Differences Between African American and White Males in Grades 6-8: Comparative Evidence from Selected Texas Rural Schools

Sheenah Maria Hopkins-Johnson
Stephen F Austin State University, SheenahJohnsonEdd@gmail.com

Differences Between African American and White Males in Grades 6-8: Comparative Evidence from Selected Texas Rural Schools

Creative Commons License

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WHITE MALES IN

GRADES 6-8: COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED TEXAS RURAL

SCHOOLS

by

Sheenah Hopkins-Johnson, B.S., M.Ed.

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Education

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
(August 2022)

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WHITE MALES IN GRADES 6-8: COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED TEXAS RURAL SCHOOLS

by

Sheenah Hopkins-Johnson, B.S., M.Ed.

APPROVED:

_____
Barbara Qualls, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

_____
Richard Skuza, Ed.D., Committee Member

_____
Sarah Straub, Ed.D., Committee Member

_____
Dustin Joubert, Ph.D., Committee Member

_____
Freddie Avant, Ph.D.
Interim Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late mother, Maggie Barefield Hopkins. While writing my dissertation, she was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The adjective "terminal" was not taken lightly by my family. Her terminal illness and my pursuit of a terminal degree will be a part of my life that I will never forget. My mother's choice to undergo chemotherapy demonstrated her bravery and determination to fight for us. Every trip that my siblings and I took made us realize that life requires one to face obstacles without ever giving up. It was difficult to sit and talk with my mom every day while making time for the dissertation; however, her presence gave me the courage, strength, and determination to finish what I started. I told her that I would dedicate my book to her like she dedicated her life to us on earth. Also, I thank God for her believing in Him for everlasting life because I know that she continues to live in a place without sorrow or pain. Because I too believe in eternal life, I will see her again in heaven. Mom, as you took your last breath surrounded by your family, I told you that "it was ok, your family would be ok." We were so proud to have her as our mother; she was loved beyond measure. In her famous words, "I am good, I won't complain." And for what life brings next, "Let's get the show on the road!"

ABSTRACT

The academic achievement gap among Black males in grades 6-8 across Texas is a growing concern. Based on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), secondary data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was used to evaluate scores from a sample of Texas rural schools. In this quantitative, non-experimental methods study, the dependent variable examined was the STAAR reading score at the "meets grade level," and the independent dichotomous variables examined were: race, whether or not the student was classified in one of the following groups: ECD, at-risk, and special education. Academic trends from the 2017-2019 academic school years suggested there were few statistical differences in STAAR reading performance between the Black and White male students in the years examined in this study. These findings will benefit teachers and administrators of K-12 schools in the selected districts. Future recommendations are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my family, cohort, professors, colleagues, dissertation chair, and committee. To those in cohort 23, thank you for providing humor, suggestions, encouragement and always being a text message away. I thank Dr. Rebeca Cooper, my dissertation statistician who taught me more about data than I cared to know! I'm grateful for all of the zoom sessions during crazy times of day and for the advice on how to get the Texas Education Agency to provide the information needed to finalize the final chapters. My appreciation is also extended to the members of my doctoral committee for their guidance through this process: Dr. Richard Skuza, Dr. Sarah Straub, and Dr. Dustin Joubert. Your expertise provided the knowledge that I needed and made this project feasible. I acknowledge whole-heartedly the role of my doctoral chair, Dr. Barbara Qualls. You modeled what a true scholar-practitioner leader is supposed to be during a difficult situation. God used you in every facet of this degree. My thanks to Dr. Hendricks, my first doctorate professor, from whom I learned to write in APA format. Dr. Ali Hachem, I appreciate how you made us competent while learning about theory and statistics and for the opportunity to present at the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA) conference.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The academic achievement gap between Black and White male students is a controversial topic in Texas. Understanding the difference between an achievement gap and an opportunity gap may explain how to address the needs of underperforming students. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NCES, 2015) explains that "achievement gaps occur when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant" (NCES, 2015, Achievement Gaps section, para. 1). Whereas an opportunity gap describes ways in which education may be unequal for all students based on other social and situational factors. The achievement gap and opportunity gap jointly contribute to the real world of students' lives (Brown, 2017). The NAEP indicates that "data can be used to identify gaps and report on trends over time but cannot explain why gaps exist or why they change" (NCES, 2015, Understanding Gaps section, para. 1). Comprehensive achievement gaps and inequities in school settings have implications from *de jure* segregation still present in many schools' lack of accountability of *de facto* segregation (Ford & King, 2014).

Frankenberg and Taylor (2018) report that the "*de jure/de facto* distinction emerged to distinguish between statutory segregation and segregation arising from private choices and served to create a class of segregation that was not protected by the law" (p. 189). Researchers from the University of Texas suggest that *de facto* school segregation, class, and language prevail in public education today, not just in race and ethnicity (Texas AFT, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, the 'theory' of implementation of laws to administer more achievement tests with accelerated practices in accountability would "force teachers to pursue higher academic standards for all children" is not supported by any evidence (Kuh et al., 2006). The state of Texas requires students in grades 6-8 to take the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams in reading. Students that score at the "approaches grade level or above" are an indication that they have learned to read, write, and perform tasks at an academic level accepted as passing by the state. "NAEP assessments are designed to measure student performance, not to identify or explain the causes of differences in student performance" (NAEP, 2011, Understanding Gaps section, para. 1). Researchers and educators have attempted to identify causal factors for the achievement discrepancy between Black and White students, with some explaining the gap by category and group labeling (Carter, 2019). Nationally, Black students attend schools that are, "on average, 48 percent Black, whereas White students attend schools that are, on average, 9 percent Black" (Bohrnstedt et al., p. 6). It is critical to distinguish whether or not these gaps are larger between

schools or within schools if educators hope to bridge the academic achievement gap between Black and White male students.

Standardized testing to assess students' academic progress is a national requirement. Laws have been passed attempting to bridge the academic gap evident in general education. For example, President George W. Bush's signature No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, formally known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) and amended by Public Law (P.L.) 107-110, was a large-scale effort to address the racial achievement gap. The premise behind NCLB was to address the achievement gaps between high and low-performing subpopulations, with a special focus on racial differences in achievement. The 2001 NCLB closure was unmet, and the academic gap remained between Black and White students. Thirteen years after the No Child Left Behind Act, President Obama's administration passed the new "ESSA" law in December of 2015. The revised law provided more effective support, technical assistance, and grant programs for low-performing and vulnerable student populations (TEA, 2021). High stakes testing impacts students' educational choices and academic performance and intellectual development (Johnson, 2017).

In the remainder of this chapter, the following foundational areas will be discussed: the theoretical foundation, the problem statement, the research purpose and questions, the significance of the study as well as the assumptions made by the researcher in the study, and the limitations will be addressed.

Theoretical Foundation

A theoretical foundation for differences in Black males' academic achievement stems from Ochs and Schieffelin's (2011) theory of language socialization. The relationship between language acquisition and socialization, was used in the study, which had been separated by disciplinary boundaries, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. This theory indicates that the cause of differences in the functional use of language among culturally, linguistically diverse, and poor children have been found to account for the discontinuity they experience. Language socialization is suggested when "research departs from other theories of learning and development through its focus on language as the principal tool for developing linguistic and cultural competencies" (Baquedano-Lopez & Hernandez, 2011, p.198).

The theoretical premise of language socialization, according to Huff (2010), is that language is learned through interactions with others who are more proficient in the language, cultural practices, and who provide mentoring or evidence about normative, appropriate uses of the language, worldviews, ideologies, values, and identities of community members. Lovelace and Wheeler (2006) explain cultural discontinuity as the lack of cohesion between two or more cultures within the school setting, which is also incongruent with the teachers' style of interaction. As explained by Duff (2010) the experience of students in the academic setting is different even though their home language is the same as that of the educational setting. Challenges are noticeable for students from "disadvantaged" backgrounds or languages of minorities. Brown-Jeffy and

Cooper (2011) state that teachers' racial/ethnic composition is substantially less diverse than the population of students that they serve.

Karrebaek (2013) describes how teachers' regard for 'minority languages' in ethnically diverse mainstream classrooms impact student learning. These minority languages reflect the students' ethnic and linguistic background, resulting in the minority student appearing different, and "the linguistic attributes signifying difference are treated as undesired" (p. 356). Proficiency in language learning does not necessarily "influence the assessment of children's educational potential, and home language use is seen as an impediment to pupils' learning of the majority language" (p. 359). Research in language socialization as explained by Brown (2011) "focuses on particular interactional practices in different cultural settings" (p. 29). Brown continues by suggesting, "how these proceed in situated interaction, how they influence the development of children's communicative skills, their ability to think, feel, and interact like others in their social world" (p. 29).

Based on applying this theory to the present study, we would expect the independent variables, the race of the male students (Black versus White males), to influence or explain the dependent variables, STAAR reading score at the "meets grade level", in grades 6-8, regarding race, ECD, at-risk, and/or special education in the selected Texas Region 7 rural school districts.

Statement of the Problem

There are differences in Black males' academic achievement compared to White males in the selected Texas Region 7 school districts. This study focuses on

understanding how the performance gaps in reading scores for these two groups of

middle school students are critical to the accountability all schools owe in providing a

quality education for all children (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, NCLB and

Accountability section, para.1). Scholars have "pondered over strategies to assist

educators in teaching diversity" in their classrooms in hopes to bridge achievement gaps

between traditionally underserved minority students and their White counterparts

(Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p.66). "There are the disproportionately higher rates of

incarceration, unemployment, violence, school dropouts, expulsion, and special education

placement of Black males" in addition to lower levels of performance on standardized

tests (Dixon-Roman, 2013, p. 830). In the academic year of 2019, NAEP estimates that

there were 150,600 grade 4 students, 143,100 grade 8 students, and 26,700 grade 12

students in Texas. According to the NAEP (2019), the NCES 2021 report card for

reading, Texas student group scores (scale score 0-300) for Black students were lower

than White, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Asian, and Two or More Races, when

compared by race/ethnicity in grades 4 and 8. The average reading scores for grade 4

were: White 232, Black 205, Hispanic 208, Asian/Pacific Islander 245, Asian 247, and

Two or More Races 225. The average reading scores for grade 8 were as follows: White

267, Black 238, Hispanic 250, Asian/Pacific Islander 286, Asian 287, and Two or More

Races 258 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Trend in NAEP Reading Average Scores for Fourth-Grade and Eighth-Grade Public School Students in Texas, by Selected Student Groups, 2019
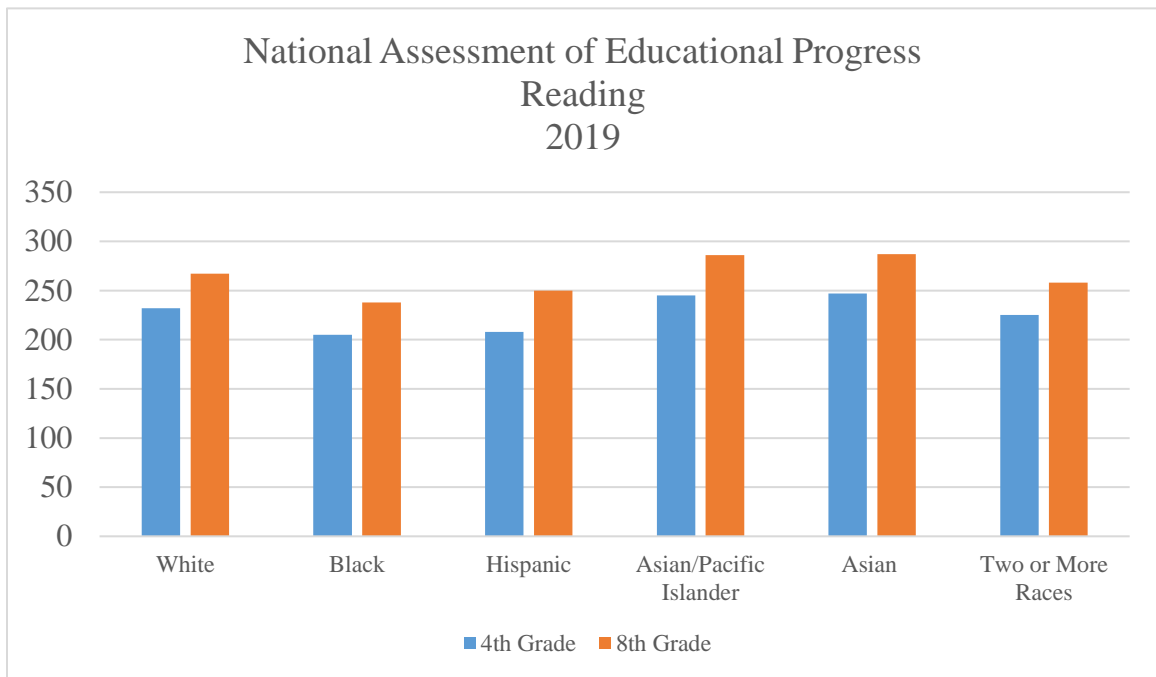
In the academic school year 2019, Black students in grade 8 scored lower in six states (NCES, 2021). This data historically supports the continuous gap between Black students and other subpopulations. This study will utilize data from three consecutive academic years 2017-2019 of the STAAR reading exam from selected Region 7 schools.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine the impact of several demographic identity statuses as variables on the reading achievement scores of Black and White males in grades 6-8.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study and that will be analyzed are:

1. Does a statistically significant difference exist between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8?

2. Does a statistically significant difference exist between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8, when ECD and other impact variables are removed from the comparison?

3. How do such comparisons vary when examined by selected demographic variables?

Significance of the Study

Teachers, staff, and administrators are expected to prepare all students to be successful in standardized testing. The outcomes of this study will be useful for the use of K-12 school districts, teachers, administrators, and the community of selected Texas Region 7 school districts. Data was collected from the TAPR after the TEA received the researcher's public information request (PIR) (see Appendix A). This quantitative data entails student performance scores on the STAAR reading at the "meets grade level." STAAR is mandated by the state and school districts are held accountable for the passing

and/or failure in student performance. Students are required to pass STAAR reading in grades 5 and 8, at the "approaches grade level or above" to be promoted to the next grade (TEA, 2020, Student Assessment section). Despite trends continuing to suggest that there is an academic gap between Black males and White males on state reading assessments, the NAEP and STAAR test measures are used as evidence of achievement levels supporting standards that describe what students should know and be able to do. If students are not successful on the STAAR exam, "TEC §28.0211(a-1) requires school districts to provide accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area each time a student fails to pass (i.e., who does not achieve approaches grade level) an assessment administered in grades 3–8" (TEA, 2020, Student Assessment section, p. 2). Educational researchers may also find this study useful to evaluate whether or not these measures are valid when assessing Black males' academic performance in Texas public schools. The results of this study are intended to inform school administrators and scholar-practitioners about the potential biases of using high-stakes testing to accurately measure Black and White student subpopulations. Texas school districts may need to change or enhance teacher preparation for those who are teaching students from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. There are differences in how Black and White male students interact with teachers from cross-cultural backgrounds and testing biases may be accounting for some of the variances in these academic gaps.

Assumptions

For this study, the following three assumptions were made. First, the data obtained from the TAPR was accurate and the TEA maintained accurate records. Second, the methodology used to analyze the data was correct and data was entered into SPSS software without human error. Third and finally, it was assumed that the STAAR testing results were valid and reliable in measuring the academic progress of Black and White male students in the selected Texas Region 7 schools.

Limitations and Delimitations

In this following section, the limitations and delimitations of the study will be examined. Limitations are factors that may or will affect the study that is not controlled by the researcher. Delimitations are factors that may or will affect the study that the researcher controls. The overarching factors of the study are limited to the inquiry of academic achievement in schools located only in the selected Region 7 geographic location of Texas. TEA (2021) reported 19 other regions. Region 7 includes 95 school districts, excluding seven charters, but only three school districts' data will be examined.

In each of the selected districts, there is a single campus where the students in the target grades are representative of the demographics within Region 7. Only test scores of STAAR reading for grades 6-8 were used. The additional core subject assessments available for grades 6-8, such as mathematics, writing, science, and social studies were not the focus of this study and were not analyzed. The demographic descriptors of teachers and staff are available on the TAPR, but are not included. Furthermore, data

were examined only from the academic school years of 2017-2019. The study focuses on STAAR performance at the "meets grade level", although it is possible to score at the "approaches grade level", "did not meet grade level", and "masters grade level". The race/ethnicity of Black and White males, as well as the demographics of economically disadvantaged (ECD), at-risk, and special education were analyzed from the TAPR. "The comprehensive TAPR system provides details of district and campus academic performance with financial reports and information about staff, programs, and demographics" (TEA, 2020, p.1).

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

The purpose of this section is to provide an explanation of terminology commonly used throughout this research study. These definitions are relevant to the topic and provide clarity to readers that not familiar with terminology commonly used in public education.

Academic Achievement gap. Achievement gaps occur when one group of students (e.g., students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (i.e., larger than the margin of error) (NCES, 2021).

Approaches Grade Level or Above. The passing standard for STAAR assessments is Approaches Grade Level. A student who scores at or above this level has passed the STAAR test, but a student who scores within Did Not Meet Grade Level has not passed (TEA, 2018).

At-Risk. The count and percentage of students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school as defined by TEC §29.081(d) and (d-1). (Data source: TSDS PEIMS 40100) (TEA, 2020).

Data Masking. This means that STAAR test results for fewer than five students in a Concatenated Masking Variable "CMVAR" will be set to blank. If the customer requests many masking-related data fields to be included in the data, the data will be severely masked and will be of no value for research. The information is masked in compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g. (TEA, 2021).

Did Not Meet Grade Level. Performance in this category indicates that students are unlikely to succeed in the next grade or course without significant, ongoing academic intervention. Students in this category do not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the assessed knowledge and skills (TEA, 2017).

Economically Disadvantaged (ECD). An economically disadvantaged student is defined as one who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program (TEA, 2020).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a law that was introduced in the Senate by Lamar Alexander (R-TN) on April 30, 2015. ESSA was signed into law by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015. The purpose of this act was to replace and update the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

which was signed into law in 2002. Like NCLB, ESSA reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (TEA, 2015).

Masters Grade Level. Performance in this category indicates that students are expected to succeed in the next grade or course with little or no academic intervention. Students in this category demonstrate the ability to think critically and apply the assessed knowledge and skills in varied contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar (TEA, 2017).

Meets Grade Level or above. Performance in this category indicates that students have a high likelihood of success in the next grade or course but may still need some short-term, targeted academic intervention. Students in this category generally demonstrate the ability to think critically and apply the assessed knowledge and skills in familiar contexts (TEA, 2017).

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Consists of print and digital assessments in various subject areas. Three of these subjects—mathematics, reading, and science—are assessed most frequently and reported at the state and select district level, usually for grades 4 and 8 (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

Nation's Report Card. Provides results on student performance based on gender, race/ethnicity, public or nonpublic school, teacher experience, and hundreds of other factors (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often called The Nation's Report Card, is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in public

and private schools in the United States know and can do in various subjects. Since 1969, NAEP has been a common measure of student achievement across the country in mathematics, reading, science, and many other subjects. Depending on the assessment, NAEP report cards provide national, state, and some district-level results, as well as results for different demographic groups (NAEP, 2019).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by Public Law (P.L.) 107-110 helps to ensure that all children receive a high-quality education and holds schools responsible for making sure that all children are learning (TEA, 2015).

Public Information Request (PIR). The Public Information Act (PIA) gives the public the right to request access to government information. The request must ask for information already in existence. The PIA does not require TEA to create new information, perform legal searches, or answer general questions (TEA, 2020).

Race/Ethnicity. Students are reported as African American, Hispanic, White, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and of Two or More Races (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Readiness Standards. Based on educator recommendations and as part of the development of the STAAR program, TEA identified, for each grade/subject and course assessed, a small percentage of eligible TEKS student expectations as the most critical to assess. These are called readiness standards and are defined as those student expectations

that are not only essential for success in the current grade or course but also important for preparedness in the next grade or course (TEA, 2020).

Region 7 (ESC-7). Region 7 serves 95 school districts, seven charter schools, and 13,305 square miles in 17 East Texas counties. Region 7 Education Service Center is devoted to assisting school districts in improving student performance, enabling school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and implementing initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner (Region 7 Education Service Center, 2020).

Special Education. Special education is a program that serves students with disabilities. Special education programs include special education instructional and related services programs and general education programs using special education support services, supplementary aids, and other special arrangements (TEA, 2020).

STAAR. The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is a comprehensive testing program for public school students in grades 3–8 or high school courses with end-of-course (EOC) assessments. The STAAR program is designed to measure to what extent a student has learned, understood, and can apply the concepts and skills expected at each tested grade level, or after each course for which an EOC assessment exists. Students are assessed in reading (grades 3–8), mathematics (grades 3–8), writing (grades 4 and 7), science (grades 5 and 8), and social studies (grades 8). End-of-course assessments are given for English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History (TEA, 2019).

STAAR Raw Conversion Table. The basic score on any test is the raw score, which is simply the number of questions correct. You can interpret a raw score only in terms of a particular set of test questions (TEA, 2020).

STAAR Scale Score. Unlike raw scores, you can interpret scale scores across different sets of test questions. Scale scores allow direct comparisons of student performance between specific sets of test questions from different test administrations. A scaled score is a conversion of the raw score onto a scale that is common to all test forms for that assessment. The scale score takes into account the difficulty level of the specific set of questions based on the test. It quantifies a student's performance relative to the passing standards or proficiency levels (TEA, 2020).

Stakeholders. Stakeholder type (e.g., teachers, students, and administrators) to be able to compare populations and identify patterns that occur within particular topical areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Standardized Testing. Standardized tests are scientifically normed and machine-graded instruments administered to students and adults under controlled conditions to assess capabilities, including knowledge, cognitive skills and abilities, and aptitude. They are used extensively in the U.S education system at all levels to assist with admissions, placement, and counseling decisions. Some of these tests include a written portion that is hand-graded (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

State Accountability. Texas provides annual academic accountability ratings to its public school districts, charters, and schools. The ratings are based on performance on

state standardized tests; graduation rates; and college, career, and military readiness outcomes. The ratings examine student achievement, school progress, and whether districts and campuses are closing achievement gaps among various student groups (TEA, 2020).

Student Success Initiative (SSI). TEC §28.0211 mandates that a student may not be promoted to (a) the sixth-grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the fifth-grade mathematics and reading assessment instruments under Section 39.023 or (b) the ninth-grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the eighth-grade mathematics and reading assessment instruments under Section 39.023 (TEA, 2020, Student Success Initiative Manual).

Subpopulation in Schools. Schools should segregate data based on subpopulation (e.g., race, gender, grade, level of ability, and sexual orientation) to be able to compare populations and identify patterns that occur within particular topical areas (NAEP, 2019).

Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR). The Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) pull together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year. Performance is shown disaggregated by student groups, including ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The reports also provide extensive information on school and district staff, programs, and student demographics (TEA, 2020).

Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Texas Education Agency is the state agency that oversees primary and secondary public education. It is headed by the commissioner of education. The Texas Education Agency improves outcomes for all public school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems (TEA, 2020).

Organization of the Study

Chapter one provided substantial background and introduction to the study and its theoretical perspective. It also included a statement of the problem, the research purpose statement and its significance within the field of education, its assumptions, limitations, and delimitations as well as an important list of operational definitions relevant to the study. Chapter two presents a formal review of related literature to the problem being studied. It focuses on the systemic inequities in schools, causal factors for testing disparities, as well as recommendations for the study of adolescent development, culturally sustaining instruction, and gaps in the current knowledge. The third chapter outlines the methodology used by the researcher to conduct the current study, research questions with hypotheses and assumptions, information regarding the design of the current study, triangulation, variables, as well as the population, sample, and setting. Reliability and validity, data collection, quantitative procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues are considered. Chapter four presents the results of the study, and in chapter five, the implications for practice and recommendations for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This study is grounded in the research literature on systematic inequality in education encompassing both external layers such as segregation and bias based on intersecting identity statuses such as school segregation, testing disparities, and widening teacher diversity gaps. In the first section, systemic inequities in education, the concepts of *de jure* and *de facto* school segregation are considered. The second section of the review examines the impact of implicit bias, stereotype threat, and teacher diversity on student success and academic performance. The third section discusses the research about implications for high stakes testing including the protocols and testing instruments. In this chapter, various elements of identity status and their impact on inequality in education; these demographic factors include the geographic social location, socioeconomic status, and linguistic bias in education. Chapter three concludes with a summary of the gaps in the literature and how these particular concerns led to the conceptualization and design of this study.

Systemic Inequities in Schools

Public schools across the United States are unequal in their access to resources and ability to provide similar levels of opportunity to all students.

Henfield (2013) explains that Black males on average are "entrapped by the vicious cycle leading to abysmal life outcomes" such as achievement gap, experience gap, and opportunity gap (p. 395) The academic achievement gap between Black and White males may be associated with disadvantages based on inequities such as students' housing, parents' income, and health. Furthermore, it is "ideal—that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their lives what they will" taking note that, "rigorous enforcement of the law's protections will be necessary to ensure existing inequities are not exacerbated" (Egalite et al., 2017, pp. 757-758). As explained by Howard (2013) despite an increase of accountability in schools due to high stakes testing in response to the promise policies of No Child Left Behind, there is still a large number of students attending U.S. schools "who fail to gain access to a high-quality education" (p. 54).

De Jure Segregation in Schools

The amount of public school financing in southern states' expenditures on Black schools was lower on a per capita basis when compared to per capita expenditures for White schools (Pierre, 2012). Ford and King (2014) reported that before the segregation of public schools, school programs that were essential to Black students' academic, socio-cultural, intellectual, and fiscal potential were denied, which enabled more extensive achievement gaps and inequities in school settings. Tieken (2017) explained, "with *de jure* segregation, White southern political and economic leaders intentionally and explicitly created separate spaces for White children and children of color" (p. 398).

Additionally, Black educators were paid less than White educators despite having similar training and credentials (Pierre, 2012). The academic achievement gap was evident during segregation and there was no legal protection for the rights of students or their teachers.

De Facto Segregation in Schools

Since the segregation of public schools, many "ghettos" are now geographically isolated from White suburbs. Schools of voluntary choice, magnet, or attendance zones "can no longer enable many low-income Black children to attend predominantly middle-class schools" (Rothstein, 2014, p. 1), therefore, Black students are essentially still being taught in segregated schools due to housing disparities. The resulting social and economic conditions are impacting the school's ability to adequately prepare children from these neighborhoods for academic success. Highsmith and Erickson (2015) explain that even after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), "the extensive literature on segregation" and frameworks of division, such as "city-splitting", and the "racial divide" is most prominent, there is continued segregation in schooling as the result of segregated housing patterns (p. 563). Furthermore, "tracing the interactions between housing and schooling also undermines the commonplace notion of *de facto* segregation" (p. 565).

In an attempt to narrow the academic achievement gap between Black and White students, Horsford (2019) explains, the benefits of socioeconomically and racially integrated schools to include:

(a) students with higher average test scores, (b) students more likely to enroll in

college, (c) students less likely to drop out, (d) students in schools that help

reduce racial achievement gaps, and (e) students attending classrooms, that

encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity are needed. (p. 261)

According to Pruitt et al. (2019) many high-performance schools have a majority

of White students, and their educators' credentials and degrees of the educators are higher

than in the schools attended by a majority of Black students. Furthermore, it is suggested

that students who live in racially homogeneous environments are more likely to attend

schools with the same racial/ethnic makeup. Tieken (2017) explains, that throughout the

1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, white flight from city to suburb effectively fostered racial

homogeneity. According to Orozco and Diaz (2016) "the rhetoric of White innocence

through altruism toward students of color has contributed to inequitable schooling while

leaving intact the moral pristineness of White policymakers" (p. 132), and led to

increases in the academic gap between Black and White students in the United States.

Grace and Nelson (2019) explain, "while *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954/1955)

attempted to provide for equitable access to schools for Black students, today it is often

schools themselves that act as barriers to successful matriculation and graduation of

Black males" (p. 664). It is unprofessional and unethical as explained by Ford and King

(2014) to "promote and permit the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities

to students based on race, which frequently occurs with Black students" (p. 300).

Implicit Bias in Education

Students' mindsets and achievements can be affected by teacher-student interactions according to McCutchen (2016). Evidence from Devine et al. (2012) also suggests Black people face "continuing discrimination and have more adverse outcomes than White people" when it comes to success and well-being (p. 1269). Implicit biases take the form of "subtle, sometimes subconscious stereotypes held by White teachers, which result in lower expectations and rates of gifted program referrals for Black students" (Young, 2016, p. 1). Brunn-Bevel and Byrd (2015) explain biased perceptions of students' abilities result in White students being placed in more advanced course tracks than within racially diverse schools. Teachers' low expectations of Black adolescent students often function as a barrier to academic success because the teachers do not wait for feedback when students are perceived as low-performing (Grace & Nelson, 2019). Togut (2011) explains how educators in majority White districts often blame minority students for their underachievement and may also view these Black students as difficult or culturally and linguistically deprived.

Huerta et al. (2018) report that teachers' and counselors' persistent racism, sexism, and classism are related to a lack of trust and relationships with adult educators which in turn directly impacts their ability to pursue academic success. Black males' academic experience has been a result of schools' primary focus on "maintaining order and discipline rather than student learning and academic achievement" (Billings, 2011, p. 7). Problems in academic performance occur when educators fail to embrace all

ethnicities by not providing diverse opportunities to learn. Billings also contends that Black students are often suspended or expelled, unlike their White male counterparts who display similar negative behaviors. Yang and Anyon (2016) explain how "cultural mismatches between students, teachers, and administrators" may increase the likelihood that students will be pushed out of school (p.40). Black male students have been caught in the "school-to-prison pipeline" (Fowler, 2011) because adolescent misbehaviors were increasingly managed with practices traditionally associated with adult corrections (Kayama et al., 2015). At the federal level, the Clinton Administration passed the 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act, which required school administrators to take a "zero-tolerance" stance on the presence of guns, drugs, and other weapons, which caused an increase in the severity of disciplinary action targeting Black male students.

Black male students have experienced racial discrimination from peers, teachers, and administrators, contributing to low academic performance. Taylor (2010) explains that teachers show prejudices toward Black students but are often resistant to admitting these biases. Students' grades, self-efficacy, values, and relationships may stem from mistreatment and harassment from school administrators, teachers, and staff based on negative stereotypes. Teacher expectations strongly influence teacher-student interactions and contribute to potential student outcomes (Grace & Nelson, 2019). Implicit biases from teachers may also contribute to disciplinary actions received by Black adolescent males (Morris & Perry, 2017). According to Bornsheuer et al. (2011) it is often difficult for school administrators to effectively combat inequitable dropout rates because of

stressed socioeconomic conditions, learning disabilities of students, and low parental educational levels.

As educators become more concerned with the passing of standardized testing and related increased curriculum requirements, longer school days, and higher standards may become factors in higher rates of student dropouts. McGee (2013) suggested that some educators frame Black male achievement in ways that "emphasize underachievement" which leads others to believe the misconception that all Black males are failing in school and life.

Another factor impacting the quality of education received by Black male students is their inadequate treatment by their teachers. Devine et al. (2012) compared implicit bias with prejudice; learning about the contexts that activate the personal bias and replacing these responses with new ones can lead educators to "Break the Habit." According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2021), the racial/ethnic and sex distributions of teachers in Texas Public schools in 2018 were as follows: a majority were White (79 percent), about 9 percent Hispanic, 7 percent were Black, 2 percent Asian, and Two or More Races, and a majority were female (76 percent). "Teachers of a given race/ethnicity were more often found in schools where their race/ethnicity matched a majority of the student body" (p. 16). According to Grace and Nelson (2019) "aside from practices that act as barriers to the education of Black students, innate features such as low teacher expectations act as barriers to success" (p. 665). Schools contribute to problems with bias through the "feminization of learning." Activities linked to

stereotypical feminine spheres have led to a decrease in Black males' interest in education (Billings, 2011). Furthermore, Orrock and Clark (2018) explain that "some educators may hold implicit prejudice toward minority students, thus perpetuating the ethnic achievement gap due to unknown or unaware prejudice" (p. 1019).

According to Huerta et al. (2018) counselors and teachers have labeled Black males as 'troublemakers' which limits their opportunities to participate in valued school activities, sports, honors, and advanced courses that contribute to the academic and social development of youth. Disparities in teachers' educational attainment, cultural competence, and readiness also lead to inequities in the educational environment. Teachers must be able to "discover" who they are in order to "confront biases that have influenced their value system" (Taylor, 2010, p. 26). The National Education Association (2011) explains that Black male students are labeled more frequently by teachers, administrators, and staff as mentally ill or exhibiting cognitive impairments (i.e., special education), and are most likely to be suspended from school or drop out. As noted by Tosolt (2010) "teacher-student relationships are central to some students' success" (p. 146).

High-Stakes Testing

Educators have questioned the validity of high-stakes testing and its presumed benefits to the state government. "Failing high-stakes tests, such as the STAAR, affects students, teachers, and districts in many ways, including the costs of remediation and tutoring programs and materials" (Szabo & Sinclair, 2019, p. 8). The label of "failure"

hurts not only the self-esteem and morale of students but the surrounding educational system. Brockmeier et al. (2014) explain that the increased use of high-stakes testing for accountability purposes for student and school performance raises concerns. Allen et al. (2015) imply, "rigorous standards for student achievement have led many school districts to look for research-based methods that will positively affect student scores on standardized assessments" (p.3). Every state in the U.S. uses standardized testing to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. "Developmentally appropriate practices have been altered to provide additional time for test preparation" since the implementation of No Child Left Behind (Musoleno & White, 2010, p.1). School systems, teachers, students, politicians, and parents are affected by tests (Minarechová, 2012).

High-stakes testing is a routine component of students' experience in today's public schools. Test scores can cause comparisons in all phases of school life. According to Madaus and Russell (2010), testing is viewed as "both a system of monitoring student performance and a vehicle of change driving what is taught and how it is taught, what is learned and how it is learned" (p. 21). A "negative effect of high-stakes testing is the impact on the quality of education that a child receives as a result of the number of standardized tests children take and the push to attain high scores" (Spann & Kaufman, 2015, p. 2). Szabo and Sinclair (2019) also noted that the STAAR test was found to be misaligned from 2012 - 2018, and some improvements in the readability of the reading passages resulted. Written text has readability if it is written clearly and at a

comprehensible level. Many students may be failing the STAAR test because the passages are written above their grade level, and furthermore, it was implied that the STAAR results may not accurately reflect student mastery of the TEKS because of the type of questioning on the exam. Despite the rigor of the tests, teachers are pressured into "teaching to the test" or to teach the required content via lecture which is a less engaging method for students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills needed for real-world settings (Minarechová, 2012; Au, 2016). Finally, Minarechová (2012) also explains that the pressure associated with high-stakes testing has caused some teachers to leave the profession.

High-Stakes Testing and Race

According to Huerta et al. (2018) Black students are negatively impacted by traditional forms of high-achieving schools because of their race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Togut (2011) noted poor and minority students' grade retention and dropout rates have been linked to high-stakes testing. Pardos et al. (2014) suggest that students are more likely to perform well on a test if they exhibit high rates of concentration, and engagement, versus students that were often off task, bored or confused. High-stakes standardized testing has been known to increase racial inequality in education by the "guise of forms of anti-racism that have been reconstituted as part of a larger neoliberal project for education reform" (Au, 2016, p. 39). Disadvantaged students may appear in statistics such as those on race or material disparities (Minarechová, 2012). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child

Left Behind (NCLB) focuses on the closure of racial gaps in test scores and school

quality (Yang & Anyon, 2016). According to Thompson and Allen (2012), the current

high-stakes testing harmed Black students through the following:

> (1) instructional practices that have not resulted in widespread higher test scores,
> (2) increasing student apathy, (3) more punitive discipline policies and pushing
> more youth into the prison pipeline, and also by (4) creating a narcissistic
> education system that strives to make schools 'look good', even if students are not
> really learning information that will help them improve the quality of their lives.
> (p. 218)

Spann and Kaufman (2015) noted that tests may be culturally biased because the

values of a community are not considered. High-stakes testing privileges include

"hegemonic definitions of literacy achievement centered on White monolingual

expectations of performance, pathologizing other groups and mandating documentation

of these groups to the centralized" (Williamson, 2017, p. 73). Togut (2011) noted

teachers' perspectives, school politics, and cultural bias determine education eligibility

and placement in special education, which is heavily reliant on testing.

Implicit Bias in Testing Instruments

Rosales and Walker (2018) suggested that standardized tests have never been

accurate and reliable measures of student learning. The effects of biased testing have led

students of color to suffer from grade school to college. According to McCutchen et al.

(2016), students' fixed mindsets inhibit their belief in overcoming academic obstacles

which results in lower achievement. Tracking methods used by the state have been known to categorize students' achievement as a "White phenomenon" which may have led to unequal opportunities for others to learn (Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015). Questions appearing in STAAR are grounded in knowledge, skills, and student expectations within the state-mandated curriculum, known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEA, 2020).

According to TEA (2019), STAAR is a comprehensive testing program designed for students who attend Texas public schools. Students are expected to understand, learn and apply the concepts and skills that are tested at their grade level. There is an assurance to parents, teachers, and administrators that these students are prepared in the selected Texas Region 7 schools to enter the next grade level. Rosales and Walker (2018) suggest standardized tests have never been accurate and reliable measures of student learning. Federal and state laws require school staff to search for ways to improve students learning so that they all can be successful in grades 6-8 (Allen et al., 2015).

STAAR is a standardized test used to measure achievement, including subpopulations. A basic score on the STAAR reading test is the raw score, which is the number of correct questions. Scale scores allow direct comparisons of student performance between a specific set of test questions from different test administrators. The cut score is used by the testing agency to distinguish between performance levels or categories (TEA, 2020). Rosales and Walker (2018) suggests tools used for assessment do not replicate existing racial and economic inequality. High-stakes testing perpetuates

systemic inequality "through the emotional and psychological power of the tests over the test takers" (p .10). Furthermore, Rosales and Walker suggests that "the tests, not the Black test-takers, have been underachieving" and these assessments have been used as instruments of racism within a biased system. Some scholars would argue that these assessments may be the "most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools" (p. 6).

Systemic Inequities Due to Identity Factors

Systemic Inequities Due to Geographic Social Location in Rural Communities

According to Williamson (2017) there is evidence suggesting "top-down" reform efforts fail to serve students equitably. It is explained by Puryear and Kettler (2017) rural districts typically "lag behind" nonrural areas in gifted education services. There are policy changes that increase the quantity and high-stakes nature of standardized assessments that have been harmful to specific student populations. Rural schools and urban schools are quite unique even when they have similar racial demographics (Tieken, 2017). Rural and urban schools that serve mostly Black, Latino or Asian, or indigenous students are separated and reflect patterns of current and historic events; "they are separate, and always were—unequal" (p. 397). One predictor of interpersonal relationships is socio-demographics (Suh et al., 2017). According to Lavalley (2018), Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native children are more

likely to attend a school experiencing high levels of poverty in rural areas than White or Asian children.

Spann and Kaufman (2015) report that students living in wealthier districts tend to perform better on standardized tests because they have better-resourced schools, greater access to private tutoring and specialized test preparation as well as educational, health and lifestyle resources at home. Au (2016) implies that oftentimes people suggest "good" teachers and schools produce high test scores in students, and "bad" teachers and schools produce low test scores in students. More specifically, "bad" teachers are more likely to receive low evaluations and termination just as the schools with lower test scores are more likely to be closed; while those schools that were perceived as "good" schools that had higher test scores remain open and are considered to be more successful.

Educational inequity is "embedded" through geography, and maintained "spatialization" similarly disadvantages in rural and urban schools serving poor children of color (Tieken, 2017). Low-income housing areas have contributed to racial segregation which also has caused the Black neighborhood to become poorer (Pruitt et al., 2019). Residential segregation as noted by Suh et al. (2017) by social class, race, and ethnicity, can "drive demographically similar students into common social spaces" (p. 428). Teiken continues, "these schools are not adversaries; they are, instead, allies in a shared struggle for educational justice" (p. 387). Rather than 'closing the gap' or educational disadvantage, "policies may result in a limited and reduced education for children

growing up in rural poverty" (Cormack & Comber, 2013, p. 87). Further, schools cannot solve the effects of poverty and poverty affects children's academic success.

Rural Positionality

Puryear and Kottler (2017) suggest, that "inequities of opportunity appear to exist based on where students live" (p. 151). Approximately one-half of school districts, one-third of schools, and one-fifth of students in the United States are located in rural areas (NCES, 2016; Lavalley, 2018). Texas rural school districts face many educational challenges unique to their size and region (TEA, 2017). With poverty rates increasing, there are more migrant families, low-educated parents, and single-parent homes (Semke & Sheridan, 2012). According to Lavalley (2018), literacy rates, access to advanced coursework at the secondary level, attendance, and persistence through college are all lower for students that are educated in rural schools. Limited access to professional development for continuing education for experienced teachers is an issue in rural geographic locations. It is explained by Semke and Sheridan (2012) that geographically, rural schools are isolated which presents challenges for rural educators, resulting in high teacher turnover and a high percentage of "inexperienced or poorly prepared teachers" (p. 23).

Rural students tend to "struggle" with lower achievement and fewer opportunities to take advanced courses; teachers in these communities are not likely to have the same level of academic experience as their metropolitan counterparts (Lavalley, 2018). Teachers report negative situations serving students with learning or behavior problems

in addition to feeling unprepared to meet their unique educational needs. According to Gagnon and Mattingly (2016), advanced placement courses are less likely to be promoted in rural schools due to a "lack of sufficiently prepared students, teaching constraints, and other logistical challenges" (p. 266). Poverty is more prevalent in rural areas, and it is "long-lasting, intergenerational, and disproportionately focused on non-White ethnic minorities and more remote areas" (Irvin et al., 2011, p.1227).

Socioeconomic Factors

Schools in high-poverty areas may not have the "supplies, materials, opportunity to learn, and deteriorating physical facilities, which diminish student engagement" contributing to the low academic achievement of Black students (Pruitt et al., 2019, p. 2). School campuses in low-socioeconomic districts have a high rate of disadvantaged students and adequate resources may not be available for all students to succeed. The occupational culture of parents impacts the performance of Black males in reading. The social class of students is also an indication that there is a chance that Black children born in low socioeconomic communities will grow up to have less income than their parents (Calarco, 2014). Dixon-Roman (2013) explains, "parental wealth has a larger association on the level of performance in reading achievement for Black children than for White children" (p. 836). Deficits in Black students' stages of development that occur in their homes may affect school achievement as well (Orrock & Clark, 2018).

It is explained by Pruitt et al. (2019) that students who live in low-socioeconomic neighborhoods may not be academically engaged because their parents may lack

educational experience or other factors that cause a cycle of school disengagement. "Students who come from lower SES experience greater challenges achieving academically in public schools" (Orrock & Clark, 2018, p. 1016).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2021) noted in Characteristics of Children's Families, that in 2019, sixteen percent of children under age 18 were in families living in poverty. According to Dixon-Roman (2013), Black children's level of reading performance has been more affected by their parents' wealth than that of White children. The wealth of parents and the upbringing of their children have been known to affect academics. Kitsao-Wekulo et al. (2013), explain that behavior during testing, as well as skill development of children, is affected by cultural values and beliefs, which are often displayed in their living environments.

Instability in low socioeconomic neighborhoods often leads to violence and poor health. Neighborhoods in low-income communities of predominantly Black people frequently do not have the financial resources needed to provide services for families. Family income is one measure of economic capital that is understood to be associated with academic achievement in Black males (Dixon-Roman, 2013). Adults working in school settings have treated adolescent students differently because of their ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Howard, 2013; Noguera, 2003). Black males may be faced with racism, poverty, discrimination, and violence in their living environment, thus creating a tolerance or normalizing for such conditions. Adolescents are at risk of running away when exposed to residential break-ins, bullying, or exposure to gunshots (Santiago

et al., 2017). As noted by Ispa-Landa & Conwell (2015), working-class residents racialize their neighborhoods as White. In so doing, they racialize (as White) the characteristic of respectability they believe prevails in their White neighborhoods and racialize (as Black) the characteristic of disorder they believe prevails in neighborhoods they classify as Black. A higher percentage of children living in married-couple households than in mother-and father-only households—was observed for children across all racial/ethnic groups, except for Black children. NCES (2021) stated that "55 percent of Black children lived in mother-only households, compared with 34 percent who lived in married-couple households and 9 percent who lived in father-only households" (p. 8). Adolescents may be influenced by "similarly aged neighborhood peers" and be pressured to use "aggressive or violent behavior" (Santiago et al., 2017, p. 172). It is implied that "most children born into the lower social classes will not make it out of that class, even when exposed to heroic educators" (Cormack & Comber, 2013, p. 80).

Stereotype Threat

The academic achievement gap has been affected by stereotypes within the school settings. According to James (2012), stereotype threat describes the situation in which there is a negative stereotype about a person's group, and he or she is concerned about being judged based on this stereotype or treated negatively. The stereotype threat theory suggests minority students underperform because of pressures created by negative stereotypes about their racial group. Spencer et al. (2016) suggest, it is how young Black students act upon the underachiever stereotype and how the stereotype of Black students

being underachievers is maintained by the social context of schooling, teachers' attitudes, and practices. Black males have stereotypically been described as fierce and violent as they develop during adolescence. Negative stereotypes have influenced the way Black male students are treated in schools. Effective learning is disrupted because stereotype threat leads to disidentification (Appel & Kronberger, 2012). Spencer et al. (2016) noted that "students experience greater performance decrements under stereotype threat to the extent that they are identified with the stereotyped domain because their performance in the domain is self-relevant" (p. 423). As a result, people who experience stereotype bias are motivated to avoid engaging in any behavior that might be seen as a stereotype (Schmader, 2012).

Testing situations have enabled members of a stereotyped or otherwise devalued group to perform up to their full potential, due to a performance inhibiting pressure not to fail (Appel & Kronberger, 2012). According to Bratter et al. (2016), the "anxiety of confirming group-specific stereotypes of poor intellectual ability, has well-established links to the poor performance of racial minority students in college, high school, and even in earlier grades" (p. 340). Bratter et al. explain that "members of groups who are stereotyped as having low intellectual ability experience anxiety when facing these triggers and perform worse on intellectual tasks than students who are not members of minority groups" (p. 341).

The academic achievement gap between Black and White male students may stem from teachers' conscious or unconscious reaffirmation of White being innocent and

Black as perpetrators through either engagement in or disengagement from certain behaviors. The perceived aggressive behavior of Black male students may cause teacher intimidation, extended suspension, and time out of class (Cumberbatch-Smith, 2016). The "double jeopardy" of gendered racism is associated with Black male behavior because of a history of Black males' perceived lack of academic progress leading to disciplinary outcomes including experiences within the criminal justice system (Matthews et al., 2010).

Oppositional Identity

Mocombe and Tomlin (2010) explain that oppositional identity contributes to the underachievement among Black American adolescent students. In predominantly White schools, Black students are more likely to experience race-related stressors. "Black American students intentionally underachieve for fear of being labeled 'acting White' by their Black adolescent peers" (p. 7). Black students' low academic performance stems from oppositional identity, indicated when students tend to reject mannerisms that are conducive to making good grades because they are viewed as the habits of White culture (Rodriguez, 2014). Adolescent students may "internalize" negative labeling and lose the will to accept and adopt school norms (Carter, 2019). According to Wildhagen (2011), some Black students perceive the costs of peer sanctions to be sufficiently high, so they scale back on academic engagement before receiving peer sanctions for their involvement in academics. Oftentimes, it is not the lack of desire to make good grades, but it is the effect of oppositional identity that causes Black students to fail. Bisin et al. (2011)

suggest that the "higher the level of harassment and the number of racist individuals in the society, the more likely an oppositional minority culture will emerge" (p. 1046).

Black male adolescents historically have had difficulty obtaining the same academic outcomes as their White peers. Darensbourg and Blake (2014) explained the difficulty Black adolescent males have in middle school if they are trying to recover from a decline in engagement and achievement. Black adolescents may be at risk of developing negative values about education because of innate barriers, such as gender and race (Butler-Barnes et al., 2012). The negative stigma placed on Black students known as "acting White" (Ogbu, 2014; Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015) has also caused them to be ridiculed by classmates and excluded from social activities. Black males may associate negative behaviors as being part of their culture. Black adolescent males were known to be respected more by their White peers when they "acted cool" by failing to follow the rules and displaying a lack of academic interest (Ogbu, 2014; Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015). Black males have been known to fail at school because they choose to resist opportunities to reach academic achievement (Allen, 2015). Black males taking risks and "acting out" are unhealthy distractors that may cause a loss of academic progress (Yeager, 2017), as well as produce significant economic and social conflicts (Bisin et al., 2011).

Developmental Factors

Educators should be cognizant that the young Black men are still in the process of constructing an understanding of their world, opportunities, and local environment, and

the deliverance of academic instruction is crucial to what they can achieve through

mutual trust (Huerta et al., 2018). The dimensions of the school climate are closely

aligned with the developmental needs of early adolescents (White et al., 2014).

Adolescents are learning how to adjust to the demands of school and social life while also

dealing with positive and negative emotions (Yeager, 2017). Instruction should be

provided in a manner that is sufficient for the complexity of the developing brain of

adolescents (Galvan, 2013). Musoleno and White (2010) explain that "cooperative

learning and other flexible grouping strategies are among the instructional practices that

address the young adolescent's need for physical movement and social interaction" (p. 3).

Adolescents in middle school may struggle with the expectations for success or failure

(Leath et al., 2019). Adolescents under the age of sixteen usually do not look to the

future. Instead, they may strive for shorter rewards quicker than an older adolescent who

will wait for a bigger reward at a later time. If rewards are used by teachers as incentives,

it is important to know if, when, and how they will motivate academically. There is an

above-average sensitivity to rewards that may lead adolescents to seek other items, such

as money, food, or what is thrilling to them (Galvan, 2013).

  Students' learning abilities may change as they experience different

developmental periods of adolescence. The age-specific behavior of adolescents causes

them to act in particular ways. Middle school students in the adolescent stage may

discover that they have different knowledge, skills, and points of view, which may cause

disagreement with their peers. Adolescents may need social and emotional help because

of negative behavior that disrupts their learning processes. Suh et al. (2017) explain how social relationships influence individual attitudes, behaviors, and values. Adolescent experiences may be triggered by stimuli and independent acts that are learned from what Galvan (2013) explains to be critical experiences. Changes in the cognition of adolescents allow for abstract, hypothetical, and real-world thinking. Adolescents engaged in positive behavioral activities may produce higher achievement scores on standardized tests and academics (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014). As noted by Semke and Sheridan (2012), "children develop within multiple contexts, and development is optimal when effective connections and continuities among these major systems are created" (p. 22).

Impact of Teacher Diversity Shortage

The demographics of the United States are constantly changing including, and especially within, the school-aged population. However, teachers' demographics do not replicate the racial/ethnic composition of the student- population that they serve, resulting in challenges in effectively teaching students whose cultural backgrounds are different from their own (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Boulanger (2019) suggests that the "cultures" of poverty-related families are negated, and parents are "artificially made into school's agents without having the possibility to be fully integrated into school" (p. 1). Black adolescent male students may feel schools are ineffective, non-supportive, or fail to provide nurture while simultaneously providing high-quality instruction (Noguera, 2003). Harris et al. (2021) explain cultural discontinuity as the lack of cohesion between two or

more cultures within the school setting, which is also incongruent with the teachers' style of interaction. Black students are perceived as having a "weaker attachment, commitment, involvement, and connection to school" (Yang & Anyon, 2016, p. 39). Harris and Marsh (2010) explains the Black community has a culture that is oppositional to mainstream U.S. society. Students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are less likely to be taught with evidence-based instruction that is effective for all student learning (Taylor, 2010). Black students need to be able to connect academic lessons in a way that they can envision knowledge in application to their culture, family, values, or self-identity for them to have a chance at academic success (Carter, 2019). There is often a disconnect between the students' and teachers' cultures which has implications for teaching and learning suggested by Tosolt (2010).

Students' ability to read and comprehend what they have read at an early age is essential to their academic growth (Matthew et al., 2010). Students who are academically unsuccessful in reading may lack the ability to meet the level of comprehension of curriculum achievement standards. Values and cultural differences of Black adolescents may be a contributing factor to underachievement (Darensbourg & Blake, 2014) because Blacks who wish to maintain academic success and achieve upward socio-economic mobility feel pressure to adopt a "raceless identity" (Harris & Marsh, 2010). According to Boulanger (2019), students may be considered "at-risk of academic failure due to learning difficulties experienced in situations of cultural discontinuity" (p.2). Furthermore, Boulanger continues "to reach for cultural continuity, academic parental

engagement is favored to the extent that it helps to synchronize the demands made to students at school and at home" (p.3). Bisin et al. (2011) suggests the role of parents in the socialization of their children is limited by the children's "pro-active" role in choosing who to imitate and learn from, thereby directly shaping their own cultural identity.

Administrators and teachers construct school-based norms socially and culturally, which oftentimes result in student conflicts. The cultural identities, insights, and perspectives of teachers and students inform how they understand, see, relate to, and experience the world and relate to others (Boulanger, 2019). Not all students who enter schools come from the same culture, resulting in cultural clashes that can potentially lead to gaps in learning. Poor academic engagement of Black students has been affected by "ethnic identity beliefs, experiences with discrimination, and bicultural efficacy" (Bingham & Okagaki, 2012, p. 65). Furthermore, Yang and Anyon (2016) noted "cultural discontinuities may be a powerful mechanism driving racial disparities in school bonding and risk behaviors among school-age adolescents" (p. 39). Different norms between students and teachers due to cultural language and behavioral expectations will lead to difficulties in school (Tosolt, 2010).

Current Gaps in the Literature

The available scholarly literature reveals that there is still much to learn about the gap between Black and White male adolescent students both nationally and in Texas and particularly to understand from the data within the selected school districts (Region 7).

Passing standards for STAAR assessments are set by the state of Texas. According to

TEA (2020), when examined through the lens of research results of one study, it suggests

that educators in the selected Texas Region 7 schools in grades 6-8, like in other regions,

have not been successful in teaching all students in K-12 how to read at the proficiency

level (Pittman et al., 2018). Parental involvement has been known to increase the

motivation and academic achievement of Black adolescent males, but little is known

about schools as students go through the stages of adolescence. Furthermore, as noted by

Brooms (2015), educational leaders should pay "closer attention to the challenges that

Black males encounter," which may help schools develop strategies to "counteract some

of the risk factors they face and the range of choices available to them" (p.270).

Culturally responsive teachers are knowledgeable about students' learning, take the

responsibility for attending to the needs of students of all backgrounds, and reflect an

appreciation of the "cultural, linguistic, and social characteristics of each student"

(Taylor, 2010, p. 26). Finally, Semke and Sheridan (2012) noted that rural culture has

also been perceived as a source of stigma leading to judgment, a lack of privacy, and

other challenges resulting in a lack of school connectedness.

Summary

The literature review explored systemic inequities in schools and causal factors

for testing disparities. Factors are speculated to contribute to the continued existence and

growth of the academic achievement gap experienced by Black male students attending

the selected Texas Region 7 schools. Educational leaders of Texas would be well served

to better understand specific strategies to bridge the academic achievement gap between Black and White adolescent males. Educational leaders should be cognizant of how to meet the academic needs of all students. Black and White male students' academic differences have historically been a thorn in the side of stakeholders in education. Black and White subpopulations have not been equal in learning the knowledge and skills that are necessary for them to be successful in public schools or the workforce. School leaders play a prominent role in providing a school culture that is conducive to students' academic success. The systemic inequities in schools, as well as the causal factors for testing disparities, are major roadblocks that educators must bridge so that Texas public schools are successful in reaching their entire student population.

The test design and preparation of the STAAR test have increased the level of accountability and urgency for educators. School behavior and the responsibilities of stakeholders in education are in a dire need of answers to solve this academic deficit between Black and White subpopulations. The use of available resources that are pertinent in discovering how to solve the causal factors for testing disparities of Black males are suggested to involve the following: strong lines of communication, culture, morals, values, discipline, knowledge of the curriculum and instruction, assessment, monitoring, feedback, and evaluations. Family involvement benefits students most when the parents are engaged in positive school partnerships. The connectedness of the school community is also an important contributor to the academic success of their children.

There are many pieces to the academic puzzle of Black adolescent males that are still unknown.

The development of the adolescent brain and its physical and emotional functions also have an impact on how students learn. The continuance of the achievement gap between Black and White males is critical because of the academic rigor that is tested on the STAAR exams. STAAR exams have been a barrier to further education of many minority students in Texas rural public schools. Teachers should possess the pedagogy and training in teaching all students at their functional levels for academic performance. Teachers' expectations of students influence the academic outcomes of students. Implicit biases of power figures in schools, as well as in the testing instruments of high stakes testing are perceived by students and have been known to affect their achievement level and their feelings toward school.

Black males have been too often tracked in the disciplinary system partially due to their perceived low academic attainment. Texas administrators and educators should develop competency in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum, hiring practices, and in the selection and implementation of assessments of student learning so that the cultural, linguistic, and racial-ethnic diversity of all students is preserved and celebrated while working to close the achievement gap. Professional development on culture and cultural differences should be delivered with a sense of urgency. Educational scholars and practitioners should lean on research and best practices to deepen their understanding

of how to support Black male students and their academic journey within educational settings.

In chapter three, the design and methodology used to conduct the study are described. The research design discussion includes background on the procedure for acquiring the selected data as well as the intended analysis plan. The statistical methodology used on the data gathered is also explained.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

In Chapter three, the research methodology is discussed in detail. This includes the rationale for the quantitative research design, the research questions and hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, the sample population, the procedure for acquiring the data, the test measures, and the statistical data analysis.

The Texas Education Agency (2021) recommends that students' educational experience be measured at all grade levels. Professional educators are expected to teach to the functional level of how students learn best. The curriculum development, instructional design strategies, learning activities, and assessment must all be aligned in order to achieve student learning (Ogbu, 2014). Data will be examined for differences in the academic achievement of Black males when compared to White males in the selected Texas Region 7 school districts. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of several demographic variables on reading achievement scores of Black and White males in grades 6-8. The study consisted of selected schools in the Region 7 geographic location during the 2017-2019 academic years.

Texas has a total of 1,247 public schools that are divided into 20 regions. Region 7 serves 95 public school districts and seven charter schools (Region 7 Education Service Center, 2020). In Texas Region 7 schools, there were more White students than Black students in the academic year 2017. There were 28,932 total Black students and 85,941 White students (see Figure 2). In 2018, the grade level populations fluctuated with an increase of more grade 7 students, followed by the number of students in grade 6. In 2019, there was an increase in all grade levels with grade 6 population having the greater percentage of students followed by grade 8 then grade 7 (TEA, 2020) (see Figure 3).

Figure 2

TAPR Population for Black and White Students, 2017

Texas Academic Performance Report
Region 7
2017

- Black students
- White students

25%

75%
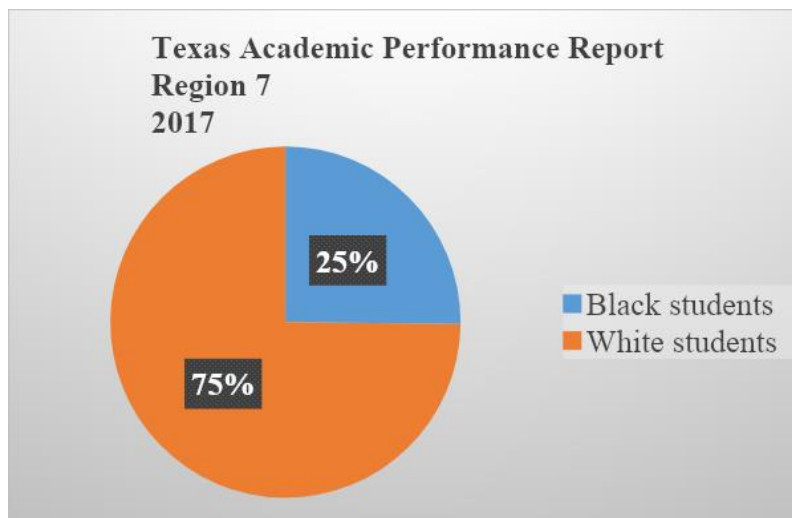
Figure 3

TAPR Grades 6-8 Student Populations, 2017-2019
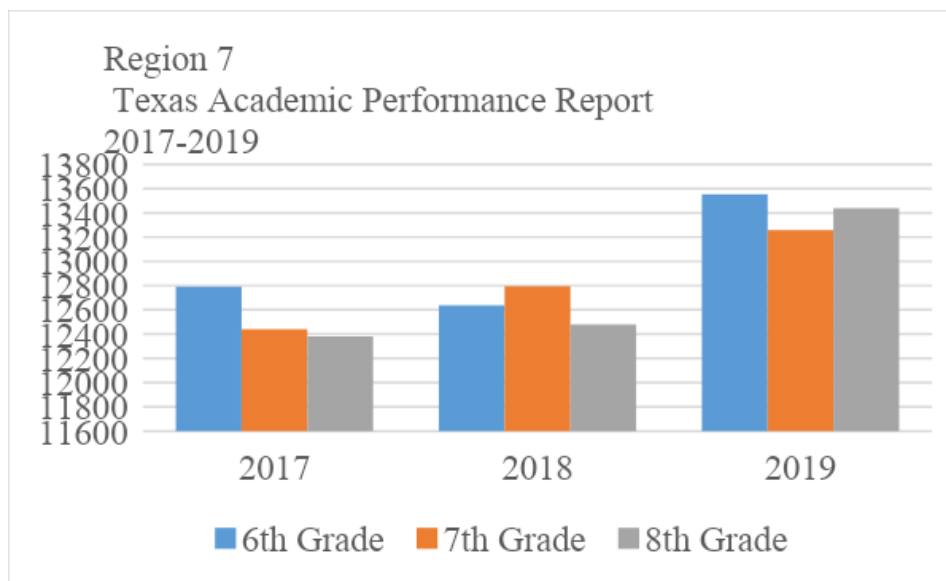
Region 7
Texas Academic Performance Report
2017-2019

6th Grade · 7th Grade · 8th Grade

In the selected Texas Region 7 schools, there were more White students than Black students in the academic year 2018. The Texas Education Agency reported 47,823 Black students and 85,296 White students (TAPR, 2020) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

TAPR Population for Black and White Students, 2018
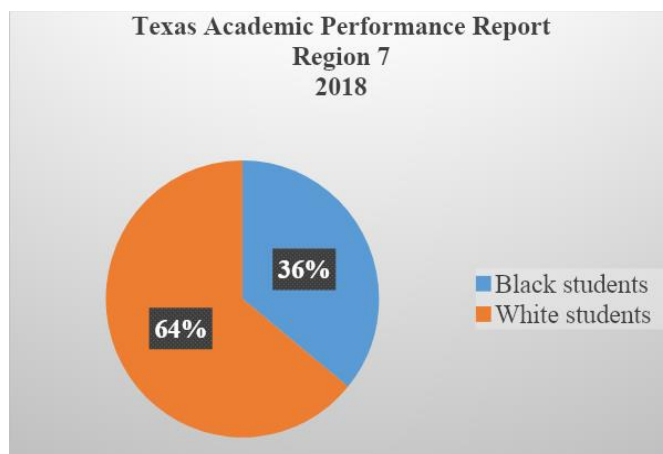
Figure 5

TAPR Population for Black and White Students, 2019
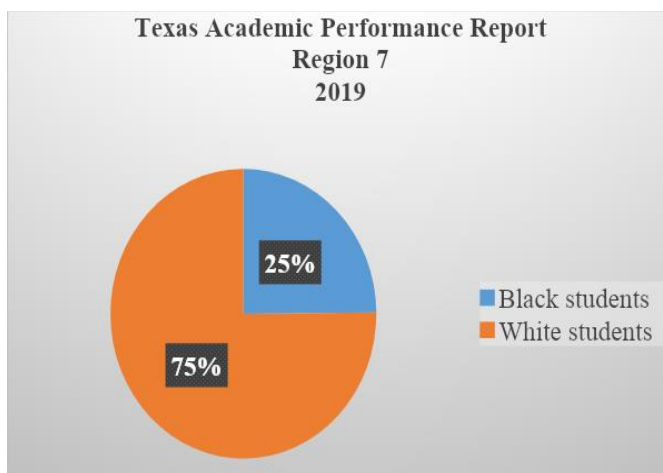
In the selected Texas Region 7 schools for the academic year 2019, there were more White students than Black students. TAPR (2020) reported 28,528 Black students and 86,282 White students (see Figure 5).

Black students attend schools that average 48 percent Black students; whereas White students attend schools that average 9 percent Black students according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2019). Black male students have historically performed lower than White male students on standardized testing in Texas. In Texas school districts, when Black and White students are grouped according to a standardized achievement measure such as STAAR reading, they are not proportionally represented by race in their performance. It is predicted that by the year 2070 if the trending declining achievement of Black males continues without intervention, Black males will not be a significant presence in higher education. Morris and Adeyemo (2012) explain Black males disproportionately underperform in U.S. public schools but are overwhelmingly represented in college and professional spectator and revenue-generating sports, such as basketball and football. Schools have increased the standards of what is expected of students to attain educational success. According to Alismail and McGuire (2015) researchers stress the importance of "implementing 21st-century curriculum and instruction in schools to prepare students who can deal with the complex challenges of our age" (p. 153). The National Center for Education Statistics (2021), known as NCES, noted that "students come to school from different socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds and may have disabilities that require adjustments to instruction"

(p. 10). Data support the consistency of an increasing achievement gap for Black males in the U.S. (Miller Dyce, 2013). Texas provides a curriculum with the knowledge and skills necessary for all students' academic success, but how to implement it in a manner that is congruent to learning remains a challenge. According to Brooms (2015), "a lack of attention to contextual factors limits one's understanding of students' attitudes, behaviors, and performances both during school and out-of-school hours" (p. 269).

The low academic achievement of Black males when compared to White males in the selected Texas Region 7 school districts is problematic. Additionally, there is evidence that disparities in educating Black males is pervasive in school districts across the United States. The current study is designed to examine the demographic variables that may influence reading scores between these groups and to identify areas of congruence in performance on the STAAR reading exam. The state of Texas provides guidelines for the legal responsibilities of school districts and campuses regarding how they should report their annual educational performance on the TAPR. TEA requires each district's board of trustees to publish an annual report that includes a versatile file format that gives people an easy, reliable way to present and exchange documents, known as a portable document format (PDF) for anyone who views the document of the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR). The TEA also requires districts to provide a summarization of the report. The district's website and other public places must include, "the campus performance objectives, and the progress toward those objectives, and district accreditation status" on the annual report (TEA, 2019, p.1).

Additional data can be requested by contacting the TEA through a Public Information Request (PIR). TEA can provide masked de-identified student-level data for the STAAR of specific academic years of districts and campuses in Texas. Legislative policies focus on ways to produce better student learning (Szabo & Sinclair, 2019). The current study examines three research questions:

1. Research Question 1 (RQ1): Does a statistically significant difference exist between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8?

    $H1_0$: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8.

    $H1_1$: There is a statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8.

RQ1 will be tested with an independent-samples t-test. This data meet all of the assumptions required for the independent-samples t-test. The requirements include one dependent variable measured at the continuous level (i.e., reading score on STAAR); one independent variable consisting of two categorical, independent groups; a dichotomous variable, race (Black/White); and independence of observations. There is no relationship between the observations of the dependent variable as it is a single-administration achievement exam taken by all members of both independent groups at the same time. Furthermore, there is no cross-over; each participant is a member of one and only one

group. Additionally, the assumptions of approximate normal distribution and

homogeneity of variances will be tested in the analysis of data.

2. Research Question 2 (RQ2): Does a statistically significant difference exist

between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in

grades 6-8 when ECD and other impact variables are removed from the

comparison?

To test RQ2, letter associations will be assigned to the four independent variables in the

following manner: race (B or W), Economically disadvantaged (y or n); "At-risk"

population (y or n), and Special education student (y or n).

The test of RQ2 will be limited to students whose data string consists of n on each

variable except race.

H2$_0$: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading scores of

Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8 when impact variables

are removed.

H2$_1$: There is a statistically significant difference between the reading scores of

Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8 when impact variables

are removed.

RQ2 will be tested with an independent-samples t-test. The data meet the assumptions

required for the independent-samples t-test as stated in RQ1 above. In this question, for

the descriptors for the identity statuses above, y stands for YES which means the

individual is a member of the demographic status for that criterion, and n stands for NO

(not a member of the group). The assumptions of approximate normal distribution and homogeneity of variances will also be tested in the analysis of this data.

3. Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do such comparisons vary when examined by selected demographic variables?

    H3$_0$: $\beta_1 = 0$, the coefficient of the slope equals 0 (zero)

    H3$_1$: $\beta_1 \neq 0$, the coefficient of the slope does not equal 0 (zero)

RQ3 will be tested with multiple linear regression analysis. The data meet the assumptions required for the multiple linear regression analysis: one dependent variable (reading score) is measured at the continuous level and two or more independent variables are measured at the dichotomous level. The four independent dichotomous variables are race, ECD, at-risk, and special education. Multiple linear regression tests rely on the initial assumption that there is a composite linear relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Further tests of fitness will be conducted in the analysis of data (Laerd Statistics, 2015).

Research Design

To answer these questions, the current study utilized a non-experimental quantitative research design, using SPSS/Laerd's statistics software to gain information on Black and White male students' performance on STAAR reading in grades 6-8, in the selected Region 7 districts. The independent variable of interest for the current study is the race of male students. The race of the male students consists of two categorical,

independent groups, Black and White, which is a dichotomous variable. There are four independent variable levels: (a) race, (b) ECD, (c) at-risk, and (d) special education.

The dependent variable of interest for the current study is the STAAR reading score of Black and White male students in the selected Texas Region 7 districts in grades 6-8. STAAR reading scores from the first administration in the spring season of the 2017-2019 academic school years were analyzed in grades 6-8 while comparing trends. The dependent variable of STAAR reading performance was the same for all three years examined. The dependent variables are assessed with the use of SPSS/ Laerd's statistics. An independent-samples t-test was carried out after verification of the continuous dependent variable. Finally, an interpretation and a report of the results were conducted from the independent-samples t-test, including the mean and standard deviation, mean difference, 95% confidence intervals, appropriate t-value, degrees of freedom, and p-value based on whether the data met or violated each test. A multiple regression analysis was utilized to determine the predictability of Black male students' STAAR reading scores based on variables, including race, ECD, at-risk, and special education. Data were verified to meet the first assumption, having one dependent variable that is measured at the continuous level and the second assumption, having two or more independent variables that are measured either at the continuous or nominal level.

The philosophical worldview proposed in the study is postpositivist due to the recognition that the claims cannot be positive of the knowledge when studying humans' actions and behavior. A diligent examination of numeric measurement and observation of

the objectives was conducted. Further, the relationship among variables was in terms of questions and hypotheses. A quantitative, non-experimental, secondary data analysis was executed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The variation comes from differences between participants at a single point in time. The primary purpose of this study was to empirically evaluate the academic differences between Black and White males in the selected Texas Region 7 school districts. One advantage of this design is the availability of data on the internet from the TAPR released annually by the TEA. The student demographic data including race, gender, ethnicity, and state assessment scores were contained in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) which was under the direction of the TEA. A Public Information Request was submitted to the TEA by the researcher, and the data requested was obtained as several comprehensive data files. The individual student data released by the TEA was masked to maintain student confidentiality; further, a unique identification number was constructed for each student, allowing the data to be extracted and analyzed at the student level. Before analyzing the data, sample selection criteria were employed. The rationale for this procedure is upheld due to the use of access, data availability, and convenience, while data from the selected Texas Region 7 represented the overall demographics of the schools.

Triangulation. Methodological triangulation of evidence was used to address the current study's research questions to enhance the validity, credibility, and quality of the findings. Data were collected from previous academic school years from the TEA through a PIR of three selected districts. Before the release of the data by the TEA, data

were "masked" to conceal any individual student identifiable information and to prevent

a violation of the Family Educational Privacy Rights Act (FERPA). TEA employed

specific data masking rules before releasing any of the data as previously defined.

According to the TEA (2018), 'masking' refers to concealing data to protect student

confidentiality. Data are masked by concealing information that could lead to the

identification of a student, either directly or indirectly. The analysis of the data sets

provided by TEA strengthened the research by providing data on students' annual

performance and progress in grades 6-8, furthermore using a variety of demographics of

the campuses provided a more informed outlook on the research problems.

The use of the independent samples t-test, multiple linear regression analysis, and

creating a case study database, created a separate and orderly compilation of all the data

from the study. The researcher made every effort to ensure authenticity in the recording,

analyzing, and reporting of the findings with minimal bias. All data compiled by the

researcher were coded and thematically analyzed. Scholarly literature was also gathered

to consolidate what is already known about the subject of the study, as well as allowed

for the identity of any gaps in knowledge, and how it could contribute to further

understanding. Accuracy and quality resources provided depth to the foundation of

knowledge of the topic by bridging the relationship of works to other works. Data

collection followed Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol and the database used was

directly related to the subjects and topics examined. The case study procedures were

documented throughout this research. The research reliability check was approved by the dissertation committee before conducting the research.

Variables

This quantitative study included both independent and dependent variables. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a "variable refers to a characteristic or attribute of an individual, or an organization that can be measured or observed, and that varies among the people or organization being studied" (p. 50). It is further noted by Creswell and Creswell that, "variables often measured in students include, gender, age, socioeconomic status (SES), and attitudes or behaviors, such as racism, social control, political power, or leadership" (p. 50).

Independent

"Independent variables are those that influence or affect outcomes in experimental studies" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 51). The independent variable of interest for the current study is the race of male students in the selected Texas Region 7 districts in grades 6-8. The race variable consists of two categorical, independent groups, Black and White. There are four independent variables level: (a) race, (b) ECD, (c) at-risk, and (d) special education. The independent variables are assessed with the use of Laerd statistics. The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) indicates all students and additional student groups, (a) the gender and race, (b) ECD, (c) at-risk, and (d) special education of the selected Region 7 STAAR reading exams for the academic school years 2017-2019.

Dependent

Dependent variables are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables, and the dependent variable for the current study is the STAAR reading score of students in the selected Texas Region 7 districts. STAAR reading scores from spring season of three consecutive academic schools of 2017-2019 were analyzed for students in grades 6-8. The dependent variable of STAAR reading scores remained the same. The dependent variables are assessed with the use of Laerd statistics.

STAAR Scores. Each of the STAAR reading assessments utilized in the current study is scored on a different scale depending on the grade level of students.

In the academic school year 2017, the lowest possible score on grade 6 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1629 and the highest possible score was 1691. The lowest possible score on grade 7 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1674 and the highest possible score was 1732. The lowest possible score on grade 8 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1700 and the highest possible score was 1762 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, 2017
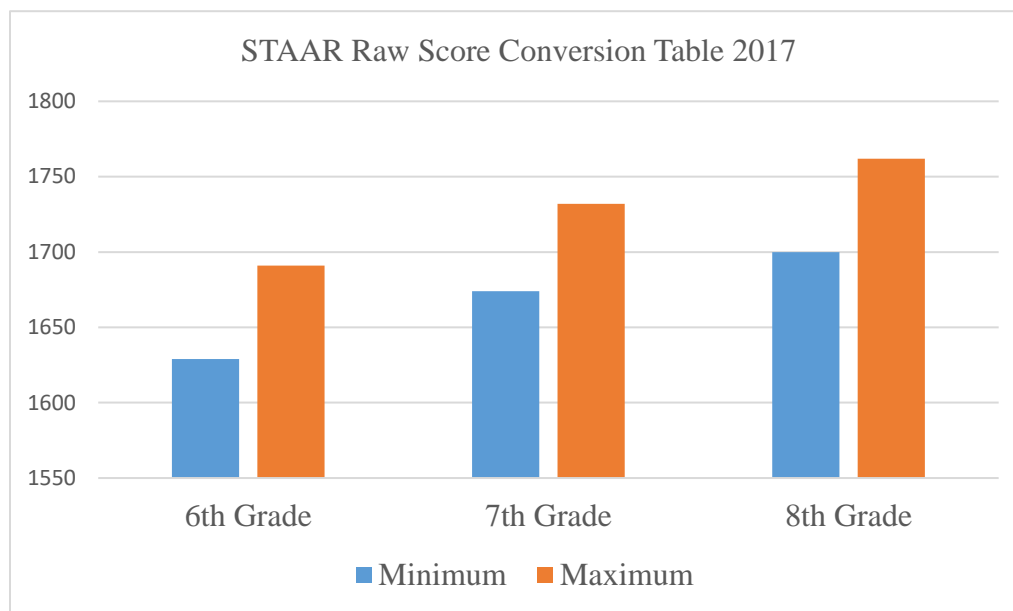
In the academic school year 2018, the lowest possible score on the grade 6 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1629 and the highest possible score was 1692. The lowest possible score on the grade 7 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1674 and the highest possible score was 1728. The lowest possible score on the grade 8 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1700 and the highest possible score was 1759 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, 2018
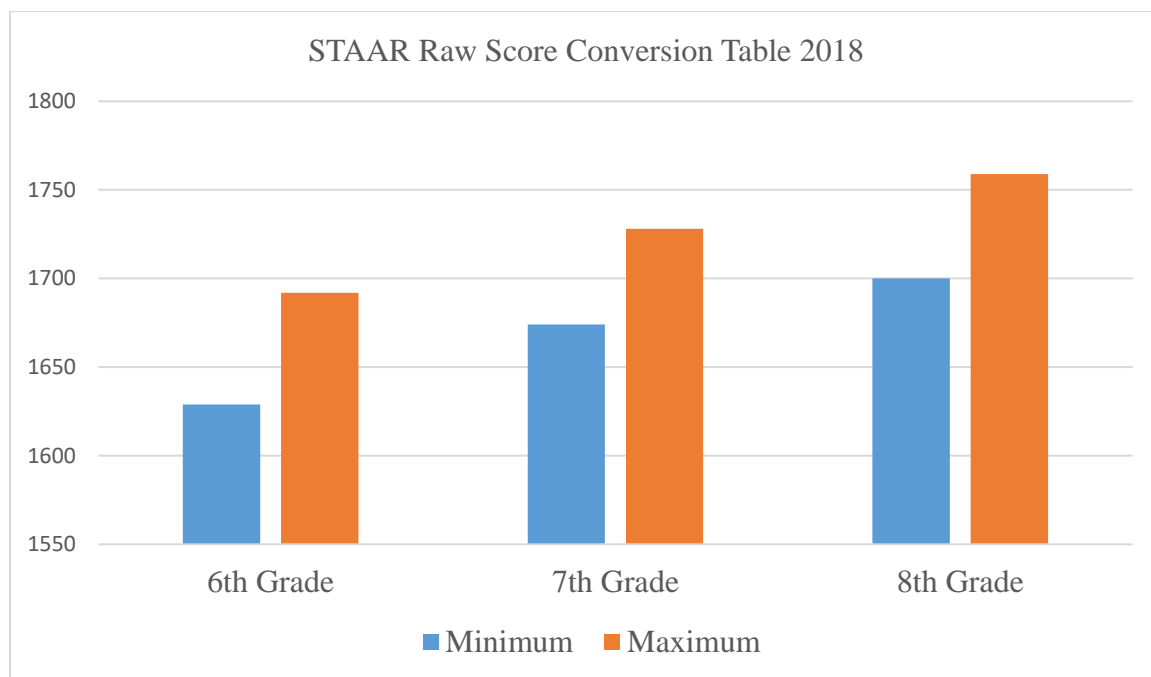
In the academic school year 2019, the lowest possible score on the grade 6 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1629 and the highest possible score was 1692. The lowest possible score on the grade 7 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1674 and the highest possible score was 1728. The lowest possible score on grade 8 reading test at "meets grade level" was a scale score of 1700 and the highest possible score was 1759 (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, 2019
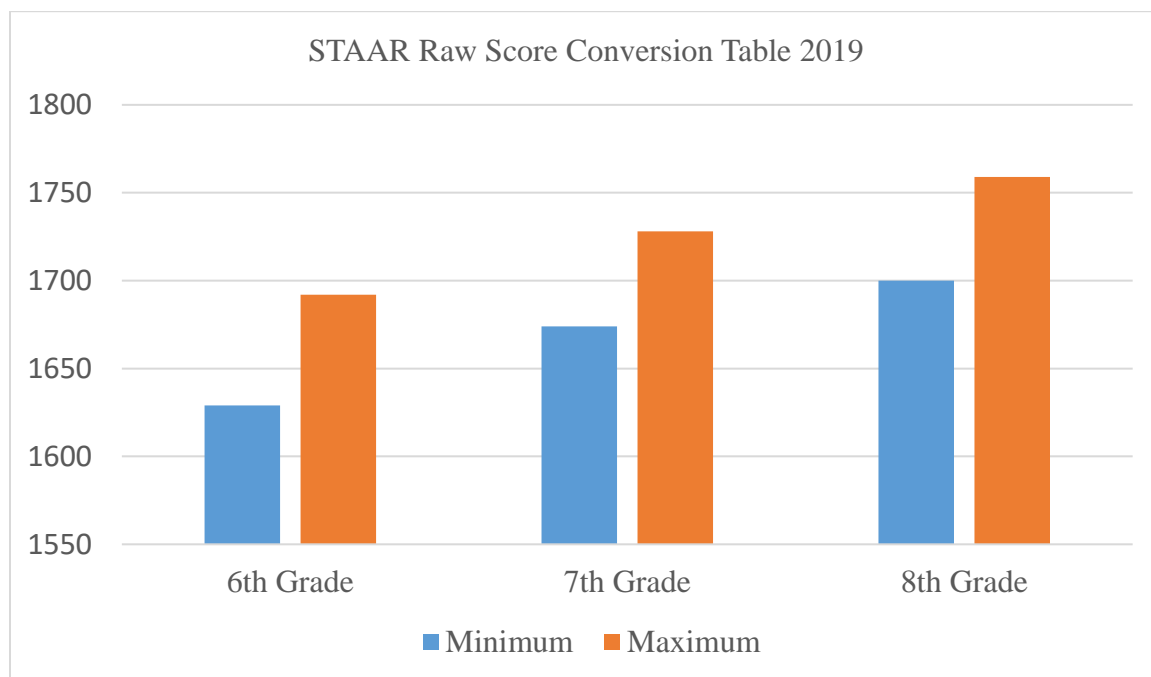
Meets Grade Level or Above. A specific performance level is used to determine

the students' achievement domain score and school progress (TEA, 2019). The 2017-

2019 TAPR for schools located in the selected Texas Region 7 geographic location was

used in the study.

Scale Score. Scale scores allow direct comparisons of student performance

between specific sets of test questions from different test administrations. A scaled score

is a conversion of the raw score onto a scale that is common to all test forms for that

assessment. The scale score takes into account the difficulty level of the specific set of

questions based on the test. It quantifies a student's performance relative to the passing standards or proficiency levels (TEA, 2020).

Raw Score. The basic score on any test is the number of questions answered correctly by a student. You can interpret a raw score only in terms of a particular set of test questions (TEA, 2022).

Grade 6-8 reading Scale Score. Student performance on the STAAR reading scale score is considered to "meets grade level or above". Students perform at their grade level but not high enough to "master grade level or above" (TEA, 2022).

Population, Sample, and Setting

Population

The population for the current study was the 6-8 grade student population who attend public schools in the selected Texas Region 7. Schools' student population and demographics vary among campuses. The researcher used data reports by the TEA from the TAPR for the academic years 2017-2019 through the request of PIR. The researcher reduced the number of variables due to the likelihood of severe "masking."

Three different rural campuses from three different school districts were used for examination of their respective performances on the STAAR "at meets grade level" in reading. The setting for the current research study was rural northeast Texas, including the public school districts located in the selected Texas Education Service Center Region 7.

Instrumentation

This study utilized an independent-samples t-test to examine the difference between reading scores on grades 6-8 STAAR (continuous variable) of Black and White males (one dichotomous variable). All participants were male and had scores within the "meets grade level" range of reading scores. In addition, multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to examine the relationship among the dichotomous variables of race, ECD, at-risk, and special education.

Reliability and Validity

The STAAR data taken from the TAPR provided by the TEA is reliable and valid, with reliability and validity data contained in the Administrator's Manual. Every STAAR question is directly aligned to the TEKS currently in effect for the grade and subject or course being assessed (TEA, 2020).

Validity

Content validity data consist of details of development indicating that the STAAR content was developed by both test developers and educators to reflect the TEKS. The State Board of Education (SBOE) has legislative authority to adopt the TEKS for each subject of the required curriculum. SBOE members nominate educators, parents, business and industry representatives, and employers to serve on TEKS review committees (TEA, 2020, p. 1). Validity among testing experts concerns the legitimacy or acceptability of the interpretation and use of ascribed test scores. Validity is not viewed as a general property of a test because scores from a particular test may have more than one use. The major

implication of this statement is that a given test score could be "valid" for one use but not for another (HumPRO, 2016, p. 1).

Evidence-Based Test Content. The STAAR reading test, the mandated statewide achievement test in Texas, was the validity criterion in this study. The STAAR reading test includes the following three reporting categories for grades 6-8: (a) understanding across genres, (b) understanding/analysis of literary texts, and (c) understanding/analysis of informational texts and is designed to assess the state curriculum standards (TEKS). Reporting category one has two readiness and supporting standards. Reporting category two has seven readiness standards and eleven supporting standards. Reporting category three has nine readiness standards and eight supporting standards. Overall, there are eighteen readiness standards and twenty-one supporting standards (TEA, 2021, Student Assessment Division).

In grade 6 category one, there are eight questions, category two, has seventeen questions, and category three has fifteen questions, which total forty multiple-choice questions. The state of Texas assesses 60%-70% (24-28 questions) of readiness standards and 30%-40% (12-16 questions) of supporting standards. In grade 7, category one, there are eight questions, category two, has eighteen questions, and category three has sixteen questions, which totals forty-two multiple-choice questions. The state tests 60%-70% (25-29 questions) of readiness standards and 30%-40% (13-17 questions) of supporting standards. In grade 8, category one, there are eight questions, category two has nineteen questions, and category three has seventeen questions, which totals forty-four multiple-

choice questions. The state tests 60%-70% (26-31 questions) of readiness standards and 30%-40% (13-18 questions) of supporting standards (TEA, 2021, Student Assessment Division).

Reliability

Grade 6-8 students in Texas public schools take STAAR tests that were designed by the TEA working in partnership with Texas educators and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (TEA, 2020). Reliability measures the repeatability of a test's scores; similar to validity, it is not a one-size-fits-all concept. There are different kinds of reliability and the most relevant kind of reliability for a test score depends on how that score is to be used. The reliability coefficients for STAAR grades 6-8 are adequate to excellent ranging from .77 to .90 (TEA, 2018). Internal consistency reliability is an important consideration and the kind of reliability that is typically analyzed for large-scale educational assessment scores. This kind of test score reliability estimates how well a particular collection of test items is related to each other within the same theoretical domain. To the extent that a set of items is interrelated, or similar to each other, can be "inferred that other collections of related items would be likewise similar" (HumPRO, 2016, p. 2).

Test Descriptions: State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Text complexity increases from grade to grade. Numeric scores are provided. There are three cut scores on STAAR assessments, which separate student performance into four categories. For the STAAR program, the labels for the performance categories

are "masters grade level" (passing), "meets grade level" (passing), "approaches grade level" (passing), and "did not meet grade level" (not passing) according to TEA (2018) Student Assessment Division.

6th Grade Reading. STAAR Performance Level Descriptors indicate, that when reading texts of increasing complexity, students achieving "meets grade level" performance can do the following: (a) analyze literary texts by determining the theme, recognizing how story structure influences plot development, and explaining how voice conveys character; (b) demonstrate an understanding of informational texts by identifying the author's purpose and viewpoint, summarizing the text in ways that maintain meaning, and recognizing how different organizational patterns are used to develop the main idea; (c) recognize the logical connections and thematic links between texts representing similar or different genres, and (d) make reasonable inferences about literary and informational texts, supporting those inferences with relevant textual evidence (TEA, 2019).

7th Grade Reading. STAAR Performance Level Descriptors indicate, that when reading texts of increasing complexity, students achieving "meets grade level" performance can do the following: (a) analyze literary texts by recognizing how the setting and the development of characters influence plot and theme, (b) demonstrate an understanding of informational texts by identifying the author's purpose and central argument and accurately summarizing the text, (c) recognize the logical connections and thematic links between texts representing similar or different genres, and (d) make

reasonable inferences about literary and informational texts, supporting those inferences with relevant textual evidence (TEA, 2019).

8th Grade Reading. STAAR Performance Level Descriptors indicate, that when reading texts of increasing complexity, students achieving "meets grade level" performance can do the following: (a) analyze literary texts by recognizing how the point of view and portrayal of characters influence plot development and theme, (b) demonstrate an understanding of informational texts by identifying the author's purpose and central argument and accurately summarizing the text, (c) recognize the logical connections and thematic links between texts representing similar or different genres, and (d) make reasonable inferences about literary and informational texts, supporting those inferences with relevant textual evidence (TEA, 2019).

Data Collection

The data collected for this study examined the relationships among variables related to the achievement of Black males and White males in reading as measured by the Texas STAAR exam. The performance scores at the "meets grade level" of Black and White students was collected from the 2017-2019 school years. The researcher emailed the TEA and asked for the STAAR reporting student data file through a PIR (see Appendix C). The first administration of each school year was requested from the TEA. The Public Information Coordinator responded by email acknowledging the receipt of the request and provided the researcher a PIR # for records (see Appendix D). Data collected using the TEA's data sets for the 2017, 2018, and 2019 school years showed the history

of the achievement cycle of Black students in their academic performance on STAAR reading for grades 6-8.

The TEA requested clarification and any indicators of partial/no documents found (see Appendix E). The researcher then had to respond either by phone, email, or through the postal service to clarify the PIR (see Appendix F). Before the release of the data, the Public Information Coordinator then asked for verification of the clarification (see Appendix G) and contacted the coordinator (see Appendix H). The programming and/or manipulation of the data was not free to the researcher due to the specifics of the request being over $100 to produce, so TEA provided a cost estimate to see if the researcher would continue with the request (see Appendix I). The researcher chose the option to pay in full versus a partial payment for the data (see Appendix J). After TEA received confirmation of the payment from the researcher (see Appendix K), data were masked to conceal any individual student identifiable information and emailed in a password-protected text file (see Appendix L). So as not to violate the FERPA, the TEA employed specific data masking rules before releasing any of the data as previously defined. Using the following criteria, the TEA masked all data before it was release for this study: (a) when very few students in a group are evaluated, it may be possible to identify a particular student or students within the group; (b) when all the students in a group have the same result, e.g. all passing or all failing, it may be possible to identify all the students within the group. Revealing that all, or no, students in a group achieved the same

result, violates the students' privacy, even if the result achieved is a positive one (TEA, 2021). Additionally, all data were released using a unique student identification number.

Quantitative Procedures and Data Analysis

Laerd Statistics' test selector was used to select the appropriate statistical tests for the research. All three research questions were analyzed using SPSS as an analytical tool. According to Laerd Statistics (2015), these statistical tests are used to: (a) determine whether there are differences between two or more groups of related and/or unrelated (independent) cases on a dependent variable, and (b) if such differences exist, determine where these differences lie. Using the statistical test selector, the following steps were done for research questions one and three: (a) in step one, the study design was group differences; (b) in step two, the researcher chose a between-subjects study design; (c) in step three, there was one independent variable; (d) in step four, the independent variable had two groups; and in (e) step five, the dependent variable was continuous, with no covariate and no other dependent variables. An independent-samples t-test was run for research questions one and two.

The independent-samples t-test was used to determine if a difference exists between the means of two independent groups on a continuous dependent variable (Laerd Statistics, 2015). For research question three, step one was choosing the prediction and relationships design. Step two was selecting the continuous dependent variable, and step three was selecting two or more independent variables. The statistical test used for

research question three was the multiple linear regression. Multiple regression is used to predict a continuous dependent variable given two or more independent variables.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher did not have reason to secure an IRB approval but did obtain one for precautionary use of students' data (see Appendix B). The IRB committee requires the researcher to assess potential risks to the participants but that was not necessarily due to the available secondary data through the TEA. Even though some data is readily available on the district website and other public places, before beginning the study, the code of ethics was considered. The researcher contacted the TEA with a PIR to release students' achievement data, as well as campuses' various demographic variables. Based on confidential or excepted information, if the records or data the researcher are requesting includes student identifying information, TEA will withhold this information in compliance with FERPA. Maintaining confidentiality must be considered to protect information obtained through or stored in any medium. The relevant limits of confidentiality and the foreseeable uses of the information generated should be included in the discussion of confidentiality at the outset of the relationship and as new circumstances evolve (APA, 2020).

However, there was no need to obtain approval for specific school data that is publicly available. The site selected was the selected Texas Region 7 school districts with varied socioeconomics. Each school district selected was also considered a rural district and campus. There was no disruption of the selected Texas Region 7 school sites. This

was a quantitative study that did not involve direct observation or interviewing. The actual names of the schools and the school districts where the current study occurred are not used in the study. All participants' data provided by the TEA was "masked" and stored on one electronic device locked with code protection.

CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to measure the impact of demographic variables on the STAAR reading achievement scores of Black and White males in grades 6-8. Chapter four reports the results of the statistical analyses conducted utilizing the Black and White male students' reading scores from the first assessment of the academic school years 2017-2019. The STAAR reading scores that were considered passing were analyzed. The setting was rural public school districts located in Texas Education Service Center Region 7. A quantitative, non-experimental, secondary data analysis was executed. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the difference between reading scores on the grade level appropriate STAAR reading test of Black and White males. All participants were male and performed within the "meets grade level" range of reading scores, which includes all scores that were considered passing based on the adopted scale score for each academic year. In addition, multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to examine the relationship among the dichotomous variables of race, ECD, at-risk, and special education. Descriptive statistics for the current study are reported and followed by a summary conclusion of the results for each research question.

75

Descriptive Statistics

Student demographic data was collected from three campuses in the 2017-2019 academic school years. All three campuses were located in the selected Texas Region 7 geographic area. The TEA reported campus participation for all students taking STAAR reading was 100%. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the difference between the continuous variable *reading scores* on the grade level appropriate STAAR of the dichotomous variable race, either Black or White males. The t-test determined whether the difference between these two groups was statistically significant. A multiple linear regression analysis was also used to predict the continuous dependent variable based on multiple independent variables. Multiple regression allowed for a relationship to be modeled between multiple independent variables and a single dependent variable where the independent variable was used to predict the dependent variable (Laerd, 2015).

Complete Data Set from the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

The researcher contacted the TEA with a PIR to release student achievement data, as well as campuses' various demographic variables. Based on confidential or excepted information, if the records or data the researcher are requesting includes student identifying information, TEA will withhold this information in compliance with the FERPA, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g. TEA is required to withhold from public disclosure personally identifiable, non-directory information in education records. Additionally, FERPA does not permit state and local educational authorities to disclose to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), personally identifiable information contained in education

records for review in the open records ruling process under the Texas Public Information Act. The United States Department of Education has ruled that FERPA determinations must be made by the educational authority in possession of the education records. Consequently, it is impermissible for TEA to seek an OAG opinion concerning the applicability of FERPA to records responsive to a public information request.

TEA can provide "masked" de-identified student-level data for STAAR, years 2017-2019 for the primary administration only. The researcher was asked to specify the following requests by the agency; the County-District-Campus (CDC) number for the three requested campuses, confirmation of grades requested for each of the campuses above, and the subjects STAAR score.

 In the case of missing or partial records, the researcher asked TEA to conduct a good faith search. The data was provided in separate files per administrative standard procedure, and an analysis and descriptive statistics included the entire data set to inform the scope and size of the population during the 2017, 2018, and 2019 academic school years. The file was restructured to create only one case per Student ID with each student as an individual variable within the data set.

Student Selection Criteria

The following variables and student score data files were received for academic school years 2017-2019: (a) African American, (b) Hispanic, (c) White, (d) at-risk, (e) economically disadvantaged (ECD), (f) gender, (g) race, and (h) special education (Sped). To employ the data masking rules, for every variable requested or received, at

least five students meeting the requested variable levels were required, or else the data for the variable group was masked. For example, for any particular campus, if the data were requested by grade level, that campus had to have at least five students in that grade level. If an additional variable was added that campus needed at least five students at that grade level with this information labeled as that variable, or the entire data for that campus, grade level, and variable were masked. The extensive request of these variables and the grade level resulted in substantial masking of the data.

Codebook

Pallant (2020) suggested researchers should prepare a codebook before entering data into IBM SPSS Statistics, where it will be converted from each case into a format that the program can understand. The codebook should list all of the variables, the abbreviated variable names used and how responses are coded. Each case had a unique variable name. Some of the names identified the information (e.g., campus numbers). Cases were given a numerical code before they were entered into SPSS Statistics. Some of the information was already in this format (e.g. grade levels); other variables, such as sex, needed to be converted to numbers (e.g. 1 = males, 2 = females). SPSS statistics provided options on how the variables would be displayed and other aspects of the program, such as the data analysis process to conduct statistical analyses to explore the relationship (i.e., multiple regression) and conduct statistical analyses to compare groups (i.e., t-tests).

Research Hypothesis Results

The primary focus of the current study was: how does the academic achievement of Black males compare to that of White males in selected Texas Region 7 school districts?

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Does a statistically significant difference exist between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8?

H1_0: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8.

H1_1: There is a statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8.

Results for Research Question 1 (RQ1)

Statistics for each analysis are based on the cases with no missing or out-of-range data for any variable in the analysis. Mean and standard deviation of zero indicated there were less than five.

Table 1

Campus One-Three Independent Samples t-test for Mean Differences (IBM SPSS), 2019

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 1	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.09	.294	.37	.496	28.37	.04
Grade 7	.07	.258	.51	.506	47.80	<.001
Grade 8	.33	.482	.30	.461	76	.536
STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 2	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.08	.277	.51	.504	32.298	<.001
Grade 7	.23	.429	.55	.502	44.701	.006
Grade 8	.05	.229	.40	.494	65.711	<.001

Table 1 (continued)

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 3	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.00	.000	.23	.424	77.000	<.001
Grade 7	.07	.258	.45	.502	41.723	<.001
Grade 8	.05	.224	.46	.502	72.202	<.001

A comparison of the three selected Texas Region 7 schools for grades 6-8, for the 2019 academic year data suggests the following: (a) campus one had a total of 134 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that number, there were 22 Black and 19 White males that performed at the "meets grade level"; (b) Black and White male students accounted for 152 in grade 7, of that total, there were 15 Black males and 45 White male students that performed at the "meets grade level"; (c) there were 170 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that total, there were 24 Black males and 54 White males that performed at the "meets grade level" (passing the STAAR exam) for the 2019 academic school year.

The number of Black and White male student data patterns continue with more White male students than Black male students' performance at the "meets grade level"

for that campus. The results are as follows: (a) campus two had 118 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total, there were 13 Black males and 59 White male students performed at "meets grade level"; (b) a total of 129 Black males and White male students were in grade 7, of that total, there were 22 Black males and 56 White males at "meets grade level"; (c) there were 130 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that number, there were 19 Black males and 55 White male students at "meets grade level"; (d) campus three had 151 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total was 9 Black males and 78 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (e) a total of 154 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that total, there were 15 Black males and 66 White male students that performed at the "meets grade level"; (f) and 155 Black and White male students in grade 8, with 20 Black male students and 67 White male students that performed at the "meets grade level" (see Table 1).

Table 2

Campus One-Three Independent Samples t-test for Mean Differences (IBM SPSS), 2018

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 1	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	-2.96	4.369	-.34	2.623	31.212	.011
Grade 7	-3.73	4.564	-.53	2.908	73.550	<.001
Grade 8	-4.35	4.721	-.46	3.036	53.547	<.001
STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 2	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.08	.277	.30	.462	72.379	.009
Grade 7	.18	.395	.43	.499	49.022	.028
Grade 8	.47	.514	.58	.500	53	.465

Table 2 (continued)

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		t	p
Campus 3	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	-3.23	4.471	.22	1.256	22.132	.002
Grade 7	.00	.000	.42	.497	66.000	<.001
Grade 8	.00	.000	.57	.499	73.000	<.001

In a comparison of the three selected Texas Region 7 schools in grades 6-8, for the 2018 academic school year, data suggests the following: (a) campus one had 150 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total, there were 24 Black males and 50 White males that performed at "meets grade level" ; (b) a total of 312 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that number, there were 52 Black males and 98 White males at "meets grade level" ; (c) there were 284 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that total, there were 40 Black males and 92 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (d) campus two had 134 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that number, there were 25 Black males and 60 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (e) a total of 123 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that total, there were 22 Black and 54 White male students that performed at "meets grade

level"; (f) there were 107 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that number, there were 17 Black males and 38 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (e) campus three had 158 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total, there were 25 Black males and 65 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (f) a total of 155 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that total, there were 14 Black and 67 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; and (g)156 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that total, there were 18 Black males and 74 White male students that performed at the "meets grade level" for the 2018 academic school year (see Table 2).

Table 3

Campus One-Three Independent Samples t-test for Mean Differences (IBM SPSS), 2017

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 1	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.20	.410	.41	.497	41.881	.073
Grade 7	.30	.483	.35	.483	13.863	.774
Grade 8	.21	.426	.33	.482	30.148	.435
STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 2	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.14	.351	.32	.471	51.389	.064
Grade 7	.17	.383	.46	.505	43.560	.024
Grade 8	.27	.458	.65	.482	22.166	.009

Table 3 (continued)

STAAR Reading	Black Males		White Males		*t*	*p*
Campus 3	M	SD	M	SD		
Grade 6	.00	.000	.38	.490	64.000	<.001
Grade 7	.11	.315	.48	.503	43.620	<.001
Grade 8	.00	.000	.49	.504	58.000	<.001

In a comparison of the three selected Texas Region 7 schools in grades 6-8, for the 2017 academic school year, data suggests the following: (a) campus one had a total of 155 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that number, there were 20 Black males and 51 White male students that performed at "meets grade level"; (b) a total of 136 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that number, there were 10 Black males and 40 White male students that performed at "meets grade level; (c) there were 119 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that total, there were 14 Black males and 24 White male students that met standard; (d) campus two had 124 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total, there were 22 Black males and 56 White male students that performed at "meets grade level; (e) a total of 110 Black and White male students in grade 7,of that number, there were 18 Black males and 35 White male students that

performed at "meets grade level; (f) there were 114 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that number, there were 15 Black males and 62 White male students that performed at "meets grade level; (g) campus three had 149 Black and White male students in grade 6, of that total, there were 19 Black and 65 White male students that met standard; (h) a total of 159 Black and White male students in grade 7, of that total, there were 19 Black males and 77 White male students that performed at "meets grade level; and (i)130 Black and White male students in grade 8, of that total, there were 12 Black males and 59 White male students that performed at the "meets grade level" for the 2017 academic school year (see Table 3).

For campus one, for the 2019 academic school year, grades 6-7 the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = < .001$), which is $p < .05$. The White males' mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" performance score was higher than the Black male mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" score. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" score between White males and Black males. There was a statistically significant difference between means ($p < .05$), and therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was retained.

Campus one, grade 8, for the 2019 academic school year, there was homogeneity of variances for STAAR reading at the "meets grade level" performance scores for Black and White males, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances. Black male STAAR reading at "meets grade level" mean performance score was higher than White

mean performance score. There was no statistically significant difference in mean STAAR reading scores at the "meets grade level" performance between Black and White males. The null hypothesis was retained.

For all three campuses during academic years 2017-2018, results from grades 6-8, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = < .001$), which is $p < .05$. The White males' mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" performance score was higher than the Black male mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" score. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean STAAR reading "meets grade level" score between White males and Black males. There was a statistically significant difference between means ($p < .05$), and therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was retained.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): Does a statistically significant difference exist between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8 when ECD and other impact variables are removed from the comparison?

$H2_0$: There is no statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8 when impact variables are removed.

$H2_1$: There is a statistically significant difference between the reading scores of Black male students and White male students in grades 6-8 when impact variables are removed.

Results for Research Question 2 (RQ2)

There was no statistically significant difference in the means of the three campuses. Since the mean scores stayed the same, this analysis suggests that the independent demographic variables entered (i.e. ECD, special education, or at-risk classifications) did not seem to have an effect on whatever construct is causing the difference between the reading scores of Black and White male students. Therefore, these groupings did not affect the significant difference as noted in the data, $p > .05$. When Black and White male students are grouped according to a standardized achievement measure in this sample, they are not proportionally represented by race, so there were fewer Black students who scored in the category of "meets grade level".

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do such comparisons vary when examined by selected demographic variables?

$H3_0$: $\beta_1 = 0$, the coefficient of the slope equals 0 (zero)

$H3_1$: $\beta_1 \neq 0$, the coefficient of the slope does not equal 0 (zero)

Results for Research Question 3 (RQ3)

Multiple regression was run to predict (dependent) STAAR reading at the "meets grade level" based on values of ECD, special education, at-risk, and race (independent). The multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted STAAR reading at the "meets grade level. All four variables, ECD, special education, at-risk, and race statistically significantly predicted STAAR reading at the "meets grade level", $p < .0005$ added statistically significantly to the prediction, $p < .05$.

Summary of Research Findings

In conclusion, there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the students' reading scores on any of the three selected campuses. Since the mean scores remained the same, this study suggests that the independent variables did not affect the observed difference between the Black and White male students. STAAR reading performance had a similarly engaging effect on Black and White males alike. A statistically significant result does not necessarily mean that it has a 'practical' significance in its usefulness in addressing the phenomena under consideration. Statistical significance merely indicates whether the result is not likely due to sampling error; while this is important in its own right, does not indicate how "strong" the differences are between the two sets of reading scores for Black and White males in Region 7 during this time period. In Chapter five a summary of these conclusions is offered. The limitations of the study and how these limitations may have impacted the results are also discussed. Additionally, the next chapter discusses the implications of these results and their impact on the school districts studied.

CHAPTER V

Implications and Recommendations

Black male students historically are categorized as a low-performing group compared to White male students. In this study, the differences in the STAAR reading scores at the "meets grade level" is statistically significant for some subgroups, which confirms that an achievement gap existed consistent with the academic literature on a national level. Numerous attempts have been made to reduce this gap in performance since before the segregation of public schools and this trend in academic performance has been documented over time. State laws and testing mandates were designed to build greater accountability by generating evidence to support these efforts. The categorizing and group labeling continues with *de facto* segregation which exists through school zoning and housing restrictions. Brown (2017) suggested that the combination of achievement gaps and opportunity gaps contributes negatively to students' lives beyond school. In particular, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 focused on the racial disparities in academic achievement, and these laws established new categories of high and low-performing sub-populations within Texas public schools (TEA, 2015).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the results of this study suggest that Black and White male students that scored in the same range of the "meets grade level," still had some differences between the two racial groups. As expected, the independent variable race did appear to influence the dependent variable of STAAR reading performance at the "meets grade level" in grades 6-8, but at negligible levels.

This study is useful for education leaders in understanding that differences in the academic test scores between Black and White male students may be related to differences beyond race. More specifically in rural districts in Texas, Black male students have had lower academic performance on tests for decades. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) mandated curriculum is assessed using STAAR. The STAAR test measures the extent to which students have learned and can apply their grade level knowledge. One function of STAAR is to measure how well individual schools and teachers prepare students, and statewide student progress is defined as meeting academic goals and objectives within TEKS (TEA, 2019). TEA (2021) explains that Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provided support, funds, programs, and technical assistance for low-performing and vulnerable student populations. Further study will determine whether ESSA will have a greater impact than No Child Left Behind has had.

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Research Question 1 (RQ 1): A simple comparison of the means was done to establish that the population and sample had scores that reflected the findings of the related literature; furthermore, the population and sample was typical.

Research Question 2 (RQ 2): The researcher removed the variables that often are used to explain differences in Black and White male scores (ECD, special education, and at-risk), and only examined scores of Black and White males who scored well on STAAR (passed). Ultimately, there is still a difference, but not a large one.

Research Question 3 (RQ 3): The researcher checked to see if the typically used variables of race, ECD, special education, and at-risk; individually or in a combination predict STAAR scores and found that they do, although none are singularly predictive.

The academic trends revealed in this study from 2017-2019 suggest that there still are differences in academic achievement between Black and White male students. The schools represented in this data generally represent the largest span of sizes of rural districts in Region 7. There were 542 Black male students and 1,566 White male students in grades 6-8. That means that 13.34% of Black male students were successful and 38.20% of White male students were successful.

Limitations and Delimitations

As discussed in Chapter 1, the results of this study were based on a set of assumptions about the STAAR test, its accuracy, and its usefulness. One limitation is the assumption that STAAR accurately reflects the effort and achievement of Black and White male students. The study was limited to the inquiry of academic achievement in three schools located only in the selected Region 7 geographic location of Texas. The area chosen by the researcher represented the biggest span of sizes of rural schools in the selected Region 7, instead of including 92 other public districts, and seven charter schools.

The demographic descriptors of teachers and staff were available on the TAPR but were not included. The relevance of this study and comparisons of the findings would be appropriate for educators trying to improve the educational outcomes of Black male students in other school districts that share the same characteristics. More data is needed to understand whether the outcomes found in this study are unique to rural school districts. Additionally, the sample size for Black males on each of the three campuses may have been too small to detect the impact of these independent variables.

High-stakes testing affects students, teachers, and school districts. Because of testing, students are compared in classrooms based on their performance level. STAAR performance scores range from "master grade level" to "did not meet grade level." Puryear and Kettler (2017) suggest that one factor in testing performance is the lack of availability of gifted services in rural school districts compared to non-rural areas. The overarching focus of this study was differences between Black and White male student performance in grades 6-8 STAAR reading at the "meets grade level" in the selected Region 7 schools. It was not possible to account for the extent to which a student actually received the curriculum that was set by the state. Students are expected to read, write, and perform tasks at an academic level accepted as passing by the state. NAEP (2021) explains that assessments are designed to measure student performance, and they do not identify or explain the causes of differences in student performance. Therefore, this study was unable to analyze the impact of differences in curriculum, instructional strategies, programs, testing environments, or other components that may account for the effect shown in the

data. However, it does account for whether or not a student participated in the STAAR

reading exam and who also received the state-mandated curriculum TEKS.

The time and duration of the test vary not including extra time allowed for

compliance with student accommodations. Additionally, the allotted time students take on

the STAAR reading exam, could include any of the following: (a) incomplete tests, (b)

students leaving early or arriving late, (c) time spent on each question, (d) technical and/or

material issues, and (e) test administrators' lack of training to administer the test, and (f)

monitoring students while they are taking the tests. Another limitation is the extent and

effect of the implementation of STAAR reading in grades 6-8 across school districts.

Musoleno and White (2010) stated that there is no evidence that "developmentally"

appropriate practices have been altered to provide additional time for test preparation

since the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Therefore, it is

possible that STAAR reading results do not accurately reflect student mastery of the

TEKS as mandated by the state.

Conclusions and Implications

The STAAR is mandated by the state and provides a valuable measurement of

academic progress for teachers, staff, administrators, and parents and it allows the

educational leadership to be in compliance with federal law. While tests have been created

to gauge student performance, as well as hold school districts accountable, it has also

contributed to many abysmal life outcomes for minority students. Pruitt et al. (2019)

explain that students often live in racially homogeneous environments which may impact

student performance. Data from the academic years 2017-2019 in grades 6-8 showed a divergence between Black and White male students' performance at the "meets grade level" on STAAR reading. Academic gaps remained on three school campuses, even after the researcher removed the scores of all of the Black and White male students that failed, as well as the elimination of variables that one may expect to make a difference in the results. One may expect the data to show homogeneity, but it did not reveal this even after accounting for presumed confounding variables. In fact, the Black and White male students' reading performance did not change. Therefore, educational leaders may need to explore additional processes and tools to ensure the academic progress of all students especially those from other marginalized groups is closely evaluated.

Testing mandates were designed and implemented in part to increase the academic achievement of low-performing student groups. However, theory suggests that the independent variable race (Black males) influences the dependent variable, STAAR reading performance at the "meets grade level." Despite the intent of these laws to use standardized testing to enhance accountability in public education, this study suggests that more data is needed to assess whether or not the Black male students who are meeting the standards are continuing to face challenges in the obtaining equitable opportunities to excel in academic performance if the system is to reduce disparities in education. When Black and White male students are grouped according to a statistical achievement measure such as STAAR reading, they are not proportionally represented by race in their performance at the "meets grade level."

One of the implications of this study is that school leadership needs to examine the impact of lower expectations for Black male students in the selected Texas public schools. This study is unique in its examination of Black and White male student performance because student failure rates were not the focus of this study. On the contrary, the researcher analyzed the STAAR reading performance at the "meets grade level which according to TEA (2018) indicates these students have a likelihood of success in the next grade. Further, these students demonstrate the ability to think critically and apply the assessed knowledge and skills in familiar contexts. Despite the removal of factors like ECD, special education, and at-risk classifications from the equation, the difference in successful Black and White male students remained visible. Furthermore, Black male students in this study are not failing the STAAR reading tests in grades 6-8, but continue to show a difference in overall academic performance. Black male students' potential is not being met by educators in the selected Texas schools. By the year 2070, if the trending decline in achievement of Black males continues without intervention, Black males will not be a significant presence in higher education (Morris & Adeyemo, 2012).

High-Stakes Testing

Lower performance of Black male students on high-stakes testing, such as the STAAR reading exam, has been linked to their race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Huerta et al., 2018). The number of thriving Black male students versus White male students in the selected Texas Region 7 schools, in grades 6-8, is a concern and should be

a top priority for educational leaders who are invested in creating a system that works for all Texas students. As noted, the testing environment for students that take the STAAR reading exams is not known. Kostyuk et al. (2018) report that boredom, confusion, or inability to concentrate are factors leading to racial disparities in education. Testing administrators should be cognizant of the arrangement and order of events that take place within the classroom setting during testing. The No Child Left Behind Act highlights the need to close the racial gaps in test scores and school quality (Yang & Anyon, 2016).

Implicit Bias in Testing Instruments

STAAR reading questions are created from the knowledge and skills of what students should learn and be able to do in their grade level, as mandated by the state curriculum, TEKS. Rosales and Walker (2018) explains that assessment tools that are used for testing do not recognize racial and economic inequality. School leaders are considered one of the most influential factors in the development, quality, and character of the campus. Black male students are not failing as explained by Rosales and Walker; the tests are failing the Black test-takers. Greater emphasis should be on creating authentic assessments that reflect a wide range of students' learning skills, such as their creativity, leadership style, and critical thinking (Maneen, 2016). The performance indicators for STAAR reading at the "meets grade level" implies that students are successful and prepared to attend the next grade, but the data from this study suggests that not all Black male students have reached the same likelihood of success through their performance level as their White counterparts.

Recommendations for Further Study

The focus of the STAAR exam is to measure what students have learned and are able to apply based on the standards set by the state. It is important to note that this study was conducted in the Region 7 geographic location with campuses in rural school districts in grades 6-8. It is recommended that a similar research study be conducted in larger districts to discover if different results are obtained. In the larger school districts, comparisons could be made by longitudinally tracking academic results for students from elementary grades, junior high, and high school.

Additional research is needed to monitor both high and low-performing students by key identity demographics. Consistency of results across multiple years would strengthen conclusions regarding academic performance. Future evaluations of the selected Texas Region 7 schools should include larger sample sizes and combining the students in grades 6, 7, and 8 for the analysis of reading scores.

An examination of reading scores for students from other Texas Region 7 schools in the elementary grades 3-5 would provide a useful context for these results. Collecting data from grades 3-8, for at least three consecutive years, could indicate the ages and/or grades where the academic gap may begin to present. Additional potential variables to add to future studies include the male students' interaction with discipline and punishment programs, participation in UIL organizations, and attendance rates when compared to other subpopulations.

In order to reduce academic performance gaps, Horsford (2019) suggests leaders in education should ensure that the school culture does not reflect differences in the academic achievement between Black and White students. Instead, socioeconomically, and racially integrated schools should include the following: (a) students with higher averages of test scores, (b) students that help reduce racial achievement gaps, and (c) classrooms that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

In the future, school leadership should prioritize improvement in student performance by setting the intention to understand and eliminate achievement gaps among all student groups at all grade levels. There must be an ending point to the growing problem of the achievement gap, just as it had a starting point. If Black and White male students' performance in Texas Region 7 is similar to the performance of other rural schools, then academic gap trends between other subgroup populations may be increasing as well.

Culturally Sustaining Instruction

Culturally and linguistically diverse students benefit most effectively from evidence-based instruction (Taylor, 2010). McGee (2013) explains that Black males' academic achievement is a complex and multilayered issue. To address inequities in education for marginalized students between the school and home, there is a dire need for cultural sustaining practice as reported by Gadd and Butler (2018) of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. When used as a resource, Gadd and Butler, explains it would "identify students' cultural knowledge, voice, prior experiences, and

diverse learning styles" (p. 1). The way that adolescents think will affect how they learn (Matthew, et al., 2010). Educators can create learning environments that allow students to learn from each other and from those who share their struggles, achievements, and advice on how to navigate school (Huerta et al., 2018). Black adolescents' academic performance has been affected by habitual racial discrimination when compared to other subgroups (Matthew et al., 2010).

Teacher-student interactions have shown a difference in contexts affecting the academic attainment of Black students. Black adolescent males attending schools primarily in a White hegemonic environment may feel rejected in a classroom setting of what they feel is "White property" (Leath, et al., 2019). Black male students have the option to conform to what they feel are the "White" norms, costing them a de-emphasis of their cultural background, but could result in academic success. Furthermore, Black students in predominantly Black schools feel supported in their identities which could result in academic success.

Culturally responsive educators will affirm individuals, identify talents, and maintain a positive view of students (Ramirez et al., 2016). It is suggested by Baquedano-Lopez and Hernandez (2011) that there is a need to create successful partnerships between home and school, "it is important to be aware of the dangers of assessing students' performance based on an evaluation of the students' family backgrounds" (p. 202). The transition from elementary to middle school may affect adolescents' ability to build relationships with their teachers. The different environments of students can cause

disengagement and build on other academic problems. Ramirez et al. (2016) explain, the importance of including themes that validate students' experiences, "draw from students' lived experiences to connect with and empower youth and provide space and time for reflection and self-determination" (p. 20).

Black students are likely to be taught predominantly by White teachers that do not have training in how to instruct Black students. Black students may be put into Black peer groups with other Black males who lack the desire to learn (Leath et al., 2019). "Teaching diverse youth to work together, communicating with parents and students, and supporting achievement" is suggested by Ramirez et al. (2016) to increase students' academic success (p. 21). As noted by Ispa-Landa and Conwell (2015), Black students and parents may feel embarrassed when they feel as though teachers are using Black program interventions designed in school to increase the achievement of low-income and minority students. Using educational practices to "respect, honor, nurture and expand ethnically and racially minoritized students," will "uplift, center, and sustain Black, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and indigenous cultures" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 3). According to Keller-Margulis et al. (2016), it is critical to consider the relationship between written expression and curriculum-based management for students with diverse language backgrounds on statewide achievement tests. This is important due to the value placed on the outcomes of high-stakes tests for students and teachers. The focus should be on promoting authentic assessments that reflect the broad range of students learning and skills, including creativity, leadership, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Alismail and McGuire (2015) suggest that there is knowledge of the importance of developing educational goals and teaching methods to prepare students for future careers, as well as knowledge to provide curriculum and instruction designed to meet these expectations so that all students can be academically successful. Goldman (2012) explained that being literate means "being able to use reading and writing to acquire knowledge, solve problems, and make decisions in academic, personal, and professional arenas" (p. 90). Educational leaders can create a culture of inclusion by encouraging all students to embrace practical career-focused experiences that keep students engaged in reading as an important lifelong skill.

Dancy (2014) explains that there is a national trend in which children are "funneled" out of public schools' educational pipeline into the juvenile and criminal justice systems known as the "school-to-prison pipeline." Huerta et al. (2018) explain how students maneuver through the educational pipeline is influenced by each element of a student's life. This educational pipeline has been further explained by Dancy's (2014), theories of six trends:

(1) excessive school closings and disciplinary actions, (2) barriers to early childhood education, (3) an avoidance or inability to promote student-centered learning, (4) poorly resourced community schools, (5) under-representation in gifted/talented and advanced placement opportunities, and (6) under-representation in post-secondary attainment opportunities. (p. 488)

Alismail and McGuire (2015) explain how critical it is for students to be prepared with the necessary knowledge, as well as life skills that will allow for their future careers. Educational leaders should search for ways to implement instructional practices to close the academic achievement gap between Black and White males in Texas schools.

Concluding Remarks

The theoretical foundation tagged with Black male students' academic performance has been affiliated with language socialization. The minority language background is detrimental to how and what students learn in a classroom environment. How the curriculum is delivered to a diverse group of students, promotes learning in ways that benefit some more than others. The focus in education should be on promoting authentic assessments that reflect a broad range of students' learning, and skills, including creativity, leadership, critical thinking, and collaboration (Taylor, 2010). With increasing accountability brought forth by the state, the number of failing schools will continue to increase, if teachers and administrators are not cognizant of how and what is being taught.

Black and White subpopulations have not equally learned the knowledge and skills necessary for them to be academically successful in public schools. There seems to be a widening gap in academic performance. The educational leaders within the community can work across school districts to share resources and data to empower and support families living in rural Texas districts. Teachers and school leaders must find ways to provide learning opportunities for all students to make connections to the state mandated TEKS, in a cultural community, with fidelity in the delivery, design, and

testing. As explained by Ford and King (2014) it is inequitable to permit opportunities to students based on race, which frequently occurs with Black students.

References

Alismail, H. A., & McGuire, P. (2015). 21st century standards and curriculum: Current research and practice. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *6*(6). 150-154.

Allen, N., Grigsby, B., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Does leadership matter? Examining the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate, and student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 10*(2), 1-22.

Allen, Q. (2015). Race, culture and agency: Examining the ideologies and practices of U.S. teachers of Black male students. *Teaching and Teacher Education 47*, 71-81.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association,* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

Appel, M., & Kronberger, N. (2012). Stereotypes and the achievement gap: Stereotype threat prior to the test taking. *Educational Psychology Review, 24*(4), 609-635.

Au, W. (2016). Meritocracy 2.0: High-stakes, standardized testing as a racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism. *Educational Policy, 30*(1), 39-62.

Baquedano-Lopez, P., & Jean Hernandez, S. (2011). Language socialization across educational setting. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Education,* 197-211.

Billings, G. L. (2011). Boyz to men? Teaching to restore Black boys' childhood. *Race Ethnicity and education*, *14*(1), 7-15.

Bingham, G. E., & Okagaki, L. (2012). Ethnicity and student engagement. *In Handbook of research on student engagement,* 65-95.

Bisin, A., Patacchini, E., Verdier, T., & Zenou, Y. (2011). Formation and persistence of oppositional identities. *European Economic Review, 55*(8), 1046-1071.

Bohrnstedt, G., Kitmitto, S., Ogut, B., Sherman, D., & Chan, D. (2015). School Composition and the Black-White Achievement Gap. NCES 2015-018. *National Center for Education Statistics*.

Bornsheuer, J.N., Polonyi, M.A., Andrews, M., Fore, B., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2011). The relationship between ninth-grade retention and on-time graduation in a southeast Texas high school. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*,*16*(2), 9-16.

Boulanger, D. (2019). Continuity and discontinuity of educational experience amidst school and family: Epistemological and conceptual foundations. *Psychology & Psychological Research International Journal, 4*(1), 1-12.

Bratter, J. L., Rowley, K.J., & Chukhray, I. (2016). Does a self-affirmation intervention reduce stereotype threat in Black and Hispanic high schools? *Race and Social Problems, 8*(4), 340-356.

Brockmeier, L. L., Green, R.B., Pate, J.L., Tsemunhu, R., & Bockenko, M.J. (2014). Teachers' beliefs about the effects of high-stakes testing. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 3*(4), 91-104.

Brooms, D. R. (2015). "We didn't let the neighborhood win": Black male students'
experiences in negotiating and navigating an urban neighborhood. *Journal of
Negro Education, 84*(3), 269-281.

Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J. E. (2011). Toward a conceptual framework of culturally
relevant pedagogy: An overview of the conceptual and theoretical literature.
Teacher Education Quarterly, 38(1), 65-84.

Brown, K. (2017, June 6). Buzzwords explained: Opportunity gap vs. achievement gap
Reading Partners. Reading Partners. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from
https://readingpartners.org/blog/buzzwords-explained-opportunity-gap-vs-
achievement-gap/

Brown, P. (2011). The cultural organization of attention. *In The handbook of language
socialization*, 29-55. Wiley-Blackwell.

Brunn-Bevel, R. J., & Byrd, W.C. (2015). The foundation of racial disparities in the
standardized testing era: The impact of school segregation and the assault on
public education in Virginia. *Humanity & Society, 39*(4), 419-448.

Butler-Barnes, S.T., Williams, T.T., & Chavous, T.M. (2012). Racial pride and religiosity
among African American boys: Implications for academic motivation and
achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence 41*, 486-498.

Calarco, J. M. (2014). Coached for the classroom: Parents' cultural transmission and
children's reproduction of education inequalities. *American Sociological Review*,
79(5), 1015-1037. https://doi:10.1177/0003122414566931

Carter, A.V. (2019). Look how far we haven't come: The possible implications of current educational context and practices for young Black males. *Education Sciences*, *9*(2), 142

Cormack, P., & Comber, B. (2013). High-stakes literacy tests and local effects in a rural school. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy,36*(2), 78-89.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *Sage publications*.

Cumberbatch-Smith, R. (2016). *School factors that contribute to the academic success of African American boys in an urban elementary school* (Doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech).

Darensbourg, A. M., & Blake, J.J. (2014). Examining the academic achievement of Black adolescents: Importance of peer and parental influences. *Journal of Black Psychology, 40*(2), 191-212. https://doi:10.1177/0095798413481384

Dancy, T. E. (2014). (Un)doing hegemony in education: Disrupting school-to-prison pipelines for Black males. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *47*(4), 476-493.

Devine, P. G., Forscher, P.S., Austin, A. J., & Cox, W.T. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit Race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(6), 1267-1278. https://doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2012.06.003

Dixon-Roman, E. J. (2013). The forms of capital and the developed achievement of Black males. *Urban Education,48*(6), 828-862.

Duff, P. A. (2010). Language socialization into academic discourse communities. *Annual review of applied linguistics,30*, 169-192.

Egalite, A. J., Fusarelli, L.D., & Fusarelli, B.C. (2017). Will decentralization affect educational inequity? Every student succeeds act. *Educational Administration Quarterly,53*(5), 757-781.

Ford, D. Y., & King Jr, R. A. (2014). No Blacks allowed: Segregated gifted education in the context of Brown v. Board of education. *Journal of Negro Education,* 83(3),300-310.

Fowler, D. (2011). School discipline feeds the "pipeline to prison." *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(2), 14-19.

Frankenberg, E., & Taylor, K. (2018). De facto segregation: Tracing a legal basis for contemporary inequality. *JL & Educ., 47*,189.

Gadd, S., & Butler, B.R. (2018). Culturally responsive (sustaining) practices for students with and at risk for disabilities: Annotated bibliography. *National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.*

Galván, A. (2013). The teenage brain: Sensitivity to rewards. *Current directions in psychological science*, *22*(2), 88-93.

Gagnon, D. J., & Mattingly, M.J. (2016). Advanced placement and rural schools: Access, success, and exploring alternatives. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 27*(4), 266-284.

Goldman, S. R. (2012). Adolescent literacy: learning and understanding content. *The Future of Children, 22*(2), 89-116.

Grace, J. E., & Nelson, S.L. (2019). "Tryin' to survive": Black male students' understandings of the role of race and racism in the school-to-prison pipeline. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 18*(4), 664-680.

Harris, A. L., & Marsh, K. (2010). Is a raceless identity an effective strategy for academic success among Blacks? *Social Science Quarterly, 91*(5), 1242-1263.

Harris, A. J., Feathers, C.E., & Musgrave, J. (2021). The relationship of openness, difference, and solidarity to cultural integration amid cultural fluidity: A grounded theory approach. *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research, 15*(4). 245-263.

Henfield, M.S. (2013). Meeting the needs of gifted and high-achieving Black males in urban schools. *The Urban Review,45*(5), 395-398.

Highsmith, A.R., & Erickson, A.T. (2015). "Segregation as splitting, segregation as joining: Schools, housing, and the many modes of Jim Crow." *American Journal of Education, 121*(4), 563-595.

Horsford, S.D. (2019). School integration in the new Jim Crow: Opportunity or oxymoron? *Educational Policy,33*(1), 257-275.

Howard, T. C. (2013). How does it feel to be a problem/ Black male student, schools, and learning in enhancing the knowledge base to disrupt deficit frameworks? *Review of Research in Education, 37*(1), 54-86.

Huerta, A. H., McDonough, P. M., & Allen, W. R. (2018). "You can go to college": Employing a developmental perspective to examine how young men of color construct a college-going identity. *The Urban Review, 50*(5), 713-734.

Huff, C. (2010). Determining a student's readiness to successfully use interpreting services. *National Deaf Education Center, 11*(1), 30-34

HumPRO (2016). The independent evaluation of the validity and reliability of the grades 3-8 state of Texas assessments of academic readiness (STAAR) part I: Grades 5 and 8 reading and mathematics, and grades 4 and 7 writing. Executive Summary. *Texas Education Agency (TEA).*

Irvin, M.J., Meece, J. L., Byun, S.Y., Farmer, T.W., & Hutchins, B.C. (2011). Relationship of school context to rural youth's educational achievement and aspirations. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40*(9), 1225-1242.

Ispa-Landa, S., & Conwell, J. (2015). "Once You Go to a White School, You Kind of Adapt" Black Adolescents and the Racial Classification of Schools. *Sociology of Education*, *88*(1), 1-19.

James, C.E. (2012). Students "at-risk" stereotypes and the schooling of Black boys. *Urban Education, 47*(2), 464-494.

Johnson, P. B. (2017). High–Stakes Testing and No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Conceptual and Empirical Considerations. In *What is Authentic Educational Reform?* (pp. 55-69). Routledge.

Karrebaek, M.S. (2013). Don't speak like that to her! Linguistic minority children's

socialization into an ideology of monolingualism. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 17*(3), 355-375.

Kayama, M., Ogata, S., Nagai, T., Yokoka, H., Masumoto, K., & Hashimoto, M. (2015). Effectiveness of model-driven development in conceptual modeling education for university freshmen. *Global Engineering Education Conference,* 274-282.

Keller-Margulis, M., Payan, A., Jaspers, K.E., & Brewton, C. (2016). "Validity and diagnostic accuracy of written expression curriculum-based measurement for students with diverse language backgrounds." *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 32*(2), 174-198.

Kitsao-Wekulo, P.K., Holding, P.A., Taylor, H.G., Abubakar, A., & Connolly, K. (2013). Neuropsychological testing in a rural African school-age population: evaluating contributions to variability in test performance. *Assessment, 20*(6), 776-784.

Kostyuk, V. Almeda, M.V., & Baker, R.S. (2018). Correlating affect and behavior in reasoning mind with state test achievement. *In Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge,* 26-30.

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006). What matters to student success: A review of the literature. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative. *National Center for Education Statistics*.

Laerd Statistics (2015). *Statistical tutorials and software guides.* https://statistics.laerd.com/

Lavalley, M. (2018). Out of the loop: Rural schools are largely left out of research and policy discussions, exacerbating poverty, inequity, and isolation. *Center for Public Education.*

Leath, S., Mathews, C., Harrison, A., & Chavous, T. (2019). Racial identity, racial discrimination, and classroom engagement outcomes among black girls and boys in predominantly black and predominantly White school districts. *American Educational Research Journal, 56*(4), 1318-1325.

Lovelace, S., & Wheeler, T. R. (2006). Cultural discontinuity between home and school language socialization patterns: Implications for teachers. *Education*, *127*(2).

Madaus, G., & Russell, M. (2010). Paradoxes of high-stakes testing. *Journal of Education, 190*(1-2), 21-30.

Matthews, J.S., Kizzie, K.T., Rowley, S.J., & Cortina, K. (2010). African Americans and boys: Understanding the literacy gap, tracing academic trajectories, and evaluating the role of learning-related skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(3), 757.

McGee, E.O. (2013). Threatened and placed at risk. High achieving African American males in urban high schools. *The Urban Review, 45*(4), 448-471.

McCutchen, K.L., Jones, M.H., Carbonneau, K.J., & Mueller, C.E. (2016). Mindset and standardized testing over time. *Learning and Individual Differences, 45*, 208-213.

Miller Dyce, C. (2013). Disappearing into the unknown: The state of Black male

    achievement in American public schools. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *15*(3), 165-

    167.

Minarechová, M. (2012). Negative impacts of high-stakes testing. *Journal of Pedagogy,*

    3(1), 82-100.

Mocombe, P.C., & Tomlin, C. (2010). The oppositional culture theory. *University Press*

    of America.

Morris, J. E., & Adeyemo, A. O. (2012). Touchdowns and honor societies: Expanding the

    focus   of black male excellence. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(5), 28-32.

Morris, E.W., & Perry, B.L. (2017). Girls behaving badly? Race, gender, and subjective

    evaluation in the discipline of African American girls. *Sociology of Education,*

    90(2)*,* 127-148.

Musoleno, R. R., & White, G. P. (2010). Influence of high-stakes testing on middle

    school mission and practice. *RMLE Online, 34*(3), 1-10.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2011). *Understanding Gaps*.

    https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/understand_gaps.aspx

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2019). *Data tools state profiles*.

    https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?chort=1&sub=MAT&sj=

    &sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2019R3

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2019). *Student Groups*.

    https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/guides/groups.aspx

National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). *National Assessment of Educational Progress*. https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/state/state_differences.aspx

National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). *National Assessment of Educational Progress*. https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/state/state_differences.aspx

Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban education*, *38*(4), 431-459.

Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. B. (2011). The theory of language socialization. *The Handbook of Language Socialization,*1-21. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444342901

Ogbu, J. U. (2014). From cultural differences to differences in cultural frame of reference. In *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development* (pp. 363-389). Psychology Press.

Orozco, R., & Jaime Diaz, J. (2016). "Suited to their needs": White innocence as a vestige of segregation. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*(3), 127-133.

Orrock, J., & Clark, M.A. (2018). Using systems theory to promote academic success for African American males. *Urban Education, 53*(8), 1013-1042.

Pallant, J. (2020). SPSS Survival Manual: *A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (7th edition). McGraw-Hill UK. https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/books/9780335249503

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning

    for justice   in a changing world. *Teachers College Press.*

Pierre, J.K. (2012). History of *de jure* segregation in public higher education in America

    and the state of Maryland prior to 1954 and the equalization strategy. *Florida A &*

    M University Law Review, 8(1), 7.

Pittman, R.T., Zhang, S., Binks-Cantrell, E., Hudson, A., & Joshi, R.M. (2018).

    Teachers' knowledge about language constructs related to literacy skills and

    student achievement in low socio-economic status schools. *An International*

    Journal of Research and Practice.

Pruitt, T. S., Nicholas-Omoregbe, S. O., Bergdahl, J., Nomoregbe, N., & Mbarika, V.

    (2019). Effects of economic inequality on academic achievement: The Black boy

    dilemma. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology*

    Education, *15*(3), em1683.

Puryear, J. S., & Kettler, T. (2017). Rural gifted education and the effect of proximity.

    Gifted Child Quarterly, 61(2), 143-152.

Ramirez, P., Jimenez-Silva, M., Boozer, A., & Clark, B. (2016). Going against the grain

    in an urban Arizona high school: Secondary preservice teachers emerging as

    culturally responsive educators. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *18*(1), 20-28.

    Region 7 Education Service Center (ESC-7). (2020). *Regional Profile*.

    https://www.esc7.net/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=2336141&type=d&pREC_

    ID=2215794

Rodriguez, P.J. (2014). A review of "minority status, oppositional culture, & schooling" edited by John U. Ogbu. *New York: Routledge,* 653.

Rosales, J., & Walker, T. (2018). The racist beginnings of standardized testing. *National Education Association, 73*(2), 88-96.

Rothstein, R. (2014). Modern segregation. *Economic Policy Institute.*1-11.

Santiago, A.M., Lee, E.L., Lucero, J.L., & Wiersma, R. (2017). How living in the 'hood affects risky behaviors among Latino and African American youth. *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 3*(2), 170-209.

Schmader, T. (2012). Stereotype threat: Theory, process, and application. *Oxford University Press.*

Semke, C. A., & Sheridan, S. M. (2012). Family-school connections in rural educational settings: A systematic review of the empirical literature. *School Community Journal, 22*(1), 21-47.

Spann, P., & Kaufman, D. (2015). The negative effects of high-stakes testing. *Educational Law and Policy, 1*(1), 1-14.

Spencer, S.J., Logel, C., & Davies, P.G. (2016). Stereotype threat. *Annual review of psychology, 67*, 415-437.

Suh, C.S., Shi, Y., & Brashears, M.E. (2017). Negligible connections? The role of familiar others in the diffusion of smoking among adolescents. *Social Forces, 96*(1), 423-448.

Szabo, S., & Sinclair, B.B. (2019). Readability of the STAAR test is still misaligned. *Schooling, 10*(1), 1-12.

Taylor, R. W. (2010). The role of teacher education programs in creating culturally competent teachers: A moral imperative for ensuring the academic success of diverse student populations. *Multicultural Education, 17*(3), 24-28.

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2015). *Provisions and Assurances NCLB.* https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/Provisions%20and%20Assurances%20NCLB%20%282015-06%29.pdf

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2015). Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2018). *Student Assessment Division.* https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-performance-standards

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2019). *Testing.* https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *Accountability Rating System.* https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting/2021-accountability-rating-system

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *Governance and Accountability/Performance Reporting.* https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/TAPR%20Guidelines%202020.pdf

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *Public Information Request.* https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/contact-us/public-information-requests

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *STAAR Raw Score Conversion Tables*.

https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-raw-score-conversion-

tables

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *State of Texas Assessments of Academic*

Readiness(STAAR).

https://NAEP.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2013STAARVerticalScaleTechReport.p

df

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *Student Success Initiative Manual*.

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019-20_STAAR_SSI_Manual_tagged.pdf

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2020). *TAPR guidelines*.

https://tea.texas.gov/media/document/288711

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2021). *Explanation of 2020-21 TAPR Masking Rules*.

https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2021/masking.html

Texas Education Agency (TEA) (2021). Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Texas AFT (2013). *De-facto* segregation by race, class, language prevalent in Texas

public education. *American Federation of Teachers.*

https://www.texasaft.org/hotline/de-facto-

segregation-by-race-class-language-prevalent-in-texas-public-education/

Tieken, M.C. (2017). The spatialization of racial inequity and educational opportunity:

Rethinking the rural/urban divide. *Peabody Journal of Education, 92*(3), 385-404.

Thompson, G.L., & Allen, T.G. (2012). Four effects of the high-stakes testing movement

on African American K-12 students. *Journal of Negro Education, 81*(3), 218-227

Togut, T. D. (2011). The gestalt of the school-to-prison pipeline: The duality of

overrepresentation of minorities in special education and racial disparity in school

discipline on minorities. *American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy &

the Law, 20,* 163.

Tosolt, B. (2010). Gender and race differences in middle school students' perceptions of

caring teacher behaviors. *Multicultural Perspectives, 12*(3), 145-151.

U.S. Department of Education (2008). *Structure of the US Education System:

Standardized   Tests*.

https://search.usa.gov/search?affiliate=ed.gov&query=standardized+testing

U.S. Department of Education (2013). *Stakeholder Engagement & Sustainability*.

https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/pdf/Stakeholderengagement_Sustainability.p

df

U.S. Department of Education (2021). National Assessment of Educational Progress.

https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

White, N., LaSalle, T., Ashby, J.S., & Meyers, J. (2014). A brief measure of adolescent

perceptions of school climate. *School Psychology Quarterly, 29* (3), 349-359.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000075

Wildhagen, T. (2011). What's oppositional culture got to do with it? Moving beyond the strong version of the acting White hypothesis. *Sociological Perspectives, 54*(3), 403-430.

Williamson, T. (2017). Avoiding the gaze of the test: High-stakes literacy policy implementation. *Texas Education Review.*

Yang, J., & Anyon, Y. (2016). Race and risk behaviors: The mediating role of school bonding. *Children and Youth Services Review, 69,*39-48.

Yeager, D.S. (2017). Social and emotional learning programs for adolescents. *The Future of Children, 27*(1), 73-94.

Young, Y. (2016). Teachers' implicit bias against black students starts in preschool, study finds. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/04/black-students-teachers-implicit-racial-bias-preschool-study

APPENDIX A

Public Information Request (PIR)

TEA Public Information Request

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, Texas 75672
johnsonsh@marshallisd.com
903-926-7578

STAAR 3-8 Reporting Student Data File for the Year **2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019**. **Grades 5-8** for the following schools: **Chapel Hill Middle in Chapel Hill ISD (CDN 212909), Henderson Middle in Henderson ISD (CDN 201902), and Kilgore Middle in Kilgore ISD (CDN 092902).**

STAAR Grades 3-8 (No STAAR ALT Data is being requested); Primary Administration only (No re-rest data is being requested)

Administration Dates
0419=April 2019 Grades 5-8 (If this is primary administration)
0418=April 2018 Grades 5-8 (If this is primary administration)
0317=March 2017 Grades 5-8 (If this is primary administration)

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
Administration and Student ID Information		
1-4	4	Administration Date
		0419=April 2019 0418=April 2018 0317=March 2017
5-6	2	Grade Level Tested Grades 5-8
7-8	2	ESC Region Number
9-17	9	County-District-Campus Number
18-32	15	District-Name

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
33-47	15	Campus Name
74-82	9	Student -ID
83-83	1	Sex-Code M=Male F=Female
Demographic Information		
93-93	1	Hispanic-Latino-Code 1=Yes 0=No
94-94	1	American-Indian-Alaska-Native-Code 1=Yes 0=No
95-95	1	Asian-Code 1=Yes 0=No
96-96	1	Black-African American-Code 1=Yes 0=No
97-97	1	Native-Hawaiian-Pacific-Islander-Code 1=Yes 0=No
98-98	1	White-Code 1=Yes 0=No
99-99	1	Ethnicity/Race Reporting Category H=Hispanic/Latino I=American Indian or Alaska Native A=Asian B=Black or African American P=Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander W=White T=Two or More Races N=No Information Provided

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
100-100	1	Economic-Disadvantage-Code 1=Eligible for free meals 2=Eligible for reduced-price meals 9=Other economic disadvantage 0=Not identified as economic disadvantage
100-100	1	Title-I-Part-A-Indicator-Code 6=Student attends campus with school-wide program 7=Student participates in program at targeted assistance school
111-111	1	Special-ED-Indicator-Code 1=Student is participating in a special education program 0=Student is not participating in a special education program
118-118	1	At-Risk-Indicator-Code 1=Yes 2=No
123-131	9	Local-Student-ID
141-142	2	Enrolled Grade Grades 05-08
Subject Information		
Local Use		
201-204	4	Reading Grades 5-8
Agency Use		
221-225	5	Reading Grades 5-8
Score Code Information		
351-351	1	Reading S=Score
Reading Subject Information		
STAAR Grades 5-8		

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
401-406	6	Reading Reporting Category Scores
407-408	2	Reading Raw Score
409-412	4	Reading Scale Score
414-414	1	Reading Test Version S=STAAR
415-415	1	Reading Test Administration Mode O=Online test P=Paper test
423-423	1	Meets Grade Level in Reading 1=Yes 0=No
424-424	1	Approaches Grade Level in Reading 1=Yes 0=No
425-425	1	Masters Grade Level in Reading 1=Yes 0=No
Reading STAAR Progress Measure Information		
430-433	4	Previous-Year Administration Date
434-437	4	Previous-Year Scale Score
440-440	1	Previous-Year Score Code
442-442	1	Previous-Year Masters Grade Level 1=Yes 0=No
443-444	2	Previous-Year Tested Grade
Current Year History Information		
Current Year Reading History (Grades 5 and 8)		

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
		Primary Administration
2251-2259	9	County-District-Campus Number
2261-2261	1	Test Version
2262-2262	1	Score Code
2263-2263	1	Approaches Grade Level
2264-2264	1	Masters Grade Level
2265-2268	4	Scale Score
2269-2269	1	STAAR Progress Measure
2271-2275	5	Lexile Measure
2276-2276	1	Meets Grade Level
2277-2279	3	Percentile
2280-2280	1	Test Information Indicator 1=Online test without embedded supports 2=Online test with embedded supports 3=Paper test with embedded supports 0=Paper test without embedded supports
		Additional Data
		Primary Administration
2431-2436	6	Reading Reporting Category Scores
2437-2438	2	Reading Raw Score
		Previous Year History Information
		Previous Year Reading History
		Primary Administration (Grades 5 and 8)
2501-2509	9	County-District-Campus Number

Location From-To	Field Length	Field Description
2511-2511	1	Test Version
2512-2512	1	Score Code
2513-2513	1	Approaches Grade Level
2514-2514	1	Masters Grade Level
2515-2518	4	Scale Score
2519-2520	2	Tested Grade
2521-2522	2	Enrolled Grade
2523-2523	1	STAAR Progress Measure
2525-2529	5	Lexile Measure
2530-2530	1	Meets Grade Level

APPENDIX B

Internal Review Board (IRB)

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
P.O. Box 13019, SFA Station · Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-3046
Phone (936) 468-1153 · Fax (936) 468-1573

Principal Investigator:	Barbara Qualls Human Services and Educational Leadership X1592 lprichardson@sfasu.edu
Co-investigators:	Sheenah Hopkins-Johnson
RE:	Difference in Academic Achievement in African American Males in Grade 6 -8: Comparative Evidence from selected Texas Rural Schools." #AY 2022 – 2209.
TYPE OF RESEARCH:	Dissertation
FROM:	Emmerentie Oliphant, Chair, IRB-H
DATE:	February 17, 2022

Thank you for submitting your project entitled "Difference in Academic Achievement in African American Males in Grade 6 -8: Comparative Evidence from selected Texas Rural Schools" to the IRB for review. It has been reviewed **approved** based on the following criteria:

Archival data.

Your project has approval through **February 17, 2023**. Should you need additional time to complete the study you will need to apply for an extension prior to that date. The IRB should be notified of any planned changes in the procedures during the approval period, as additional review will be required by the IRB, prior to implementing any changes, except when changes are necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the research participants. The researcher is also responsible for promptly notifying the IRB of any unanticipated or adverse events involving risk or harm to participants or others as a result of the research.

All future correspondence regarding this project should include the case number **AY 2022-2209**.

AY2022-2209   Exempt

APPENDIX C

Email to Texas Education Agency

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>
To: pir@tea.texas.gov
Bcc: Sheenah Johnson <JohnsonSH@marshallisd.com>

Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 10:26 AM

Good day,
I'm a doctoral student, as well as a teacher in Texas. I am requesting individual campuses/districts' data to complete my dissertation. Please see the attachment below for the information needed.
Thanks for all you do!

Mrs. Sheenah M. Johnson, M.Ed.
johnsonsh@marshallisd.com
Instructional Coach, Marshall Junior High School
(903)927-8830 ext.1273

"Be thankful in everything, in all circumstances" ~1 Thessalonians 5:18

TEA Public Information Request.docx
17K

APPENDIX D

PIR Receipt Acknowledgement from TEA

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Receipt Acknowledgement

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Thu, Feb 24, 2022 at 12:01 PM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Receipt Acknowledgement
February 24, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

Thank you for contacting the Texas Education Agency. I want to acknowledge receipt of your request. Your request number is PIR # 52331.

Our Public Information Request Coordinators are processing your request in coordination with the area(s) that may have the responsive information/data. A response to your request should be provided on or before 10 business days: March 11, 2022. Should you not receive a response within this timeline, please do not hesitate to contact our office and ask to speak to one of our Coordinators.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (512) 463-3464 or by email at PIR@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Jenny Eaton
Public Information Coordinator

Enclosure: Original Request

TEA Public Information Request.docx
17K

APPENDIX E

Request for Clarification & Partial No Documents Found from TEA

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Request for Clarification & Partial No Documents Found
2 messages

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 2:08 PM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Request for Clarification
Partial No Documents Found
March 4, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your public information request (PIR). A copy of your original request is enclosed.

Request for Clarification:
Please contact our office to provide a clarification or narrowing of your request based on the explanation below.

TEA can provide masked de-identified student level data for STAAR, years 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019 for the primary administration only.
1) Please specify/confirm the County-District-Campus (CDC) number for the 3 requested campuses, as your request only provided district number. These can be found in AskTed: https://tea4avholly.tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.Web/Forms/SearchScreen.aspx?orgType=School
    Chapel Hill Middle School - (only Elementary or JH listed in AskTed). Please provide the 9-digit CDC number for the campus requested.
    Henderson Middle School - 201902041 (please confirm)
    Kilgore Middle School - 092902042 (please confirm)
2) For each of the campuses above, what grades are requested? Please only request the grades in which are available for the campus, i.e. if campus is for grades 6-8, then grades 3-5 data will not be available.
3) For each of the campuses above, what STAAR subjects are requested?
4) Variables Requested: We recommend reducing the number of variables due to likelihood of severe masking*. Please see guidance below.
    A) About student-level data masking:
    Data masking means that STAAR test results for fewer than 5 students in a Concatenated Masking Variable "CMVAR" will be set to blank. If the customer requests many masking related data fields to be included in the data, the data will be severely masked and will be of no value for research.

    Here is an example how the masking CMVAR is created:
    CMVAR = (campus||grade||ethnicity||eoc-frlp||titleI||||mig||lep||bil||esl||speced||gifted||at-risk|||test_version||test_language).

    B) Masking of the data can be reduced by:
        1)   Limiting the number of required student demographic variables,;
        2)   Combining the values in the demographic variables with multiple levels to Y/N, such as TITLE-I-PART-A-INDICATOR-CODE, LEP-INDICATOR-CODE, BILINGUAL-INDICATOR-CODE, ESL-INDICATOR-CODE
5) Please revise your request and choose the variables for the current administration and not from the History Section. Some of the same fields in this history section have already been requested in the section of the current admin. Data will be provided in separate files per administration.
    Current Year Reading History (Grades 5 and 8) Primary Administration

2251-2259	9	County-District-Campus Number
2261-2261	1	Test Version
2262-2262	1	Score Code

APPENDIX F

Researcher's Response to TEA's Request for Clarification

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>   Fri, Mar 4, 2022 at 4:49 PM
To: PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>
Bcc: Sheenah Johnson <JohnsonSH@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Request for Clarification
Partial No Documents Found
March 4, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your public information request (PIR). A copy of your original request is enclosed.

Request for Clarification:
Please contact our office to provide a clarification or narrowing of your request based on the explanation below.

TEA can provide masked de-identified student level data for STAAR, years 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019 for the primary administration only.
1) Please specify/confirm the County-District-Campus (CDC) number for the 3 requested campuses, as your request only provided district number. These can be found in AskTed: https://tea4avholly. tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.Web/Forms/SearchScreen.aspx?orgType=School
        Chapel Hill Middle School - (only Elementary or JH listed in AskTed). Please provide the 9-digit CDC number for the campus requested. CHAPEL HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL CDC NUMBER 212909042. REQUEST GRADES 6-8
        Henderson Middle School - 201902041 (please confirm) YES, THIS IS CORRECT. REQUEST GRADES 6-8
        Kilgore Middle School - 092902042 (please confirm) YES, THIS IS CORRECT. REQUEST GRADES 6-8
2) For each of the campuses above, what grades are requested? Please only request the grades in which are available for the campus, i.e. if campus is for grades 6-8, then grades 3-5 data will not be available. I REQUEST DATA FOR GRADES 6-8
3) For each of the campuses above, what STAAR subjects are requested? READING
4) Variables Requested: We recommend reducing the number of variables due to likelihood of severe masking*. Please see guidance below.
        A) About student-level data masking:
        Data masking means that STAAR test results for fewer than 5 students in a Concatenated Masking Variable "CMVAR" will be set to blank. If the customer requests many masking related data fields to be included in the data, the data will be severely masked and will be of no value for research.

        Here is an example how the masking CMVAR is created:
        CMVAR = (campus||grade||ethnicity||eoc-frlp||titleI||||mig||lep||bil||esl||speced||gifted||at-risk|||test_version||test_language).

        B) Masking of the data can be reduced by:
                1)   Limiting the number of required student demographic variables,;
                2)   Combining the values in the demographic variables with multiple levels to Y/N, such as TITLE-I-PART-A-INDICATOR-CODE, LEP-INDICATOR-CODE, BILINGUAL-   INDICATOR-CODE, ESL-INDICATOR-CODE
                I REQUEST DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (YES/NO) FOR:
                93-93 HISPANIC (YES/NO)
                96-96 BLACK-AFRICAN AMERICAN (YES/NO)
                98-98 WHITE (YES/NO)
                99-99 ETHNICITY/RACE REPORTING CATEGORY (YES/NO)
                100-100 ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE (YES/NO)
                111-111 SPECIAL ED (YES/NO)
                118-118 AT-RISK (YES/NO)

APPENDIX G

Email from Public Information Coordinator Verification of Clarification

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Request for Clarification

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 11:41 AM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Request for Clarification
March 8, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your public information request (PIR). A copy of your original request is enclosed.

Request for Clarification:
Please contact our office to provide a clarification or narrowing of your request based on the explanation below.

Thank you for your recent clarification. Our understanding of your current request and additional clarification questions are listed below:
1. Masked de-identified student level data for STAAR, years 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019
2. Primary administration only.
3. Campuses:
   - CHAPEL HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL CDC NUMBER 212909042
   - Henderson Middle School - 201902041
   - Kilgore Middle School - 092902042
4. Grades 6, 7, 8
5. Reading only
6. Demographics variables collapsed:
   - 93-93 HISPANIC (YES/NO)
   - 96-96 BLACK-AFRICAN AMERICAN (YES/NO)
   - 98-98 WHITE (YES/NO)
   - 99-99 ETHNICITY/RACE REPORTING CATEGORY (YES/NO)
   The above Ethnicity variable values are typically not collapsed into yes/no
   H = Hispanic/Latino I = American Indian or Alaska Native A = Asian B = Black or African American P = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander W = White T = Two or More Races N = No Information Provided. How would you like this collapsed, if at all? For example, we can collapse to Hispanic/Latino, Black or African American, White, and other.
   - 100-100 ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE (YES/NO)
   - 111-111 SPECIAL ED (YES/NO)
   - 118-118 AT-RISK (YES/NO)

7. Performance variables requested for current admin:
   - 401-406 6 Reading reporting category
   - 407-408 2 Reading raw score
   - 409-412 4 Reading scale score
   - 414-414 1 Reading test version
   - 415-415 1 Reading test administration mode
   - 423-423 1 Meets grade level in reading
   - 424-424 1 Approaches grade level in reading
   - 425-425 1 Masters grade level in reading

8. Are you also requesting the AGENCY USE field at position 221-225?

APPENDIX H

Phone Clarification from Public Information Coordinator

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Phone Clarification Summary
4 messages

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 12:08 PM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Phone Clarification Summary
March 8, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your public information request (PIR). A copy of your original request is enclosed.

Phone Clarification Summary:
Thank you for calling our Public Information Office today to provide clarification of your request. Please review my understanding of our conversation, and you may reply with edits if needed. We anticipate that we will respond to this clarification on or before March 22, 2022.

6.   Demographics variables collapsed:
- 93-93 HISPANIC (YES/NO)
- 96-96 BLACK-AFRICAN AMERICAN (YES/NO)
- 98-98 WHITE (YES/NO)
- 99-99 ETHNICITY/RACE REPORTING CATEGORY (YES/NO)

The above Ethnicity variable values are typically not collapsed into yes/no
H = Hispanic/Latino I = American Indian or Alaska Native A = Asian B = Black or African American P = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander W = White T = Two or More Races N = No Information Provided. It is my understanding that you would like to collapse to include Hispanic/Latino, Black or African American, White, and other.
- 100-100 ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE (YES/NO)
- 111-111 SPECIAL ED (YES/NO)
- 118-118 AT-RISK (YES/NO)

8.   Are you also requesting the AGENCY USE field at position 221-225?
It is my understanding that you would like to remove this field from your request.

You may reply with edits to this understanding, if needed, by mail, fax, or e-mail. Additionally, you may deliver your edits in person to our office.

Public Information Coordinator
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
FAX: (512) 463-1022 | **Email**: PIR@tea.texas.gov

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (512) 463-3464 or by email at PIR@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Jenny Eaton
Public Information Coordinator

APPENDIX I

Programming and/or Manipulation of Data Statement of Cost Estimate

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Programming and/or Manipulation of Data Statement of Cost Estimate
4 messages

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Wed, Mar 9, 2022 at 8:56 AM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Programming and/or Manipulation of Data
Statement of Cost Estimate
March 9, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your request for public information. Because the cost to fulfill your request will exceed $100.00 and requires programming and/or manipulation of data, TEA must provide an itemized statement of estimated charges that may be included in your final Invoice Statement.

The Statement of Cost Estimate for your request is enclosed. Please note that full payment is not due at this time, only the deposit amount.

Less Costly Alternatives and Format
On the enclosed cost estimate, please indicate the method by which you wish to receive the information. TEA must provide you the information in its original format. However, if TEA has the technology to do so, it will provide you the information in other formats. There are less expensive ways for you to obtain this information. These charges may be reduced if you narrow or clarify the scope of your request (reduce data fields, timeline, etc.). Additionally, other alternative options for less costly or no-cost way of accessing the information, such as TEA website or in person inspection, may be described in this letter, if available.

Data Specifications
The attached Statement of Cost Estimate includes the Ethnicity/race variable (position 99) with Hispanic/Latino, Black or African American, White and Other values (Other will include I = American Indian or Alaska Native, A = Asian, P = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, T = Two or More Races, N = No Information Provided)

Agency Use field will be excluded.

Anticipated date on which your records/data will be released to you is indicated on the enclosed statement (based on 15 business days to complete the work) and it is recalculated from the date the agency receives your payment of the deposit as work will not begin until the minimum 50% deposit is received.

Deposit
TEA requires a deposit before beginning to retrieve and prepare the information for you to review or receive. The deposit is required when costs to make the information available exceeds $100.00, or the information is older than five (5) years old, or the information will fill six (6) archival boxes and more than five hours is estimated to make the information available. This deposit amount will be 50% of the entire estimated amount and will be reflected in the enclosed cost estimate.

Adjustment to Estimated Cost
Occasionally, after starting the work, but before making the information available to you, TEA may find that the actual cost will exceed the initial estimate. In this case, if the cost estimate exceeds more than 20% above the estimated amount, TEA will issue a new cost estimate for approval. You must respond to the adjusted statement within 30 business days or your request will be considered withdrawn. If the actual cost is below or it exceeds the estimated amount, but by no more than 20%, the cost will be adjusted in the invoice.

APPENDIX J

Cost Estimate from TEA for PIR

Cost Estimate

PIR Number: 52331

Date: 3/9/2022

Requestor: Sheenah Johnson

Affiliation: Individual

This cost estimate is the: Initial Estimate

The records/data are available in: ☐ Paper ☑ Electronic ☐ Other:

How do you want to receive your records?: ☐ Paper ☐ CD-ROM ☐ Electronic
☐ EMAIL Attachments ☐ View by Appointment
☐ Pick-up ☐ Other:_____

Item	Estimated Quantity	Charge	Estimated Total
Labor Charge for Manipulating Data	1	@$15.00/hr.	$15.00
Overhead Charge	1	20% of labor charge	$3.00
Labor Charge for Programming	4	@$28.50/hr.	$114.00
Overhead Charge	1	20% of labor charge for programming	$22.80
Total Estimated Charges			**$154.80**

Anticipated Date Records Available: 3/30/2022

Deposit (50% for amounts over $100): $77.40

Please indicate your decision:
☐ Accept Estimate ☐ Modified Request Attached ☐ Withdraw Request

Print Name: _____

Sign: _____   **Date:** _____

Return Cost Estimate Statement To:
Mail: Public Information Coordinator
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Tel: (512) 463-3464 Fax: (512) 463-9838

Email: PIR@tea.texas.gov

APPENDIX K

Public Information Request Payment Received

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Payment Received

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Thu, Mar 17, 2022 at 2:51 PM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Public Information Request
Payment Received
March 17, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your request for public information. On March 16, 2022, TEA received payment in full in the amount of $154.80 for the requested information.

We anticipate that the responsive information will be provided to you on or before March 31, 2022.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (512) 463-3464 or by email at PIR@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Jenny Eaton
Public Information Coordinator

APPENDIX L

Masked Data Text Files from TEA

Johnson, Sheenah <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

PIR # 52331 Release Documents- Paid in Full
2 messages

PIR <PIR@tea.texas.gov>   Wed, Mar 30, 2022 at 1:26 PM
To: "johnsonsh@marshallisd.com" <johnsonsh@marshallisd.com>

Citrix Attachments   Expires September 26, 2022

PIR 52331 Data.zip	55.9 MB
TEA Public Information Request.docx	17 KB

Download Attachments

PIR TEA uses Citrix Files to share documents securely.

Public Information Request
Release Documents- Paid in Full
March 30, 2022

Sheenah Johnson
202 Benita Drive
Marshall, TX 75672

TEA PIR #52331

Dear Sheenah Johnson:

On February 24, 2022, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received your request for public information. To the extent it exists, the requested information is provided to you with this letter and includes a copy of the original request. Additionally, there are all charges for fulfilling this request are paid in full, and PIR # 52331 is considered closed.

The responsive information released to you is a large size file (s) that cannot be sent via regular Outlook email, therefore we are sending the files through a large file server, (Citrix ShareFile), which may require you to create a user name and password in order to retrieve the files. Note: The username must be created using the original email address that this communication is sent to. The files will only be available through this email for 6 months and we recommend that you download them to access them at a future date, if needed. The new TEA ShareFile service can be accessed at https://tea.sharefile.com, using your email address. It is highly recommended to install the Citrix Files for Windows/Mac and Citrix Files for Outlook applications for more convenient file access and sharing.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (512) 463-3464 or by email at PIR@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Jenny Eaton
Public Information Coordinator

Enclosures: Original Request
               TEA Responsive Documents
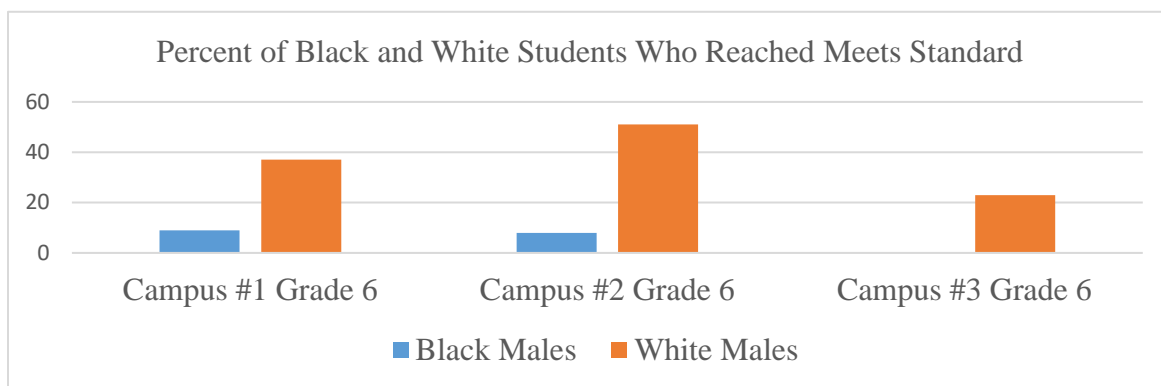

Attachments.html
5K

APPENDIX M

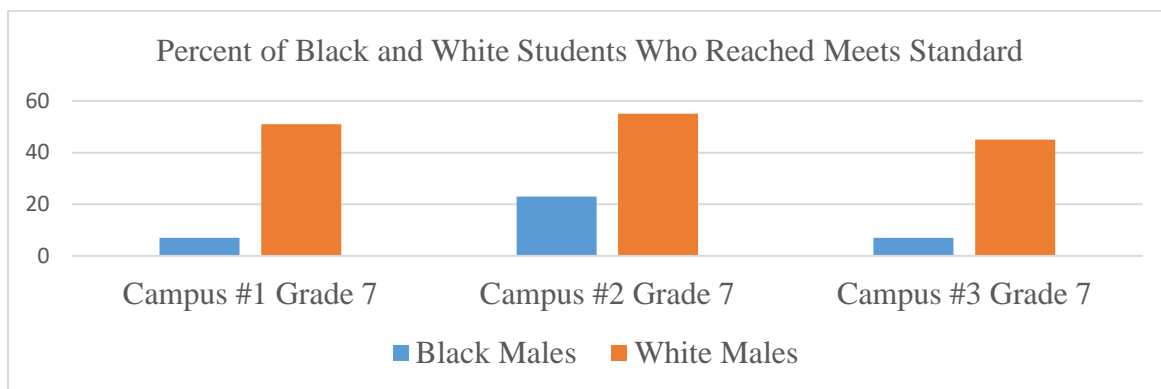**STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students**

Figure 11

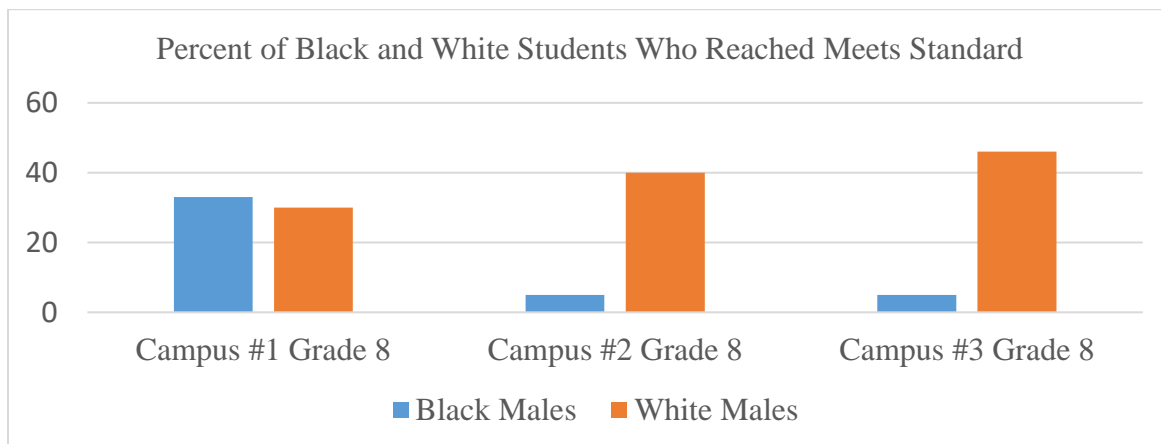*STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 6, 2019*

Figure 12

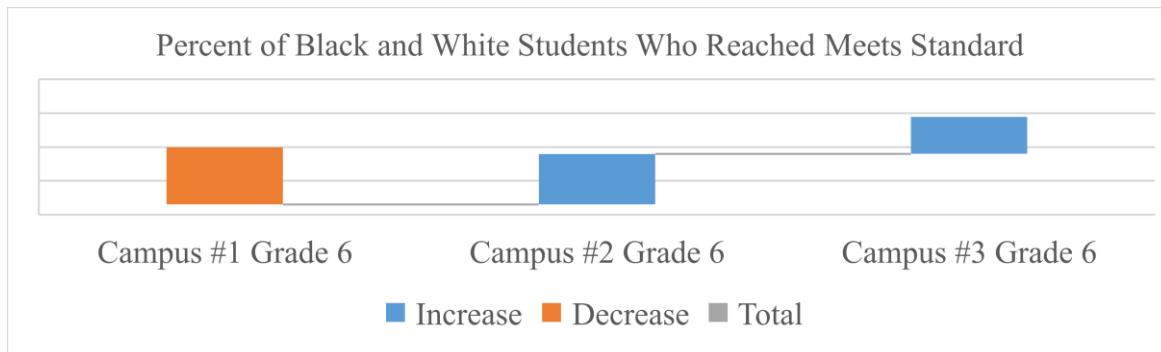*STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 7, 2019*

Figure 13

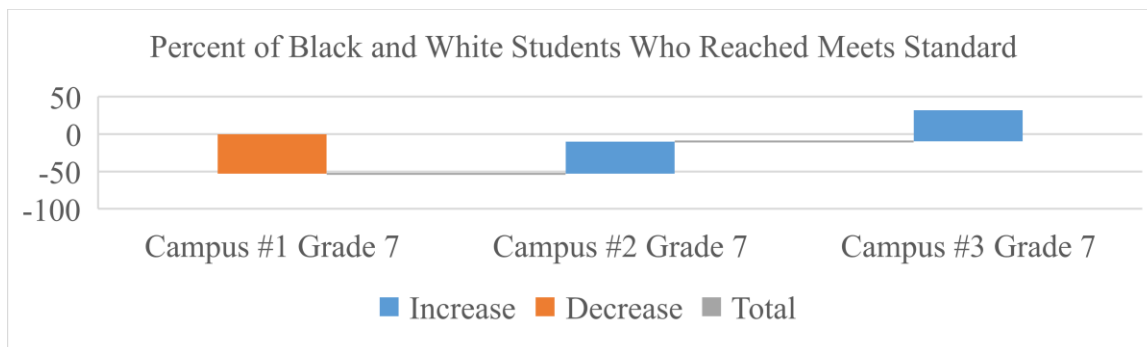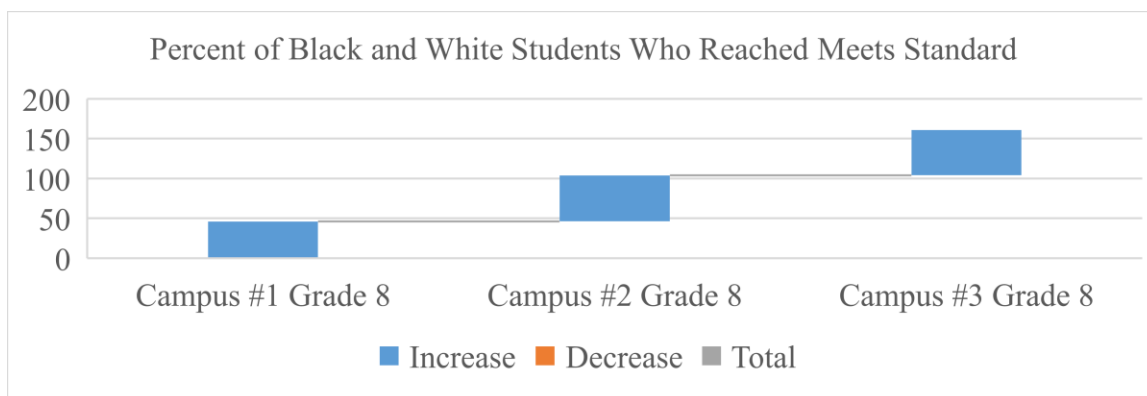*STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 8, 2019*

Percent of Black and White Students Who Reached Meets Standard

■ Black Males ■ White Males

Figure 14

STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 6, 2018

Percent of Black and White Students Who Reached Meets Standard

■ Increase ■ Decrease ■ Total

Figure 15

STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 7, 2018
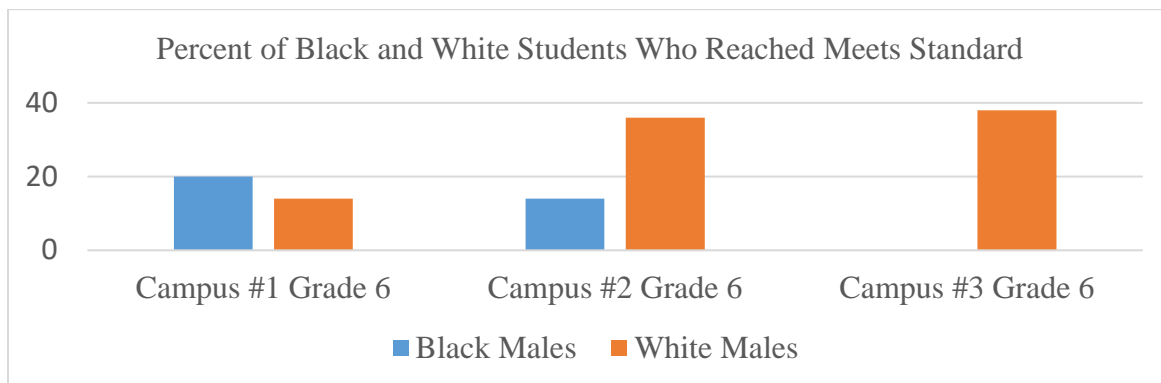

Figure 16

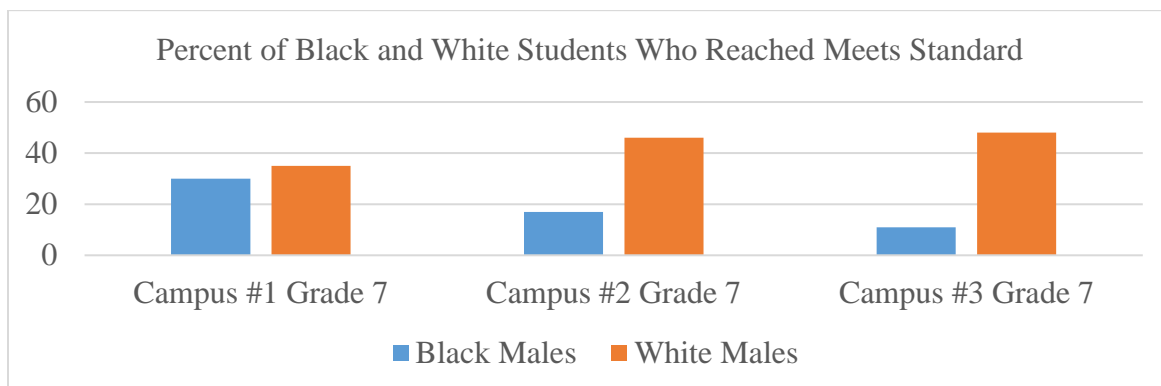*STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 8, 2018*

Figure 17

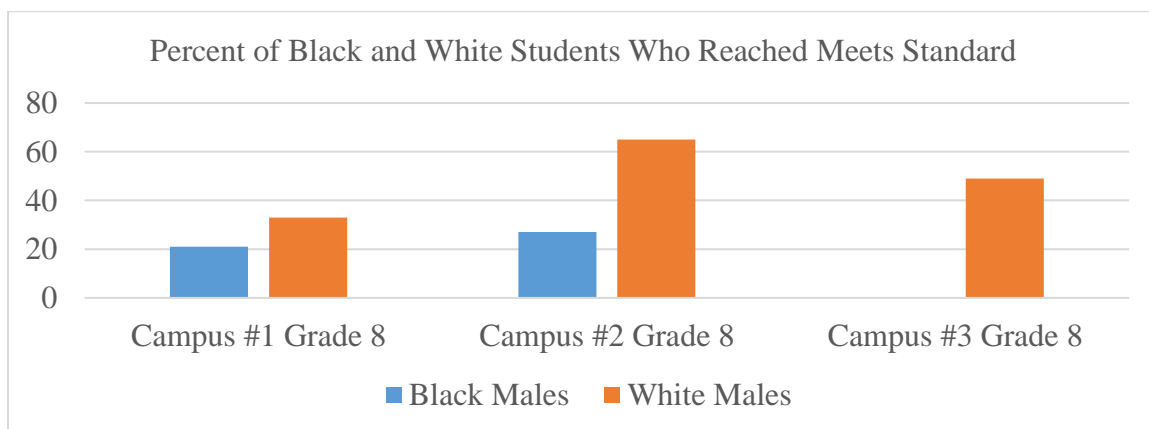*STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 6, 2017*

Percent of Black and White Students Who Reached Meets Standard

Figure 18

STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 7, 2017

Percent of Black and White Students Who Reached Meets Standard

Figure 19

STAAR Campus Comparisons of Black and White Male Students in Grade 8, 2017

Percent of Black and White Students Who Reached Meets Standard

VITA

Sheenah Maria Hopkins-Johnson was born in Pleasant Springs, Texas to J.V. and Maggie Barefield Hopkins. In 1994, she graduated from Centerville High School, Centerville, Texas. She received an opportunity to further her education through a basketball scholarship to Panola Junior College. After earning an Associate of Science degree, Sheenah graduated from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Science in 2002 and obtained her first job in education as a teacher and coach at Marshall High School, Marshall, Texas. In 2003, Sheenah married her college sweetheart, James Johnson III, and God blessed them with a daughter, Raigan in 2006 and a son, Jace in 2009. Sheenah transitioned into leadership roles of education while receiving a Master of Education in Administration from Lamar University in 2013 followed by a Master of Education in School Counseling in 2015. She was accepted into Doctoral Cohort 23 in 2019 at Stephen F. Austin State University, where she earned a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership in 2022. Sheenah currently serves as an Instructional Coach at Marshall Junior High School in Marshall Independent School District. Her passion for teaching has led her in growth as a scholar-practitioner and the pursuit of the superintendence.

Permanent Address: 3031 Queens Way West, Marshall, Texas 75672

Style manual designation: *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition*

Typist: Sheenah Hopkins-Johnson