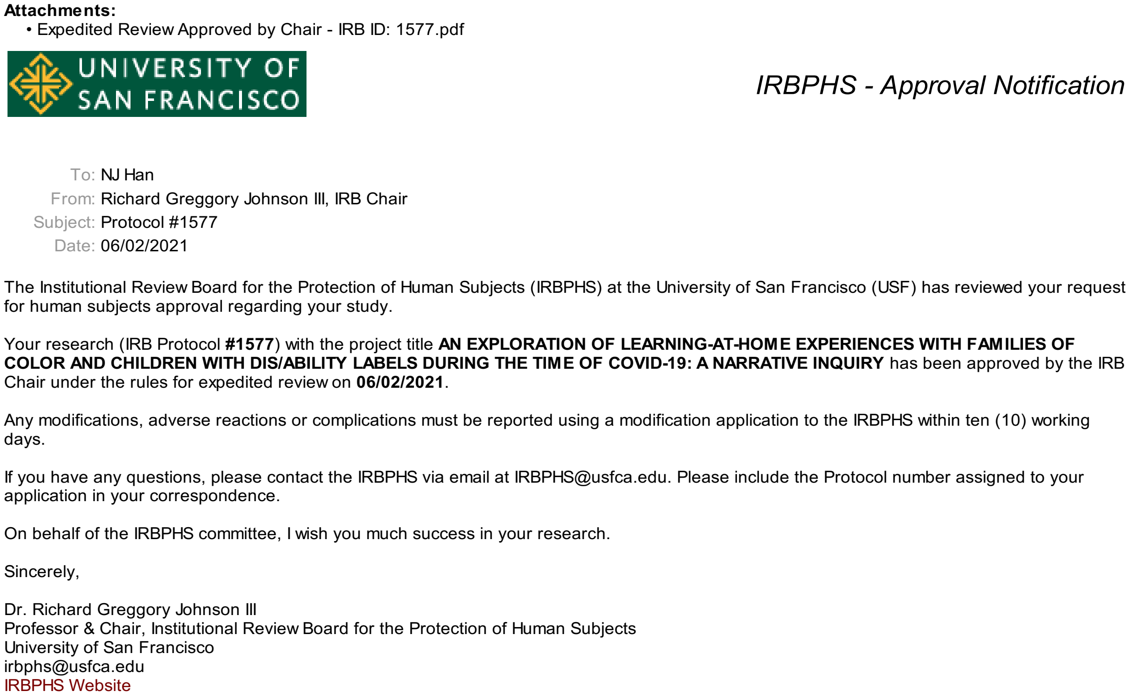
APPENDIX A

USF IRB Approval



Attachments:
- Expedited Review Approved by Chair - IRB ID: 1577.pdf

UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

IRBPHS - Approval Notification

To: NJ Han
From: Richard Greggory Johnson III, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #1577
Date: 06/02/2021

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your research (IRB Protocol **#1577**) with the project title **AN EXPLORATION OF LEARNING-AT-HOME EXPERIENCES WITH FAMILIES OF COLOR AND CHILDREN WITH DIS/ABILITY LABELS DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY** has been approved by the IRB Chair under the rules for expedited review on **06/02/2021**.

Any modifications, adverse reactions or complications must be reported using a modification application to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS via email at IRBPHS@usfca.edu. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Greggory Johnson III
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
irbphs@usfca.edu
IRBPHS Website

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Consent Form for Adult Participants

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study entitled *An exploration of learning-at-home experiences with families of color and children labeled with disability during the time of COVID-19: A narrative inquiry* conducted by NJ Han, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Organization and Leadership within the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales, a professor in the Department of Organization and Leadership, in the School of Education at The University of San Francisco.

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this research study is to illuminate the academic, social-emotional and psychological needs of students of color with learning disability labels who are schooling at home during this global crisis. To do this, the researcher aims to document the experiences of students and their families who are navigating schooling at home during the COVID-19 pandemic with a child of color who has been labeled with learning disability. In addition, the researcher seeks to examine what particular resources, practices and tools families and students are utilizing and/or need during this time.
The research hypothesis within this community-based research is held within the framework that we can continue to unpack, inform and dismantle deficit-based models in which our society and educational institutions are founded in.

WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, the following will happen: The researcher will request two virtual interviews during the summer months of 2021 at a time that is convenient for your family. The researcher will also request two virtual interviews with your child(ren) who are willing to participate in a virtual discussion. Each interview will provide rich and nuanced stories of each unique family experience, which will inform this research study within the framework of amplifying the voices and stories of children of color and their families. Each interview will be recorded and be kept confidential.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:

As mentioned above, your participation in this study will involve two virtual interviews with the adult caregiver(s) and two virtual interviews with the child(ren). Each interview must occur during the summer months of 2021, prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year. The interviews with the

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Consent Form for Older Child

July 2021

Dear Student,

My name is NJ Han and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at The University of San Francisco. I am asking you to participate in this project that examines and hopes to illuminate the academic, social-emotional and psychological needs of students of color labeled with learning disability who are or have been schooling at home during this global crisis. I seek to document your school or learning-at-home experiences during the COVID-19. I also seek to examine what particular resources, practices and tools you need during this time. The research hypothesis within this community-based research is held within the framework that we can continue to unpack, inform and dismantle deficit-based models in which our society and educational institutions are founded in.

I am asking to sit with you in a virtual Zoom room to discuss your experiences in a safe and confidential space. Your caregivers/legal guardians have already given permission for you to participate in this study, but you do not have to participate if you choose. You may quit this study at any time by simply telling me that you do not want to continue. You can skip any questions or tasks that you do not want to complete. Your participation in this study will not affect your grades in any way. There are no known risks involved in this study and you will receive nothing for your participation. To protect your confidentiality, your responses will not be shared with anyone unless required by law. The responses you make will only be kept by me. Neither your teacher nor your parents will know if you chose to participate in this project or will know the answers you provide.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me:

NJ Han
415-940-1038
njhan@dons.usfca.edu

Sincerely yours,

NJ Han

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CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Consent Form for Minor/Child Participant on behalf of Adult Caregiver

July 2021

Dear Caregivers/Families:

My name is NJ Han and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at The University of San Francisco. I am sending this letter to explain why I would like for your child to participate in my research project. I am studying disability rights and justice and would like to see the voices and narratives of students of color labeled with disability and their families amplified within scholarly research and in our society. Students of color and those labeled with disability are traditionally silenced and discriminated against. This research aims to center these voices and give them a platform, leading to a positive sense of self-acceptance and advocacy in our schools and in our communities.

With your permission, I will ask your child some questions to understand their experience during the COVID-19 quarantine about schooling at home and their school experience in general. Depending on your child, the interviews may be a few minutes in length up to 45 minutes in length. Your child will not be asked to share or do anything they are unwilling to. You, as their caregiver, may be present during the entire interview or may step out of the room. This can be decided together with your child. Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may quit this study at any time by simply saying "Stop" or "I do not wish to participate."

The study will be conducted virtually via Zoom, a virtual meeting platform and you connect in a location that is comfortable for you and your child. There are no known risks involved in this study and your child will not receive any compensation for their participation. To protect your child's confidentiality, your child's name will not appear on any record sheets. The information obtained will not be shared with anyone, unless required by law. The records will be maintained by myself. If you have any questions, please contact me 415-940-1038 or njhan@dons.usfca.edu.

This letter will serve as a consent form for your child's participation and will be kept in my possession. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dr. Genevieve Negron-Gonzales, the faculty sponsor of this project, at gnegrongonzales@usfca.edu. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant, you may contact the University of San Francisco IRB at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

APPENDIX B

Research Participant Recruitment Flyer

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED: Families with a child of color labeled with learning disabilities

- Have an opportunity to share your narrative and lived experience
- Contribute to scholarly research
- Access to community resources if needed
- All interviews will be virtual and confidential

Using a Disability Justice lens, my research focus is to understand the current experience for families of color, and offer support and resources based on their family's unique needs.

Do you qualify?

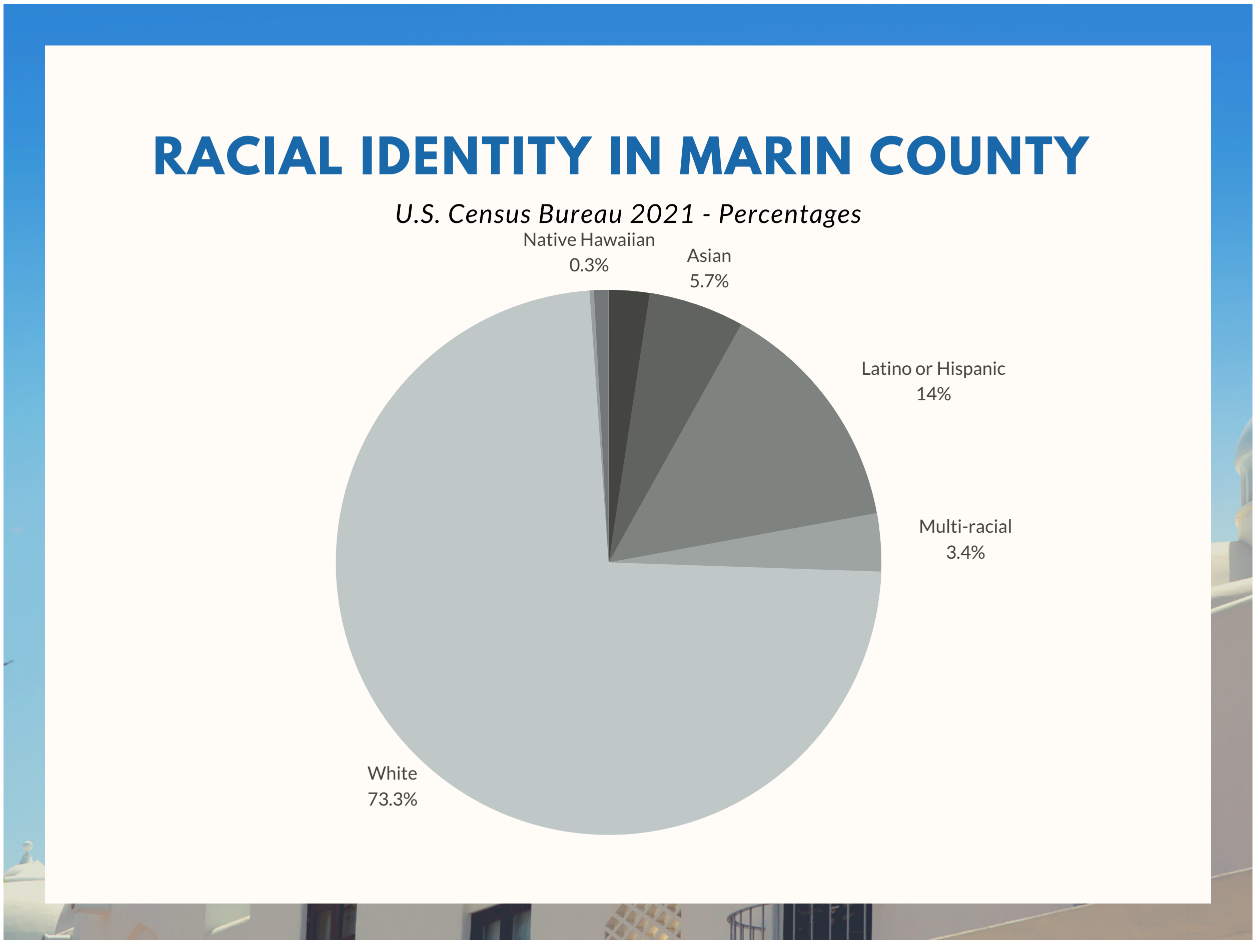
- Your family has a child who has been diagnosed with a learning disability and were navigating distance learning during the COVID-19 quarantine
- You identify as a family of color – Black, African American, Latinx, Asian, mixed race

Please contact me:

NJ Han
Doctoral Candidate - School of Education
The University of San Francisco
njhan@dons.usfca.edu
415-940-1038

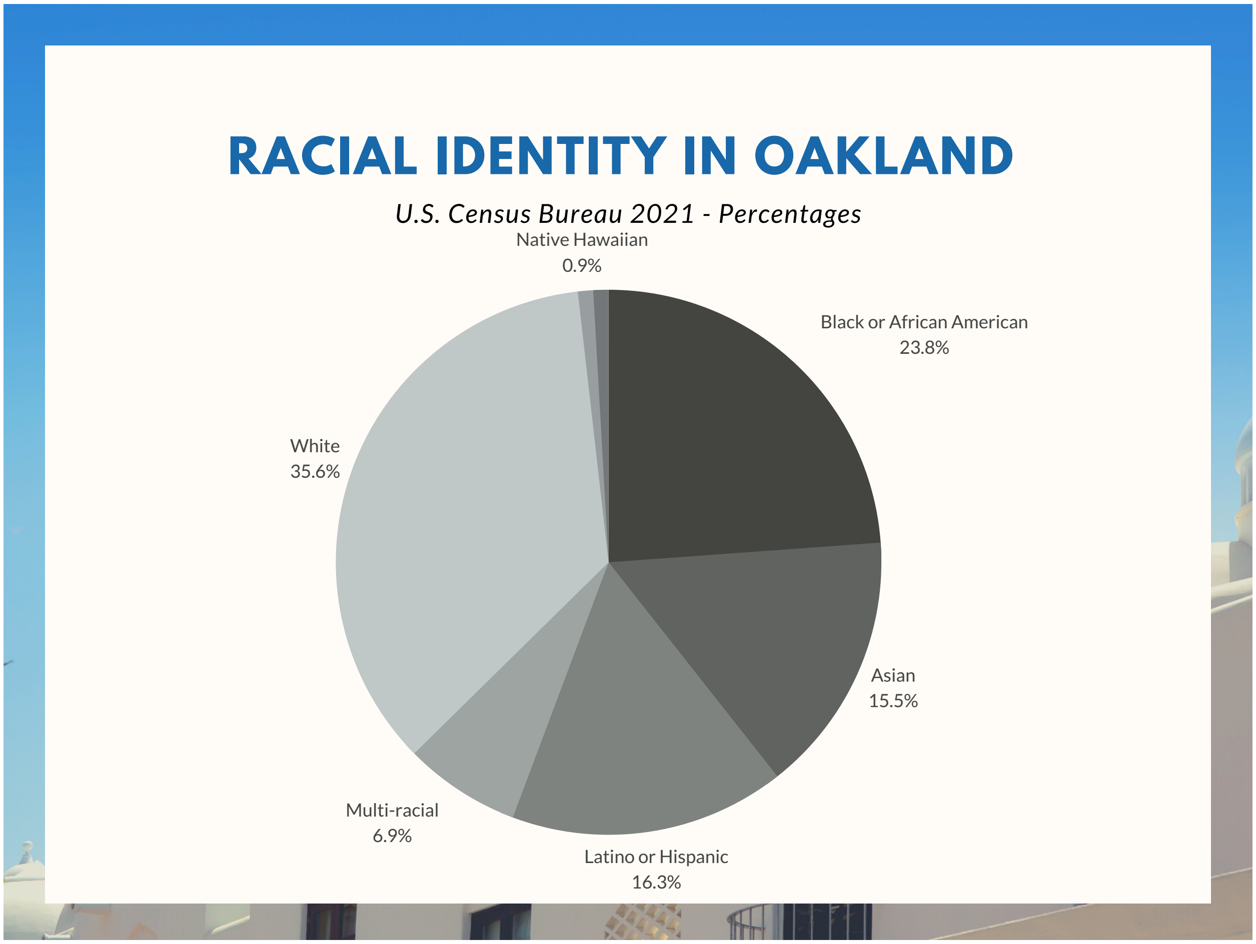
IF YOU ARE A SPECIAL EDUCATION EDUCATOR OR KNOW FAMILIES IN NEED AFTER THE DISTANCE LEARNING MODEL, please contact me.

APPENDIX C



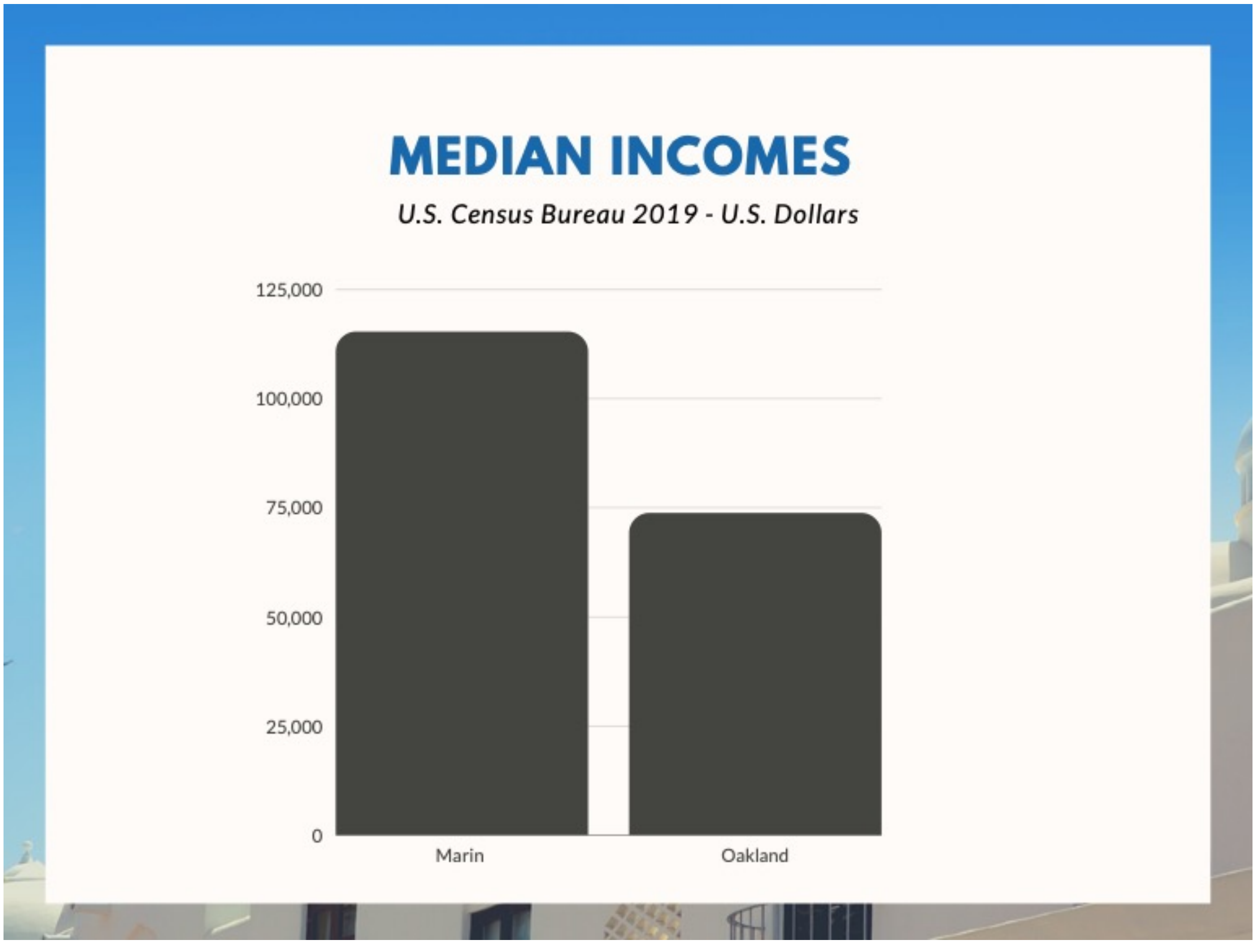
RACIAL IDENTITY IN MARIN COUNTY

U.S. Census Bureau 2021 - Percentages



RACIAL IDENTITY IN OAKLAND

U.S. Census Bureau 2021 - Percentages



MEDIAN INCOMES

U.S. Census Bureau 2019 - U.S. Dollars

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1

Participant School Profiles

School Type	School Location	School Size	Student of Color %	Median Household Income (2019)	Annual Tuition (2021-2022)
Public middle school, grades 6-8	Marin County, CA	700-765 students	unknown	$128, 212	n/a
Public middle school, grades 6-	Marin County, CA	1203 students	75% (69.9% Hispanic/Latinx)	$91,742	n/a
Independent K-8	Marin County, CA	595 students	41%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$38,220 to $42, 230
Independent high school, 9-12	Marin County, CA	440 students	25%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$53,086
Independent specialized school, grades 5-12	Marin County, CA	55-60 students	33%	Families who live in San Francisco and Marin County	$22,950
Charter arts school, grades 6-12	Oakland, CA	795 students	65%	Families who live in and around East Bay and Bay Area	n/a

Table 2
Family Participant Identity Profiles

Name	Gender identity	Racial identity	Family structure	Socioeconomic identity	City	Disability Label
Marla (parent)	Non-binary (she/they)	White	3 parents, twins	Middle class	Oakland	
Wayne (Marla's child)	Male; female assigned at birth (he/him)	Black/multiracial	3 parents, twins	Not mentioned	Oakland	Autism spectrum
Abby (parent)	Female (she/her)	5th gen Chinese American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	
Jane (Abby's child)	Female (she/her)	Asian American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Language based
Anna (Abby's child)	Female (she/her)	Asian American	Adoptive family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Language based
Selena (parent)	Female (she/her)	Hispanic American	Single mother	Did not share	San Rafael	
Peter (Selena's child)	Male (he/him)	Hispanic American	Single mother	Middle class	San Rafael	ADHD, gifted
Marcus (parent)	Male (he/his)	White multi-racial	Recently divorced	Did not share	San Rafael	
Kai (Marcus' child)	Female assigned at birth (they/them)	Multi-racial	Recently divorced	Not mentioned	San Rafael	ADHD, ODD
Sarah (parent)	Female (she/her)	White	Adoptive family	Middle class	San Rafael	
Jacob (Sarah's child)	Male (he/him)	Black	Adoptive family	Not mentioned	San Rafael	ADD, Tourette's Syndrome
Cecelia (parent)	Female (she/her)	Multi-racial – Native American, Puerto Rico, Irish Black	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	
Tasha (Cecilia's child)	Female (she/her)	Black, Latinx, multiracial	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	ADHD
Donovan (Cecelia's child)	Male (he/him)	Multi-racial	Traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	ADHD

Table 3
Adult Participant Profiles

Name	**Gender identity**	**Racial identity**	**Family structure**	**Socioeconomic identity**	**City**	**Profession**
Marla	Non-binary (she/they)	White	Biological co-parent in a 3 parents, twins	Middle class	Oakland	Educator/doctorate student
Abby	Cisgender Female (she/her)	5th gen Chinese American	Adoptive mother in two-parent family	Upper middle class	San Rafael	Educator for 29 years
Selena	Cisgender Female (she/her)	Hispanic American	Biological single mother	Did not share	San Rafael	Working remotely
Marcus	Cisgender Male (he/his)	White multi-racial	Biological father, recently divorced	Did not share	San Rafael	Working full-time
Sarah	Cisgender Female (she/her)	White	Adoptive mother in two-parent family	Middle class	San Rafael	Public school educator
Cecilia	Cisgender Female (she/her)	Multi-racial – Native American, Puerto Rico, Irish Black	Biological mother in traditional (husband, wife, 3 kids, 2 dogs)	Middle class	San Anselmo	Educator for school district

Table 4
Minor Participant Profiles

Name	Age/grade	School/City	Racial identity	Gender identity	Socioeconomic identity	Disability label
Wayne	12/7th grade	Charter arts, Oakland	Black/White multiracial	Male; female assigned at birth (he/him)	Not mentioned	Autism spectrum
Jane	16/12th grade	Independent high school, San Rafael	Asian American	Female (she/her)	Upper middle class	Language-based
Anna	16/12th grade	Independent high school, San Rafael	Asian American	Female (she/her)	Upper middle class	Language-based
Peter	10/5th grade	Independent for the gifted, San Rafael	Hispanic American	Male (he/him)	Middle class	ADHD, gifted
Kai	10/5th grade	Independent K-8, San Rafael	Multi-racial	Female assigned at birth (they/them)	Not mentioned	ADHD, ODD
Jacob	12/7th grade	Public middle, San Rafael	Black	Male (he/him)	Not mentioned	ADD, Tourette's Syndrome
Tasha	12/7th grade	Public middle, San Anselmo	Black, Latinx, multiracial	Female (she/her)	Middle class	ADHD
Donovan	10/5th grade	Public elementary, San Anselmo	Multi-racial	Male (he/him)	Middle class	ADHD