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Race Matters: Factors That Impact Recruiting Black Teachers in Minnesota

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RACE MATTERS: FACTORS THAT IMPACT RECRUITING BLACK TEACHERS
IN MINNESOTA

by

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Ed.S., Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Charles Swanson. Although he is gone, he predicted I would be a lifelong learner and I am grateful for what he instilled in me.

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NOMENCLATURE

GYO	Grow Your Own
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education
MTLE	Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
PELSB	Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board
SOCIS	Students of Color and Indigenous Students
TOCIT	Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Black teachers are underrepresented within Minnesota and the nation. The perspective and presence of Black teachers was motivation for why this topic should be explored. This study examined factors that impact the decision making of individuals who identify as Black entering the field of education as teachers. The researcher conducted qualitative research utilizing the grounded theory approach to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of Black teachers. The participants of this study were from the seven-county metropolitan area in Minnesota. The researcher used semi-structured interviews of ten participants for this study.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, was killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota" (Barrie, 2020, p. 1). The murder of George Floyd was a spark to a racial reckoning in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. Dreyer et al. (2020) noted, "Diverse members of society appear to have awakened from passivity and have been moved to act together, not just in Minneapolis, but in cities around the United States and across the world" (p. 2). The murder of George Floyd started more intentional conversations about systemic racism as a society in the United States and the world. Jones (2021) noted,

The racism pandemic persists because systemic racism is designed to be invisible to those who are not victims of or oppressed by it. It is invisible, insidious, and invasive in the hearts and minds of people of color (p. 428).

Racism has persisted and examples of this abound in our society. An example of this is the current debate around what content should and should not be read or taught in schools. Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich (2011) discussed a view of post-Barack Obama America. The concept revolved around the idea that we cease to be a racist nation because America elected a Black president. The notion is that Barack Obama erased the history of slavery, reconstruction, lynching, and Jim Crow from America. Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich stated, "Racial oppression is still systemic in America, affecting all people, networks, and institutions" (p. 191). One of those institutions directly impacted by racism is our school system. In education, systemic racism appears invisible until we review the data and signs around us.

The researcher reviewed state enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in 2018-2019 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Minnesota Department of Education Enrollment Data 2018-2019

Enrollment Data by Race							
	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino	Black	White	2 or more races
Total Count	14, 271	59,304	734	81,990	96,510	569,298	42,731
Total Percentage	1.65%	6.86%	.08%	9.48%	11.16%	65.83%	4.94%

The data from Table 1 demonstrated that the majority of K-12 students in Minnesota public schools were White at 65.83%. However, that data showed there are possible signs that point to systemic racism within the school system related to students who were suspended or expelled. According to the MDE, during the 2018-2019 school year, there were 49,437 out of school suspensions and the percentages of that number were listed (see Table 2).

Table 2. Minnesota Department of Education Suspension Data, 2018-2019

Statewide Data compared to Minneapolis Public Schools						
	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi- race
Statewide Data	5%	2%	38%	11%	36%	8%
Minneapolis Public Schools	5%	1%	75%	7%	8%	4%

Black student suspensions represented 38% statewide while White student suspensions were 36%. However, Black students represented 11.16% of all students statewide. Black students were suspended at three times the rate of their population. The researcher focused on the seven-county metropolitan area which included the following counties: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. The demographics in these counties demonstrated more diversity than throughout the state (see Table 3). Overall, White students in the seven counties were 55.34% compared to 65.83% statewide. In the seven-county area, Black students represented 16.32% of the population. Finally, the researcher observed that White students were not the majority in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

Table 3. Minnesota Department of Education Enrollment Data, 2018-2019

Enrollment Data by County							
	American Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino	Black	White	2 or more races
Anoka	.70%	5.79%	.09%	8.36%	12.69%	66.94%	5.43%
Carver	.24%	2.82%	.08%	7.11%	3.25%	82.44%	4.05%
Dakota	.46%	6.06%	.10%	12.31%	10.43%	64.58%	6.05%
Hennepin	1.05%	9.88%	.08%	12.47%	22.99%	47.91%	5.62%
Ramsey	.81%	24.79%	.06%	12.18%	20.61%	35.69%	5.86%
Scott	.84%	6.11%	.07%	8.49%	6.60%	73.30%	4.60%
Washington	.39%	8.64%	.05%	6.75%	7.01%	71.59%	5.56%

Minneapolis Public Schools is in Hennepin County, and the researcher reviewed the same data for that district as a comparison. Minneapolis Public Schools had 12,560 Black students representing 35.3% of the overall population. Similarly, 12,578 White students representing 35.35% were enrolled in Minneapolis Public Schools. Of their 6,488 suspensions during the 2018-2019 school year, 8% of suspensions involved White students while 75% of suspensions occurred with Black students. Both populations are almost identical by percentage, yet the likelihood of suspension was nine times greater for Black students than White students. As we consider the data around suspension, we must think about why the numbers are so different for White and Black students in the metropolitan area. What is leading to the suspension of these students? Disciplinary disparities between

White and Black students could be indicative of systemic racism. However, the researcher chose to investigate the lack of Black teachers as an indicator of systemic racism.

The researcher used data from Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) to review the number of individuals who were initial teacher licensure candidates, as well as those who completed an approved Minnesota preparation program (see Table 4).

Table 4. Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), 2021 and 2022 Reports.

Race/Ethnicity	2021 Enrolled Teacher Candidates	2022 Enrolled Teacher Candidates	2021 Program Completers	2022 Program Completers
White	8,788	7,940	2,735	2,216
Asian or Pacific Islander	352	354	72	29
Hispanic	311	453	78	39
American Indian or Alaska Native	36	13	5	0
African American or Black	360	791	48	54
Multiracial	281	301	41	15
Total	10,128	9,852*	2,979	2,353

It is important to note that PELSB made changes from their 2021 and 2022 Data Summary Reports to add teachers of color category and unduplicated counts. The researcher did not include this separately in the table above. The data drop illustrated in the number of students enrolled in an initial licensure program in 2022 was 10,152 with an unduplicated count. The number remained steady between the two years. For initial licensure candidates, 4.1% in 2021 identified as Black and increased to 7.79% in 2022. In comparison, White initial licensure candidates represented 86.8% of all students in 2021 and 78.2% in 2022. As we look at rates of completion, we see significantly lower program completion rates. Black students completed programs at a rate of 1.61% in 2021 and 2.29% in 2022. In contrast, White students completed at a rate of 91.8% in 2021 and 94.2% in 2022.

The number of program completers was a metric to project what the future of the teaching profession could look like in Minnesota. In the 2022 PELSB report, they noted that the average months to completion for undergraduate candidates varied from 18 months at Augsburg University to 52 months at Metropolitan State University and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. For individuals who were in post-baccalaureate programs, the average months ranged from 11 months at Southwest Minnesota State University to 61 months at Martin Luther College.

In addition to the reports related to preservice education program, PELSB also collects data on the supply and demand of teachers in Minnesota. The PELSB 2023 biennial report had three findings that are worth noting:

- 38% of Minnesota teachers with Tier 3 or Tier 4 licenses are not teaching in a public or charter school classroom

- 84% of districts in Minnesota reported that they were “somewhat or very significantly” impacted by the teacher shortage
- Approximately 33% of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years

Why is the loss of teachers currently working within the classroom so great? One primary reason for this is the mere loss of all teachers annually from the job. "We found that all three burnout symptoms (exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment) were implicated in teachers' intentions to quit to some degree" (Madigan and Kim, 2021, p. 10). Teachers have jobs where they do not often have time to care for themselves during the workday. Lunch breaks are reduced, and preparation periods can become time to cover an absent teacher's classroom, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Teachers often work their entire day alone with students and may not receive recognition for what they endure every day. Madigan and Kim established through metanalysis that teachers who felt satisfied with their jobs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and were less likely to leave their positions. Teachers also sought recognition from their colleagues as well as supervisors. However, Sims and Jerrim (2020) noted that teacher recruitment is constant because an estimated half of new teachers leave the profession within five years. Recruitment is an issue related to the lack of all teachers within the field.

Retention can be considered by looking at attrition based on school district data. Burnout, lack of appreciation and poor job satisfaction play a role in leaving the teaching profession. Player et al. (2017) considered the issue of teacher attrition by using data from the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey and the 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-up Survey. Player et al. utilized the data to determine the impact of principal leadership and person-job (P-J) fit on attrition. Player et al. found that "teachers who reported strong or high-quality

principal leadership were much less likely to leave their school of origin and move to another school" (p. 336). In addition, Player et al. noted that "teachers who report greater P-J fit are less likely to leave their school of origin and move to another school" (p. 336).

Based on research findings, principal leadership may be a factor in a teacher lacking a sense of belonging within the school environment. Papay et al. (2017) created a longitudinal data set from 16 urban school districts that served an average of 150,000 students each year. Most students served by these districts were eligible for free or reduced lunch and were students of color. The findings indicated that teachers in schools with racially diverse students and those who served a majority of students with lower socioeconomic status were more likely to leave the field of teaching. Papay et al. reviewed data across seven states and found that 13% of teachers left their district each year, with 45% leaving within five years. With the departure of so many teachers, further investigation is needed to determine the underlying reason. Papay et al. noted a difference between novice teachers and those with three or more years of experience. Papay et al. found that 55% of novice teachers left their district and 70% left their school within five years. Novice teachers appeared to lack the same sense of belonging or person-job fit as veteran teachers.

However, in contrast to Papay et al. (2017), Glazer (2018) studied those he called invested leavers. Invested leavers left the profession after teaching at least three years and are fully certified and credentialed teachers. Glazer's twenty-five study participants included men and women of different ethnicities, with and without children. These teachers represented elementary and secondary school teachers and were from three regions of the United States. Glazer used convenience sampling and conducted semi-structured interviews. Throughout the research, a couple of themes emerged. Glazer noted the importance of

autonomy and supportive administration as a common theme, and teacher disagreement with policies and practices. For example, Glazer cited that a teacher disagreed with teaching to the test, and leaving the field was a way to resist the policies and procedures they needed to follow. Glazer mentioned that the teacher felt the focus of teaching to the test negatively impacted students, and their joy in teaching was no longer present.

Teacher loss is an issue that impacts all teachers, but it is more noticeable for Black teachers. Historically, the idea of leaving teaching as a form of resistance to policies is opposite of what happened for Black teachers. Black teachers were removed from the field as a form of resistance to integrated schools. Since the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Black teachers in the United States have decreased substantially. The decision allowed for creating integrated schools where many Black students had previously attended all-Black schools. Carter Andrews et al. (2018) found that the desegregation of public schools resulted in 38,000 African American teachers losing their jobs in the southern United States within ten years of the decision. An unintended consequence of this landmark decision was that White school leaders did not choose Black teachers to work at integrated schools. The shortage of teachers of color within K-12 education, specifically Black teachers, will be expounded upon in Chapter 2.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) tracks national student enrollment and staffing data. According to the NCES (2022) reported 2017-2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) results, 7% of teachers nationally identified as Black or African American. Of that 7% of teachers, 76% were women. As the researcher looked at the Minnesota landscape, another picture began to form. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) collects annual data about student enrollment in Minnesota public schools.

MDE (2022) reported 872,759 public school students in grades PreK-12 during the 2020-2021 school year. Of that number of students, 63.66% of students identified as White, and 11.62% identified as Black. The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB, 2021) biennial report identified approximately 1.4% of teachers as Black. Although the report identified errors that may have led to data misreporting, the number is still significantly lower than the national data. The data is clear that Minnesota has a significant underrepresentation of Black teachers compared to the number of Black public school enrolled students currently in Minnesota schools.

As mentioned above, the researcher reviewed the source of incoming teacher licensure candidates. The PELSB (2021) Data Summary Report tracks data from Minnesota teacher preparation programs. Based on graduation data from colleges and universities during the 2019-2020 school year, only 1% of Black students completed their program and received a Tier 3 or 4 license in Minnesota. Minnesota has a tiered license system that has four levels. An individual who completes a licensure program and passes their content and pedagogy exams scores is eligible for a Tier 3 license. To receive a Tier 4 license, candidates must complete three years of teaching in Minnesota and not receive a performance improvement plan. Tier 3 and Tier 4 licenses are essential because they allow individuals to access the bargaining unit for their district and have continuing contract rights. Tier 1 teachers are not in the bargaining unit, have no credit earned toward probation, and are not eligible for continuing contract rights. Tier 1 teachers must reapply annually and are subject to review. Tier 2 teachers are approved for two years and have access to the bargaining unit but no continuing contract rights unless they achieve Tier 3 status.

Young and Easton-Brooks (2020) contend that one factor may be that teacher candidates must pass a test of basic skills to gain teacher certification. Minnesota requires teacher candidates to pass the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) in content and pedagogy exams to have a Tier 3 or 4 license. Table 4 illustrates the MTLE subtest passing rate between September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021.

Table 5 Percent Passing All MTLE Subtests by Ethnicity

<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N Pass</i>	<i>N Fail</i>	<i>% Pass</i>
African American/Black (not of Hispanic origin)	1,162	721	441	62.0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	189	141	48	74.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1,164	892	272	76.6%
Hispanic	1,109	836	273	75.4%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	26,919	24,468	2,451	90.9%
Multiracial	614	555	59	90.4%
Other	237	188	49	79.3%
Undeclared	446	406	40	91.0%

The data affirmed the discrepancy between the passing rate for Black participants (62.0%) compared to White participants (90.9%). Young and Easton-Brooks referred to this requirement as elimination by examination. Within Minnesota, an optimistic change recently occurred. PELSB issued a memo after working with their vendor, Pearson, to revise cut scores for the MTLE. The revised cut scores created a 95% pass rate for all teacher candidates. PELSB notified individuals that they would review previous test scores and modify the level of licensure for teachers based on their previous scores.

Research Questions

Educational leaders in Minnesota must examine why so few Black people successfully enter the teaching profession. The numbers are concerning, and a deeper dive provided some understanding to the reason why there are so few Tier 3 and Tier 4 Black teachers in Minnesota. The researcher sought to examine the reasons for individuals who identify as Black entering the profession given the lack of representation within the field. The researcher wanted to determine if the environment within the preservice teaching programs were a factor in motivating them to graduate. Additionally, given the data that support the high number of Black teachers with alternative licensure, the researcher wanted to determine if passing the MTLE exam was a barrier to licensure. The research questions are below.

1. What reasons for entering the field of teaching do individuals who identify as Black provide?
2. What factors do individuals who identify as Black provide for as reason they may leave the field of teaching?
3. What factors influence individuals who identify as Black to persist within teacher preparation programs?
4. What do individuals who identify as Black teachers need to remain within the field of teaching?

Definition of Terms

Black. Black defines individuals who identify as African American or those whose identity comes from within the African diaspora whose primary language is English.

Grow Your Own (GYO). Grow Your Own is used to describe programs that support education assistants or support professionals with gaining initial licensure through courses

typically connected to a college or university.

Teacher. PELSB has four tiers that establish the licensure level of a teacher. The researcher focused on individuals who have attained Tier 2, 3 or 4 licenses for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Black teachers represent few fully licensed teacher candidates throughout Minnesota and nationally. There is a scarce amount of literature that fully examines the rationale behind Black teachers entering, persisting, or leaving the profession. This research considered the factors that lead Black individuals to pursue teaching, what helps them complete teacher preparation programs, and which factors lead to persistence or exodus from the teaching profession. The study focused solely on Black teachers who completed teacher licensure programs and possess a Tier 2, 3 or Tier 4 license within Minnesota. Individuals who began a teacher licensure program and did not complete it were not part of this study.

Purpose of the Study

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the reason that makes Black teachers pursue teaching as their career and persist in teaching. The researcher chose to use grounded theory as the approach. Glazer (2018) asserted:

The underlying principle in grounded theory which leads to a researchable problem with high yield and relevance is that the research problem and its delimitation are discovered or emerge as the open coding beings on the first interviews and observations (p. 3).

The researcher wanted the data discovered through the research to guide the generation of a theory related to the lack of Black teachers in Minnesota. Glazer emphasized that it is easy to have preconceived notions of the reason, and the researcher wanted to allow

the theory to emerge based on the interviews with participants.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher chose to investigate the topic using a qualitative research approach. Fraenkel et al. (2019) stated that "quantitative researchers usually base their work on the belief that the world is a single reality that can be approximated by careful study" (p. 7). In contrast, Charmaz and Thornberg (2021) asserted that "qualitative research allows researchers to discern explicit and implicit processes in their data" (p. 307). The researcher sought to demonstrate how the actions of participants were connected to their decision-making related to becoming a teacher. Although a quantitative approach could gain responses from hundreds or thousands of Black teachers around the United States, the researcher believed that qualitative data were most appropriate. The researcher wanted participants to provide a detailed description of their experiences that led to their aspirations to become teachers. The researcher wanted to gain responses that could inform future practice within the educational field.

The researcher adopted a social constructivist perspective. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted, "In social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 24). The researcher believed that each participant's background would vary, so their view of the issues would also change. Their personal life experiences will inform how they see the under-representation of Black teachers in Minnesota. The qualitative study used a semi-structured interview approach with ten participants.

The researcher utilized grounded theory as the method of analysis. Charmaz and Thornberg (2021) stated that "grounded theory is a systematic method of conducting research that shapes collecting data and provides explicit strategies for analyzing them" (p. 305).

Grounded theory allowed the researcher to develop a new theory based on collected data that had been analyzed repeatedly. Grounded theory enabled the researcher to determine the focus during the research, not before beginning it. The researcher recognized the limited amount of research into this specific topic and wanted the data gathered from participants to shape the theory related to Black teacher entry into the profession.

Delimitations

Due to convenience and research time available, the seven-county metropolitan area of Minnesota is the focus of this study. The seven-county metropolitan area includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington. Initially, the researcher intended to encompass the entire State of Minnesota; however, most licensed teachers of color reside primarily within that metropolitan area. The researcher focused on Black teachers rather than all Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) or White teachers. Specifically, the researcher studied at Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 Black teachers who are currently teaching and were enrolled in a teacher preparation program within the last two years.

Limitations

The researcher used purposive sampling and asked participants who completed registration through the recruitment survey to recommend any other colleagues to participate through snowball sampling if needed. The recruitment survey was sent by e-mail and posted on Facebook and Twitter. The initial response from external recruitment was limited in the number of eligible participants, which led the researcher to recruit select staff from within the district they worked. The researcher invited staff that they had not personally supervised to participate. The goal was to limit bias and recruit participants throughout the larger metropolitan area. Due to the small number of Black teachers, the researcher could not

specify the teachers' grade level or content area as it may make participants identifiable. The researcher used recruitment through Facebook, Twitter, and emails to school leaders within the seven-county metropolitan area of Minnesota to reach participants. The experiences of the sample chosen may not be reflective of Black teachers throughout the state of Minnesota or other parts of the country.

Assumptions

The researcher held the following assumptions:

- Participants would range in age from 21 to 45 years old
- Participants would self-identify as Black
- Participants would identify as male or female
- Participants would come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds
- Many participants would be first-generation college students
- Many participants may have chosen teaching as a second career
- Some participants would enter teaching through a grow your own (GYO) program
- Many participants will not have had a mentor or cooperating teachers who represented their racial identity

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it allowed for the authentic voices of Black teachers in the field to speak for themselves about the educational system. These Black teachers hold personal understanding of how to recruit and retain them within the field. This research project provided another perspective on the reason behind the lack of Black teachers in the seven-county metropolitan area. At present, most Black students do not see teachers who

reflect their racial identity. This study will provide a theory as to reasons for the low number of Black teachers licensed within the seven-county metropolitan area of Minnesota. The researcher intends to provide findings that will lead to more effective strategies in supporting Black preservice teachers to complete their licensure.

Conclusion

The lack of teachers within the United States is worth examining. The researcher acknowledged the overall lack of interest entering the teaching profession as well as retaining teachers due to the challenges within the profession. Yet the researcher focused on the specific lack of Black teachers within the seven-county metropolitan area of Minneapolis. The researcher sought to determine the factors that specifically influence or discourage Black educators from pursuing teaching as a career. The study looked at Black teachers from recruitment, preparation, licensing, and retention within the field of education. Chapter 2 will provide a literature review to expound on the studies within the field that support this area of research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

One reality during the colonial period of the United States was that Black people were not permitted to read and write. "If the Negro was to learn, he must teach himself, and the most effective help that could be given to him was the establishment of schools to train Negro teachers" (DuBois, 1902, as cited in Gist et al., 2019). History has demonstrated that Black teachers were instrumental in the educational development of Black students. The United States Department of Education tracked data through the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). From the 2017-2018 NTPS report, NCES (2018) reported that 79.3% of all teachers are White, non-Hispanic, and 6.7% are Black or African American.

While the NCES data was a snapshot of the nation, the focus of this study served to analyze Minnesota's data and the processes for teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) was relevant to this analysis, which is mandated to complete a state licensing report. According to the 2021 Biennial Report of the Supply and Demand of teachers in Minnesota completed by PELSB, 1.45% of all license holders, Tiers 1 through 4, are Black, while 78.27% are White. In that report, PELSB stated that there had been changes in how school districts have identified race and ethnicity. The report noted that 16.08% of individual license holders had no race or ethnicity provided. The PELSB report stated, "Another couple years of data is needed before conclusions can be drawn regarding an increase or decrease of teachers in race and ethnicity categories" (p. 16).

Without race or ethnicity reported, the data was somewhat skewed. Nonetheless, Black

teachers were significantly fewer than White teachers in Minnesota. The researcher focused on the seven-county Twin Cities region for this study. The decision was made due to the high number of students of color and indigenous students (SOCIS) and teachers of color and indigenous teachers (TOCIT). PELSB reported that in the seven-county region, there were approximately 12.09% TOCIT compared to most regions with fewer than 2% of TOCIT. In contrast, 55.34% of students were White in the seven-county Twin Cities region, and 44.66% were SOCIS.

This literature review aimed to determine the factors that impacted whether a current Tier 3 or Tier 4 Black teacher completed a teacher education program. The relevance of this research would be to determine how we could use more effective strategies to recruit Black teachers into the field of education and make the experience one that would allow them to feel comfortable remaining in the field as teachers. During the literature review, several themes emerged that demonstrated significance, as there were no single factors in the completion rate for Black teachers. This research would inform prospective Black teachers, school leaders, preservice teaching programs, and other educational researchers.

Methodology of Review

For this review, research articles were located using the Livingston Lord Library through the Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) database. This database allowed for exploring the text in hundreds of abstracts published in academic journals. Articles were searched online using the keywords: "Black" and "teacher" or "preservice." To expand access to multiple resources, the researcher looked for "Black" and "teacher," "recruitment," "retention," "attrition," or "grow your own." The initial search included "teachers of color"; however, the term was too broad for the context of the study. The articles examined for this

research focused on individuals who taught in K-12 education settings within the United States. Thus any articles with research conducted internationally were omitted. The researcher retrieved articles from multiple sources and concentrated on peer-reviewed articles written between 2015 and 2022. Google Scholar was also utilized for additional full-text articles using the exact keywords. The researcher looked for books that provided information on the history of school integration but lacked information relevant to previous research studies of Black teachers.

Historical Lens

As suggested above, the reality of educating Black people formerly contrasted with the opportunities that existed for their white counterparts. Butchart and Roller (2004) noted that Black people in the South were not allowed to receive formal education. The fear of enslaved people leaving their masters and starting independent lives was too risky. Also pointed out by Butchart and Roller was a physical training focus for Black people to remain good servants, and only three schools existed to educate Black women in 1727. Following the Civil War, additional opportunities were created for Black people. Butchart and Roller found a strong desire for Black educators to build schools, allowing blacks freedom from White control. Training by northern states who offered volunteer teachers was insufficient to meet previously enslaved people's needs. For many of these institutional founders, the goal was to make sure that free men and women could be educated, and their way to make this happen was to train teachers. Butchart and Roller stated, "As the American Missionary Association explained in 1866, black teachers can go where white ladies cannot, on the plantations, into the interior of the country, living in the negro cabins and roughing it in the most primitive way (p. 161)". Black teacher education took root through the formation of schools to allow

them to gain the skills they could teach others.

Following the early years after the Civil War and through Reconstruction, Black teachers were the primary force behind educating Black students. The Supreme Court decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163, U.S. 537 (1896), asserted that separate but equal facilities or accommodations for White and Black people were allowable, including schools. As the fight for Civil Rights began in the 1950s, a challenge for education arose in the *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) Supreme Court case. The case represented the culmination of several court cases brought on by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to integrate schools to support Black students. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, specifically fought for the rights of a Black girl in Topeka, Kansas. The case was won; however, the fallout was significant. Walker (2009) noted that many Black teacher organizations had hoped for better conditions for Black students when integration occurred. Walker noted they did not expect that everything associated with being Negro would be removed from the school experience for Black students. Walker referenced a prominent leader, Horace Tate, calling the change "second-class integration" as he believed desegregation equaled the removal of voices of Black teachers. Walker pointed out that many Black educators were dismissed and left without positions to allow them to continue to teach.

Impact of the Court

The dismissal of positions would grow over time, as would the reality of school integration. Villegas et al. (2012) found that in 1972, demographic data recorded 22% enrollment for students of color with 12% for teachers of color. The researchers found that students of color rose to 27% of enrollment and only 10% of teachers of color within ten

years. Jones et al. (2019) found that in South Carolina, for example, as schools began to be consolidated through integration, many Black teachers lost their teaching positions, which led to enormous impacts on Black teachers in the community who were not offered jobs in integrated schools. Milner (2006) shared,

Pre and post desegregation, Black teachers have been able to develop and implement optimal learning opportunities for students-yet in the larger school context, they were often ridiculed for being too radical or for not being 'team players' (p. 92).

The Perception of the Black Teacher

Milner (2006) illustrated the perception of Black teachers as radical and not being team players. There was a strong belief that teachers of color influenced the classroom considerably. Specifically, they diversified the teaching landscape, whose majority consists of White females. Several themes developed when considering the perceptions that exist surrounding Black teachers. Individuals saw Black teachers as role models, including "fictive kin" or "other parents" and warm demanders. The researcher also explored whether race had an academic or behavioral impact on the literature review.

Black Teachers as Role Models

Holding students to high expectations and being a role model for students was one of the primary reasons often mentioned when research is presented on Black teachers (Villegas & Irvine, 2010; see also Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Milner, 2006). When we explore teachers as role models, we must look beyond the academic lens and consider what seeing a teacher of color means for students. Villegas and Irvine asserted that school is a place to gain academic knowledge and where children form their values. Black teachers often have lived experiences that relate to their students. For some Black teachers, the desire to become an educator comes

from a role model position. An example of the desire to be a role model was validated by Williams (2018). The researcher conducted a qualitative study using the life histories of four female African American middle school teachers. Williams used three semi-structured interviews starting with initial pre-formatted questions and creating questions based on their responses for the following two interviews. The researcher analyzed and transcribed each interview before coding and identifying themes. Williams found that participants often spoke of how adults in their community assumed family-like roles considered "fictive kin" or "other parents." The researcher documented that participants identified these individuals as influential, built their confidence, and reminded them of their value and worth. Williams noted that the participants felt it was essential to confront stereotypes of Black students while holding students to high expectations.

Research shows that when students do not see teachers of color, they perceive they cannot hold such a position for all students (Mercer and Mercer, 1986; Villegas et al., 2012). A role model's function was to provide exposure and support for all students. An implicit bias could be developed between white students and students of color. White students may see the lack of representation as reinforcing myths about the lower intelligence of people of color. Alternatively, students of color could see this as supporting the idea that they are less than their White peers. Black teachers' diversity is typically discussed as more profound among students of color and students of low socioeconomic status.

Given the deficit stereotypes placed on men and women of color, being taught by a teacher of color can provide white students with positive images of different racial groups-which is crucial if we want to disrupt inequities in education and society at large (Goings et al., 2018, p.51).

Black Teachers as Warm Demanders

The idea presented by Goings et al. (2018) focused on Black teachers as change agents who can disrupt inequities in education and society. Several concepts were researched that looked at the practices of Black teachers within the classroom. Ross et al. (2008) observed three novice teachers with fewer than five years of classroom experience. All three teachers taught in low-income, predominantly Black classrooms. Ross et al. noted that the teachers modeled and insisted on academic success. They insisted that their students did not give up, and teachers did not give up either. Ross et al. found that the teachers were transparent with their expectations and provided demonstrations or examples. The models provided were both positive and negative. In addition, they noted that teachers required students to practice appropriate behavior repeatedly. The teachers repeated requests to students, reminded them of expectations, and reinforced those expectations for students. Ross et al. asserted that insistence is an essential part of classroom management.

Ross et al. (2008) referred to their observation of teachers as insistence and transparency of student expectations. Insistence can be used; however, warm demander is more frequently used. Ware (2006) conducted two case studies on two African American teachers. The first participant was a veteran teacher, and the primary data source was three formal semi-structured interviews for the pilot study in 1998. In addition to those interviews, Ware was a participant-observer in the class for three separate hourly sessions and completed five interviews after those observations. The researcher followed up the pilot study by observing a second teacher during the 2000-2001 school year. Ware observed this teacher on 25 class occasions and followed up each class with 25 interviews. The researcher also performed member checking on two occasions. Unfortunately, the pilot study participant

died, so member checking did not occur with her. Ware used transcription of class observations and interviews to create pattern codes. The researcher found that the two teachers were seen as warm demanders, authority figures, disciplinarians, caregivers, and teachers who incorporated culture into the learning for their students.

Ware (2006) identified specific teachers to understand their practice. Yet Hambacher et al. (2016) utilized a different approach to consider this concept. The researchers used a qualitative method to understand how two female preservice teachers work to become warm demanders. Warm demanding is a blend of care and demonstration of authority as the lead in the classroom. Hambacher et al. collected interviews, online discussions, and video data, with four researchers analyzing the data using an inductive analysis strategy. The two preservice teachers completed internships at a predominantly African American and low-income elementary school. The two preservice teachers were female; one was White, and one was Latina. Hambacher et al. utilized two 60-minute interviews and reviewed online discussion posts during a 16-week blended course as the primary data source. The preservice teachers engaged in a blended course in addition to their teaching internship. Hambacher et al. recorded two 30-minute videos of classroom teaching of each preservice teacher as a secondary data source. The researchers found that the preservice teachers' authoritative posture differs from what teachers typically use in the classroom.

Griffin and Tackie (2017) expounded on the work of Ware (2006) and Hambacher et al. (2016). The researchers invited Black teachers to participate in focus groups and found that Black teachers noted their high expectations for students and their drive to empower students with knowledge. Griffin and Tackie found that Black teachers felt it was reasonably easy to develop working relationships with students because of fundamental and perceived

similarities. The researchers noted that Black teachers do not always have strong relationships with all Black students. For example, Coffey and Farinde-Wu (2016) observed a first-year Black teacher who taught A.P. English language and composition. The researchers observed her for a 90-minute block class four to five times per week. Coffey and Farinde-Wu found that although the teacher was Black, the experiences coming from a two-parent home in a rural community compared to the urban district she worked in did not match her students' identities. Coffey and Farinde-Wu asserted that knowledge of culturally responsive teaching does not necessarily lead to culturally responsive work with students.

Teacher Race and Student Performance Impact

The theme of considering whether the teacher's race impacts students behaviorally was explored further by Bristol and Mentor (2018). Using a phenomenological approach, the researchers gathered data from a larger project to learn about 27 Black male teachers and their entry into the teaching profession. Bristol and Mentor used purposive sampling to get a range of district schools in a large northeastern urban district. The researchers emailed principals with a recruitment letter for participants and then visited schools to ask participants if they had no response. Bristol and Mentor had participants ranging in age, years of teaching, and subject area. In addition, the researchers had socioeconomic diversity from the participant's childhood and where they were born and raised in the United States. Bristol and Mentor conducted two sets of semi-structured interviews with 27 Black male teachers from 14 schools, which lasted approximately one hour. The first interview focused on their life story, teacher preparation, and why they taught in their current schools. During the second interview, Bristol and Mentor had participants reflect on their interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. The researchers found that Black male

teachers felt other teachers and administrators saw them as disciplinarians more than teachers. Several participants indicated that they were called on more to support classroom management than support student instruction. Bristol and Mentor referred to this perception as "de facto disciplinarian" and stated that participants felt this role negatively impacted their perception as a teacher.

Egalite et al (2015) expounded on the work of Bristol and Mentor (2018). Egalite et al. sought to support the idea that a teacher's race matters for students. Egalite et al. found research suggesting that minority students may benefit when they have a teacher representing their identified race or ethnicity within the classroom. The researchers examined a dataset of approximately three million students linked to 92,000 teachers over seven years in Florida. Egalite et al. found that student math and reading achievement was significantly positively influenced by the race and ethnicity of their teacher. When the researchers looked explicitly at Black students, the impact was more notable in math than reading, predominately in elementary grades. Egalite et al. (2015) stated, "Overall, there is a statistically significant positive achievement effect associated with race matching for black and white students in reading and for black, white, and Asian/Pacific Island students in math" (p. 49). The importance of these findings provided an additional rationale to address the lack of representation of Black teachers in schools.

Preservice Teacher Education

Preservice teacher education was where it all began for most prospective teachers. Benson et al. (2021) stated, "Black preservice teachers frequently enter preservice programs with a critical consciousness of how racism in schools impede the academic achievement and lifetime outcomes of students of color" (p. 664). Black students were keenly aware of the

predominantly white environment they must learn to navigate, which correlated to the experiences of the Black students they teach. Miller and Endo (2005) conducted a phenomenological study to explore how students felt about their experience in a teacher preparation program. The researchers had eight participants who were all undergraduate students of color at either a large midwestern state-funded university or a smaller state-funded college in the northeast. Miller and Endo had three participants who were Asian Americans, two who were African Americans, and three that were Latin Americans. The researchers utilized a questionnaire to gain responses with eight open-ended questions. After the questionnaire, Miller and Endo interviewed participants individually or in small groups. The researcher tape-recorded interviews and transcribed, coded, and analyzed the results. Miller and Endo found a few critical factors for these individuals entering a program. One of the factors was having an educator within their family, as it impacted their interest level in the career. A second factor was parental support, especially given that teaching is not known for being a high-paying field. Two elements connected Miller and Endo's research to previous information stated earlier relate to teachers being seen as role models and having a solid relationship with a teacher.

Being a role model to students was often seen as a highlighted aspect nested in the role of Black teachers and other teachers of color. However, the challenge was that teachers must persist within a teacher preparation program to move forward. Solorzano et al. (2000) studied the racial climate and environment using a qualitative, focus-group research design. The researchers focused on the exposure of students to racial microaggressions. "Racial microaggressions are subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put-downs' of blacks by offenders" (Pierce et al., 1978, as cited in Solorzano, 2000). The

researchers selected thirty-four African American students in 10 focus groups to consider the concerns about race and racism within the college environment. All students attended one of three elite, predominantly White research universities within the United States. Solarzano et al. found that students in the study experienced a tense racial climate inside and outside their classrooms. Although this was not a preservice teaching program, the findings were relevant. No matter their major, students in college were likely exposed to the same type of racial climate and likely similar microaggressions. The researchers noted that in the course curriculum, they felt the contributions of African Americans were not evident or stereotyped. Solarzano et al. reported that some students felt that white students assumed they were at the university because of affirmative action policies and not their academic abilities or talent. Participants said how tiring and draining the experiences were for them as students.

Considering that Solarzano et al. (2000) spoke of college experiences, we must consider how this would impact preservice teacher education classroom environments. Similarly, Plachowski (2019) studied preservice teachers of color from a college of education within a public university. Plachowski sought to understand how previous K-12 educational experiences of preservice teachers of color affected their desire to pursue teaching as a career. Plachowski interviewed eight teachers of color and coded their responses. The researcher found that most preservice teachers shared almost twice as many negative experiences as positive experiences that motivated them to become teachers. Plachowski found that the most significant experiences were lack of care by their teacher, poor academic support, linguistic challenges, and overt racialized experiences. Plachowski's findings of preservice teachers of color mirror what Solarzano et al. noted.

It is worth noting that there was little limited research focusing on non-White

preservice teachers. Morrell (2010) outlined a course created in California as a requirement to study education within the framework of a diverse society. The researcher acknowledged that a course transformation was required to support the preservice students. Sleeter (2001) noted that "Students of color tend to bring richer experiences and perspectives to multicultural teaching than do most White students..."(p. 94). A common theme in the research indicated that many White preservice teachers did not understand racism and discrimination and defaulted to being colorblind (Sleeter, 2001; Su, 1996). The perception impacted their future students and their colleagues within preservice education programs. Sleeter found that many teachers of color graduated from Historically Black Institutions (HBIs), also known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Grow Your Own Programs

One of the strategies used to increase the number of teachers in education has been a pathway program named Grow Your Own (GYO). GYO program models date back to the 1970s and were primarily a result of community organizers collaborating with university stakeholders (Coffey et al., 2019). GYO programs work to create a pathway for individuals interested in becoming teachers in a supportive, articulated environment that leads them to their goals. Coffey et al. described a unique GYO, Charlotte Teacher Early College (CTEC), that worked with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the Cato College of Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). Coffey et al. described CTEC as unique because they attempted to identify students as early as the 8th grade to gain access to the curriculum to learn about the field of education. CTEC did not look to create rigorous standards for admission to the program either. CTEC cares most about students passionate about teaching, and students were selected through a lottery process. CTEC worked to

address students' academic gaps through seminars to support student success within the programming offered. Coffey et al. noted that CTEC started with 49 ninth graders in the fall of 2017 and anticipated growing to 500 students within eight years. Their first class was 75.5% of students of color, with 49% being African American.

Gist et al. (2019) found that GYO programs encompass three primary designs: traditional preservice programs, paraprofessional development programs, and programs supporting youth in high school. Goings et al. (2018) found, "As educators specializing in teacher pipeline issues, we contend that diversifying the teaching profession is an act of disrupting educational inequities" (p. 50). Disrupting educational inequities occurs when the workforce brings in staff that does not mirror the students within the classroom. Goings et al. featured the Pathways2Teaching program that started as a pilot during the 2010-2011 academic year through a partnership between the University of Colorado Denver and Denver Public Schools. The researcher found that programs needed to have six guiding principles:

- Focus on educational justice by examining policies and practices in schools that label, sort, marginalize, and oppress students
- Promote and elevate the profession by combating negative perceptions of the role of teachers and explaining how teachers of color impact their student's lives
- Provide college access and readiness through learning how to conduct research and investigate issues within their communities
- Focus on inclusion by evaluating school policies and removing barriers that restrict access to rigorous courses and coursework
- Offer access to role models and mentors through undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students at the University of Colorado Denver

- Encourage family and community engagement through having Pathways2Teaching instructors who have demonstrated closer relationships with students and families (Goings et al., p. 53-54)

Studies on GYO concentrated on 11th and 12th-grade high school students enrolled in an Introduction to Urban Education Pathways2Teaching, revealing the factors that influenced or deterred Black males from becoming teachers in the Pathways2Teaching program in a western state. Goings and Bianco (2016) noted that the course was designed for high school students of color, and no students were excluded due to their grade point average or disciplinary records. Goings and Bianco collected data from 2010-2011 through 2013-14 school year with 22 students. The researchers interviewed students at school, and the interviews lasted between 20 and 40 minutes. Goings and Bianco coded the responses and broke them into three themes. The researchers found that students often perceived their teachers as having low expectations of them. One possible reason was that the entry requirement for this program was not the same as for other similar programs awarding college credit. The second theme was related to the profession and whether it was worth it even if they gave back to their communities. Participants were challenged by wondering if the sacrifice to enter a field such as teaching would benefit them in the long run. The final theme was whether having a teacher of color made a difference; however, the researchers found that the participants did not have enough experience with a teacher of color to influence their decision-making.

Pathways2Teaching was one model of GYO, but several researchers have studied the variety of models that GYO programs offer. Gist (2018) recruited Black teachers who participated in a GYO. Gist utilized a subset of data from three types of GYO programs:

gender-race specific, community-driven, or a professional pipeline from educational support staff. Gist conducted eight focus groups with twenty-eight participants, twenty-one teacher candidates, and seven teachers. Focus groups lasted for 60 to 120 minutes. Gist found that family, education, and social change values were protective factors for Black teachers pursuing an education. However, the researcher noted challenges, such as being a first-generation college student and financial barriers, that posed difficulties for Black teachers. Gist concluded that GYO programs need a holistic view of teaching and learning for Black teachers to succeed.

Holistic programming for GYO led to a theme. With programs targeting individuals by race, the vision went beyond traditional preservice education program models. Jones et al. (2019) described the Call Me MiSTER (CMM) program. Jones et al. stated, "Our vision for the development of a CMM graduate is conceptualized according to the following tenets: ambassadorship, brother's keeper, personal growth, teacher efficacy, and servant leadership" (p.59). CMM was founded in 2000 and headquartered at Clemson University to address Black men becoming teachers in K-8 public schools. CMM initially collaborated with other colleges and universities in South Carolina but expanded to other regions. Jones et al. noted that the student participants are typically underserved, socioeconomically disadvantaged students from communities where education programming is vulnerable. Participants were identified in a variety of ways. The program's tenets went well beyond traditional college programming to support a population of underrepresented teachers in teaching. The CMM program was a model with promise, as it has existed for over twenty years. The program began when students identified that they intended to enter a college after graduation.

Policy as Barriers

GYO programs served a need within the system for preparing future educators. Yet, many Black educators experienced policies and requirements that made it difficult to enter the profession even if they completed a licensure program. Cole (1986) considered the number of states with standardized tests to enter or exit teacher preparation programs. Cole stated, "The tragic consequences of this rapidly spreading practice is that a disproportionate number of minorities are failing the tests, and thus are being excluded from the teaching profession" (p. 327). The statement was strong yet almost 40 years old. Does this statement hold merit with teacher licensing today?

White et al. (2019) asserted that reform and accountability movements within education, notably No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), started expanding school standardized testing mandates. The subsequent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offered grants to use performance-based evaluations of teachers. White et al. (2019) believed that these changes have led to privatized models of alternative teacher licensing programs that do not strongly impact student achievement. Considering privatization within teacher licensing was crucial as we consider the impact of policy on actual practices within education. White et al. specifically focused on the effects of policy and the underrepresentation of Black teachers. The researchers interviewed eight education researchers, from teacher educators to policy researchers. The researchers utilized a semi-structured telephone interview protocol lasting approximately an hour. Data analysis used descriptive and inductive coding, note-taking, and participants' summary responses. White et al. created a response matrix to identify data patterns. In addition, they also received feedback on their descriptions used, primarily receiving minor edits.

White et al. (2019) found that all researchers agreed that strengthening Black teacher representation was necessary, yet they had different views on creating policies and procedures. Three participants believed that policy is contingent on school factors. The factors noted are similar to the reasons for leaving the field: teacher autonomy, administrative support, and colleague support. Another group of three participants believed that accountability policies unintentionally impacted Black teachers. Those participants argued that there should be alternatives to standardized testing to assess individuals becoming teachers. Finally, two participants believed in policy-maintained systems of power and hierarchy, including institutional racism in schools. In the end, White et al. found four emerging views related to policy and the underrepresentation of Black teachers:

- Policy as contingent: "Contingent views of policy were those that linked the impact of educational policies on Black teachers to meso-level institutions and actors (p.457)."
- Policy as incongruent: "Accountability and market policies (have) a harmful impact on Black teachers due to misalignments between practices extolled by federal and state policies and principles of teaching valued by teachers of color (p. 457)."
- Policy as complicit: "Prominent policies as tacit forms of racial discrimination due to the embeddedness of policy (and policymakers) in social relations of power, including race, White supremacy, and anti-Black racism (p. 458)".
- Policy as contested: "The duality of education and education policy was noted, as warranting criticism while also recognized as instruments of struggle by and on behalf of those marginalized in society (p. 458)".

School Environment

The school environment itself was an area to consider as teachers were employed to work within schools. Goings (2015) noted that Black male teachers might feel like they enter a hostile work environment or are perceived as outcasts. Black male teachers represent an even smaller subset than the number of Black teachers in general. Bristol and Goings (2019) gathered data from a more extensive study of 27 Black male teachers across 14 public schools in Boston. The researchers used a qualitative method of phenomenology to explore Black male teacher experiences. The schools were selected using a purposive sample, and the participants ranged in age from 25 years to 56 years. The teachers taught a variety of content areas and went from their first year of teaching to more than 20 years of teaching experience. Bristol and Goings used two 60-minute interviews with 24 of the 27 participants. Three participants were only interviewed once due to staffing changes. Bristol and Goings noted that some Black male teachers said their colleagues saw them as incompetent or overqualified. One participant pointed out that the staff believed they were not as qualified to teach a content area. For example, one teacher who taught Spanish could not speak the language well. Bristol and Goings found that some teachers intentionally worked to interact with White colleagues to blend within the environment so they felt less isolated. Experiences like this challenged increasing the number of Black teachers within a school environment.

Hiring and Recruitment of Black Teachers

Policies significantly impact the number of Black teachers available for hire. In addition, the hiring process itself in schools should be a consideration. Engel et al. (2018) noted that the principals' hiring process had become more driven than district office administrators. The researchers used the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), which

collected data from districts, principals, and teachers. Engel et al. used data from the 1987-1988, 1990-1991, 1993-1994, 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2007-2008, and 2011-2012 school years. The final analytic sample included 47,860 observations. The data varied over time because the SASS does not use the same schools or principals. Engel et al. found that principals who considered themselves a significant influence in teacher hiring increased from 47% in 1987 to 90% in 2007. The research was necessary when considering who typically acts as principals and how or if they have more or less bias than central office administrators or human resources departments.

Also assessing the hiring practices were Giersch and Dong (2018), who conducted a conjoint experiment using principals from North Carolina. The researchers used North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction data to invite 2,674 K-12 public school principals to participate in an online survey. Giersch and Dong created an online Qualtrics survey and collected data in two waves in 2016 and 2017. Out of the 2,674 invited principals, the researchers received only 467 usable responses out of 507. Principal participants served elementary and secondary schools. In addition, they represented charter and traditional public schools within the state. While Engel et al. compared principals' influence in teacher hiring, Giersch and Dong's research found that principals prefer candidates with more education, some experience over those with no experience and those with an appreciation for innovative instruction and focus on the school's mission. Their research noted that approximately 62% of participants were female, and 28% were people of color, which mirrored the state records of licensed principals. The researchers used conjoint analysis to allow participants to choose between two options from their responses to determine the most preferred attributes of a teacher candidate. Giersch and Dong created fictional candidate profiles with characteristics

analogous to a resume, teaching portfolio, or letter of recommendation. Giersch and Dong had each principal review five separate pairs of candidates. Principals chose one of the two candidates they wanted to hire, leading the researchers to receive 4,554 usable responses.

Similarly, hiring was looked at from the lens of the skills that individuals bring to prospective employers. Comparing the works of Streib et al. (2020) and D'amico et al. (2017), we learned that qualifications, as are the soft skills a candidate possesses, are essential. Streib et al. reviewed data from applications submitted to Teach for America (TFA) using a sample of college students who applied in 2012 or 2013. Streib et al. limited their selection to applications from students who attended highly ranked public universities with a minimum 3.0 grade point average. Furthermore, they randomly selected 100 applications in 12 separate groups from that pool divided by the applicant's race, class, and gender. Using a systematic content analysis of the applicants and creating a coding system, the researchers reviewed the application and focused only on White, Black, and Hispanic applicants. The researchers collaborated to have multiple researchers code the data and attempted to keep demographic information blind from the review. The deductive analysis that Streib et al. used after coding to know if the way a candidate presented themselves varied based on their race recognized that all candidates appeared to list comparable reasons for applying, similar personality traits and experiences, and avoided violating professional norms. As Streib et al. noted that many Black applicants had more spelling errors and involvement in leadership activities, D'Amico et al. found common themes in a few cases where Black candidates had advanced degrees and more teaching experience.

Furthermore, D'Amico et al. (2017) determined that the chances of a qualified Black applicant receiving a job offer were significantly lower than White candidates, which Streib

et al. (2020) did not expand on in their research. Specifically, D'Amico et al. found that White candidates submitted 70% of all applications and received 77% of the job offers compared to Streib et al., a single reason for the similarities. Streib et al. summarized that TFA's structure format for candidates and applications did not measure soft skills but rather what is presented through that process. D'Amico supported this by looking beyond qualifications. Streib et al. and D'Amico et al.'s research support crucial ideas as we consider why Black teachers are not hired for open positions within school settings.

What other factors could exist if the issue was not about the candidate's qualifications? D'Amico et al. (2017) stated, "In most U.S. districts, principals are the gatekeepers of the schools, granting or denying entry via job offers" (p. 29). Since most principals started as teachers and White males and females receive most administrative positions, entry for Black teachers would be a challenge. D'Amico et al. reported that Black principals were more likely to hire Black teachers and stated there needs to be a focus on addressing hiring bias.

Retention of Black Teachers

Before exploring the difficulty of retaining Black teachers, the researcher wanted to review the general attrition data. Glazer (2018) found that attrition rates have increased such that many teachers no longer remain in the classroom until retirement. The turnover of teachers has led to high costs for districts that pay the price for the repeated recruitment of new teachers (Glazer, 2020; Muller, Dodd, & Fiala, 2014; Synar & Maiden, 2012). In addition to the cost, teacher turnover also impacted student achievement and created challenges for school leaders (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Glazer noted that most teacher attrition occurs during their first two years of teaching, called the "survival period."

During this time, teachers were questioning their choice of being a teacher and being able to meet their students' needs adequately. While their feelings, emotions, and challenges might resemble other jobs, teachers' impacts affect students' lives. They do not directly affect a market representation or the amount of product produced.

Attrition or teacher turnover was further explored by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019). The researchers gathered data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Schools, Staffing Survey (2011-12), and Teacher Follow-up Survey (2012-13). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond noted that the Teacher Follow-up Survey had three parts: a Teacher Status Form and a questionnaire for former and current teachers. The Teacher Status Form was sent to all schools, with at least one teacher completing the survey the following year. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond used descriptive statistics and differences of means to identify critical differences in teacher and school characteristics. The researchers found that the overall turnover rate is about 16%. The turnover rate represented 8% of teachers leaving the profession each year, and another 8% changed schools to equal 16%. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond noted that the analyzed data occurred during the Great Recession when there were higher layoffs, 14% in 2012-13 compared to 8% in 2008-09. The researchers found that of the 16% turnover, there were four primary categories:

- Involuntary turnover: 14%
- Retirement: 18%
- Voluntary, pre-retirement leavers: 30%
- Voluntary movers: 37%

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond explored turnover in specific schools, such as

Title I schools with high percentages of low-income students. Their research determined that the turnover rate was 16% in a Title I school versus 11% in a non-Title I school. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond determined that schools with high percentages of students of color (more than 55%) had a 17% turnover compared to 10% for schools with less than 10% students of color. They specifically looked at teachers of color; they found that mover rates ranged from 6% to 10% since 1988. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond also noted that teachers of color tend to enter teaching through an alternative pathway and work within schools where turnover rates are higher for all teachers. These factors should be explored and addressed to retain teachers, especially teachers of color. The final significant item to note was workplace conditions. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond noted,

The workplace condition most predictive of teacher turnover was a perceived lack of administrative support, a construct that measures how teachers rate an administrator's ability to encourage and acknowledge staff, communicate a clear vision and generally run a school well (p. 15).

Ingersoll et al. (2019) explored similar data as Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019). The researchers used the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-up Survey. Ingersoll et al. found that minority teachers had higher turnover rates than non-minority teachers. Comparable to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond's findings, retirement was not the primary reason for turnover. The researchers found the primary reason to be the same, with dissatisfaction or family/personal reasons being the reason for leaving the field. The researchers explored the concern related to dissatisfaction, and the primary reasons were dissatisfaction with administration, accountability/testing, student discipline problems, and lack of influence or

autonomy.

Dissatisfaction with Administration

Ingersoll et al. (2019) highlighted teachers' concerns with administrators. Administrators play an essential role in retaining the teachers who enter the field. Their support, or lack thereof, determined what the teaching field looks like. Considering administrative support means looking at their support to keep teachers at their best. Bressman et al. (2018) explored mentoring to support the professional development of experienced educators. The researchers found a heavy, intentional focus on professional development during the induction period, but the emphasis lags for veteran teachers as time passes. Bressman et al. used an interpretive-qualitative design to understand the perception of 20 classroom teachers towards being mentored during the 2016-2017 school year. The researchers initially collected surveys and followed up with six one-on-one interviews. Bressman et al. did not note the race or gender of the teachers. Still, they reported five to forty-five years of teaching experience and represented 12 schools in the greater Chicagoland area. The insight provided by these teachers indicated a need to pursue individualized, differentiated professional development for veteran teachers as student demographics, new technology, and changes to measuring student achievement are needs that often go unmet.

Educator needs that are not addressed intentionally have left teachers wanting to leave the field of education. As Bressman et al. (2019) found, teachers wished to pursue individualized professional development and considered how new technology can impact their work as teachers. Unmet needs within education have resulted in teachers who have dedicated their careers to intentionally choosing to leave the field. Glazer (2018) and Glazer (2020) studied a group of invested leavers. The researcher defined invested leavers as fully

certified teachers who left the profession after teaching for at least three years and completed a teacher education program. Some of the individuals in this group had a master's degree in education. Glazer researched 25 participants with various teaching experiences, both men and women, who represented different ethnicities and were with or without children. Glazer utilized one to three hours of semi-structured interviews to gain their perspectives on the decision. Glazer found that autonomy for teachers, reasonable policies and practices, and supportive administrators were significant in mitigating the decision that caused invested leavers to exit the profession.

Glazer (2018) and Glazer (2020) established strong reasons for teachers leaving the field related to autonomy and policies and procedures that did not align with their personal beliefs. Farinde et al. (2016) researched 12 Black female teachers similarly. Farinde et al. held open-ended, semi-structured interviews that lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The researchers chose participants who worked in Title 1 schools. Farinde et al. noted three primary themes that impacted whether Black female teachers remained in the classroom. The first theme was related to a lack of administrative support. Farinde et al. found Black teachers didn't necessarily leave the profession but did not remain within high-needs schools. The second theme the researchers found was related to salary. The state in which the study was conducted was one of the lowest-paying states in the nation. The final theme by Farinde et al. was related to teacher advancement and the lack of opportunities within the field.

Farinde et al. (2016) discussed the lack of teacher advancement. Most teachers needed to seek positions as administrators to advance. Lack of promotion and opportunity are themes throughout the field of education. Williams III et al. (2020) used descriptive data collected on Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District staff between the 2005 and 2017 school

years. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction compiled and disaggregated the data by racial identity. Williams III et al. sought to determine if the teacher-student racial match was maintained over time and considered how to gain more new Black teachers. The researchers found that from 2005 to 2016, the retention of Black and White teachers remained the same. Williams III et al. noted that specific attention to hiring and recruitment practices could lead to the retention of Black teachers.

The researcher encountered a variety of studies that were more qualitative than quantitative or mixed methods. In particular, the researcher noted that studies focused on the experiences of teachers of color were likely qualitative with smaller sample sizes that looked at the experiences through case studies or phenomenological approaches. There were a couple of studies that reviewed data from state or national entities collecting data related to the numbers of teachers currently in the field. The researcher wanted to view the issue from multiple sources with a variety of study types rather than solely relying on qualitative data. The researcher chose a qualitative methodology approach for the research as they sought to gain a deeper understanding of the issue than what could be provided through a quantitative approach. Although there likely would have been a higher number of participants, the semi-structured interview approach allowed the researcher to probe resources for information that may not have been provided by the participant.

Conclusion

Black teachers could impact White students and students of color within the classroom. Since the decision of the Supreme Court to integrate public schools, there has been a significant loss of Black teachers within the field of education. The number of Black teachers does not represent Black children within the K-12 education system or the overall

population, including Minnesota. The literature review supported that Black teachers were considered role models and warm demanders in the classroom. Black teachers have high expectations for their students within the school. The literature provided a foundational understanding of the challenges within preservice education and the GYO programs that have emerged to entice individuals who identify as Black to enter the teaching field. Policies, procedures, and the school environment determined Black teachers' perceptions and acceptance. Hiring, recruitment, and retention of Black teachers were examined as areas related to the number of Black teachers serving within public schools. In the next chapter, the researcher outlined the methodology used in the research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will explain the overall methodology of this qualitative study that utilized the constructivist, grounded theory approach. The research goal was to understand why individuals who identified as Black chose to enter the field of teaching in Minnesota. The purpose of grounded theory as a methodology was to provide a deeper level of knowledge regarding the needs of Black teachers regarding their perceived teaching profession barriers, which were discussed in Chapter 2.

Research Approach

The researcher chose a qualitative, constructionist approach utilizing grounded theory for this study. Grant and Osanloo (2016) described the concept of a blueprint for making a house as an analogy to a dissertation's theoretical framework. The house's foundation is based on the type of research method chosen. Bhattacharya (2017) stated qualitative research "aims to work within the context of human experiences and the ways in which meaning is made out of those experiences" (p. 6). The researcher wanted to understand the participants' perspectives and their choice to pursue teaching as a career as individuals who identify as Black.

The researcher focused on a constructivist grounded theory approach that differed from the classical approach.

Constructivist grounded theory situates the researcher and the participant in an interpretive exchange where neither enters the research space without the influence of the world, their individual histories, beliefs, assumptions, informing the meanings

they make of each other, their experiences outside and within the research space (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 105).

The researcher did not believe that they would be a neutral person in the research process and would bring her history, beliefs, and ways of thinking to the research process.

Research Design

The research study used a qualitative, constructivist grounded theory approach. The researcher used semi-structured interviews following an interview protocol. The researcher developed the following research questions for this study:

RQ1. What reasons for entering the field of teaching do individuals who identify as Black provide?

RQ2. What factors do individuals who identify as Black provide for as reason they may leave the field of teaching?

RQ3. What factors influence individuals who identify as Black to persist within teacher preparation programs?

RQ4. What do individuals who identify as Black teachers need to remain within the field of teaching?

Setting

The study focused on the seven-county metropolitan area outside of Minneapolis-St. Paul in Minnesota. The population of the seven-county metropolitan area is approximately 3 million people. The area has many Fortune 500 corporations, a highly educated workforce, beautiful parks, and recreation opportunities, and is known for its arts and music. Although the workforce is highly educated, there is a known disparity between White and Black students and a large housing ownership gap by race. The study did not take place in a single

location or school district. Due to the coronavirus epidemic, the researcher offered to meet participants face to face in a coffee shop or park or conduct a virtual Zoom session if the participant did not feel comfortable meeting in person. Given the need for transcribing interviews, using a mask may have prohibited the ability to capture the statements made by the participants entirely.

Recruitment Survey

The researcher used a simple Qualtrics demographic survey to identify participants. Participants were asked ten questions in the survey. Most notably, participants were asked if they identify as Black, their employment status, their current number of years teaching, and the tier level they qualify for in Minnesota. These questions were related to the criteria for participation in the study. In addition, participants were asked to identify their age, gender, and a couple of questions to understand more about their teacher preparation program. Additional questions were asked to identify any themes that emerged based on the other data gathered. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to add their contact information if they agreed to participate in the study. The researcher recruited participants through Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the researcher sent surveys to leaders throughout the seven-county metropolitan area requesting a distribution to teachers who identified as Black. The researcher posted on Facebook and Twitter every two weeks and sent at least two emails to educational leaders.

Participants

To participate in this study, individuals needed to identify as Black, be a current Tier 2, 3 or 4 teacher, be currently in a teaching role full-time, and have completed a teacher

preparation program within the past three years. In addition, participants needed to work within the seven-county metropolitan area in Minnesota.

Procedures

The researcher met with their internal leadership regarding this study. The researcher sought participants from outside of their sphere of influence or individuals they previously supervised. The research received an Institutional Review Board (IRB) letter of approval from the Executive Director of School and Student Outcomes on August 4, 2021. For the study, Minnesota State University Moorhead granted IRB exempt approval on August 25, 2021.

Sampling

The participants needed to meet specific guidelines for participation in this study. Participants must identify as Black, be currently teaching full-time, licensed as a Tier 2, 3 or 4 teacher, work in the seven-county metropolitan area, and have graduated from a teacher preparation program in the past three years. Tier 1 teachers were ineligible as they would not have been enrolled in a teacher preparation program. The researcher used purposive sampling for the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined this as choosing participants that can support the researcher in understanding the research problem and phenomena to be examined in the study. The researcher anticipated that if there were not enough participants, snowball sampling could be used to gain enough participants to make the research relevant. Snowball sampling would occur if a recruited participant recommended that another colleague complete the demographic survey to become a participant in the study. The researcher rejected convenience sampling, which could have been done by accessing individuals within their K-12 setting. This decision was based on relationships between the researcher and

participants that could potentially influence the research. Convenience sampling can be easier on the researcher but result in less accurate or valid responses from participants.

Data Collection

Before starting data collection, the researcher needed to consider the sample and population. Fraenkel et al. (2019) differentiated a sample as a selection of individuals who participate in a research study. The initial data collected for this study came from a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). The demographic questionnaire used primarily closed-ended questions determined by the attributes required for participation in the study. The researcher used a review of the literature with sample questionnaires in appendices. Dissertations submitted previously by Minnesota State University Moorhead students were also perused.

Fraenkel et al. (2019) further contrasted the sample from the sampling of a population, the larger group of individuals that may mirror the research findings. The researcher chose to conduct semi-structured interviews using an interview protocol of participants (see Appendix B) to gain a more profound knowledge of the topic. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted the importance of having a process to prepare and conduct interviews by ensuring a precise determination of open-ended questions. Following information obtained from the literature review as a guide, the researcher developed the interview protocol. The researcher sought feedback from Black teachers who were ineligible as participants to provide feedback on the questions developed as part of the interview protocol.

The researcher offered participants the ability to have an in-person or Zoom interview due to the coronavirus pandemic and potential health concerns for participants. The researcher recorded all interviews by utilizing Zoom audio. The audio was tested before each

interview to ensure recording was in process. The researcher took advantage of the built-in transcription feature to transcribe all interviews. Interviews were stored within the Cloud of the researcher's Minnesota State University Moorhead account and the researcher destroyed the interviews and associated transcriptions after the successful dissertation defense.

Data Analysis

Charmaz and Thornberg (2021) emphasized the importance of grounded theory as an iterative process. The researcher repeatedly collects data and analyzes it from the first interview until the final interview. Each interview provided a perspective that can be integrated into the subsequent interviews. Charmaz (2014) found, "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (p. 111). The first step following the interview review was to begin to understand the data and find ways to categorize the parts that the participant provided. The categories were repeatedly defined and refined throughout the process. This process aimed to begin to find meaning and develop a theory based on the data collected.

Charmaz and Thornberg (2021) found that data analysis begins with line-by-line coding. "Line-by-line coding helps grounded theorists to understand their research participants' experiences and perspectives" (p. 306). Additionally, Charmaz (2014) shared that line-by-line coding can be more helpful than thematic analysis. Reviewing each statement that the participant was sharing allowed the researcher to think about the frame being presented by the participant. A sample of the line-by-line coding utilized in this research was shared (see Appendix C). The researcher believed that allowing the data to create the theory would be purposeful for those inquiring into the lack of Black teachers in

Minnesota. Data would be reviewed and compared, yet the data collected and analyzed would support the developed theory.

Following line-by-line coding, the next step or phase was focused coding. Charmaz (2014) described this as the ability to sift, sort, synthesize, and analyze the data collected from the first phase. The researcher reviewed the initial codes created to compare the initial codes developed. The result was a more organized and developed code structure for analyzing the data that had been collected. Following the excerpt from Appendix C, a sample of the focused coding was shared in Appendix D.

Finally, the researcher practiced memo-writing. Charmaz (2014) stated, "Memo-writing creates an interactive space for conversing with yourself about your data, codes, ideas, and hunches" (p.162). Memo-writing occurred in different ways and times for the researcher. This researcher chose to keep a journal with them so that whenever a thought about the research crossed their mind, they were ready to make a note of it. The researcher also used the free memo feature within MAXQDA when they coded participant transcripts. Charmaz noted that memos help support the work of developing a grounded theory and help to know what gaps may still exist.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher worked in K-12 education for approximately 22 years at the beginning of this study. The researcher held a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a minor in sociology. The researcher also held a Master of Social Work degree and a K-12 Principal certificate, a Special Education Director certificate, and a Superintendent certificate. The researcher previously completed an Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership as well. The researcher identified as Black but did not formally go through a teacher preparation

program before teaching for 2 ½ years in an area learning center high school, also known as an alternative school, at the beginning of her career.

The researcher was interested in the topic based on the experience within primarily high-needs schools that served large numbers of students of color with few teachers of color present. The researcher's current role is Executive Director of Student Support. Although the title does not imply a role in teacher recruitment, the researcher's previous role as a principal allowed the researcher to begin to examine from that position the challenges in locating teachers of color, as well as the challenge of retaining them once hired. The researcher sought to gain insight into what can be done within K-12 education and teacher preparation programs to address this current reality by examining this topic further.

Ethical Considerations

Fraenkel et al. (2019) defined ethics as questions of right and wrong. Researchers are responsible for minimizing risk for participants and sharing the information they collected if they have informed consent. Participants in this study were all over 21 years of age and no intervention occurred during this research study. All participants provided informed consent through a consent form before interviews with clear instructions on the process and received a copy of the document.

Before the interviews, participants were read a statement of informed consent. Following the interview, participants engaged in member checking to determine if there were any discrepancies in the transcribed interview. The researcher also reviewed their notes taken during the interview and the transcribed interview. However, the notes taken by the researcher were not shared with the participants. Fraenkel et al. (2019) also emphasized the importance of confidentiality and being honest about research results. If a participant desired

to be removed from the study, the researcher would comply with that request as part of informed consent guidelines. Confidentiality was assured by using pseudonyms rather than actual names for each participant.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research approach and design of the qualitative study using a constructivist grounded theory approach. The researcher detailed the process that would be used to ensure informed consent and confidentiality for participants. Additionally, the researcher provided details on the development of the questionnaire to solicit participants and the creation and review of the interview protocol. Data analysis was noted, which included a process for line-by-line coding followed by focused coding of the data collected. Moreover, the researcher detailed plans to engage in memo-writing to capture thoughts and ideas generated throughout the research process. To be transparent, the researcher shared their perception of an individual who identifies as Black and the potential bias this brings to the research. In the next chapter, the research will share the research findings that were gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 4. Findings

Introduction

This qualitative grounded theory study aimed to understand why so few Black teachers exist in Minnesota. This research addressed a current concern within K-12 education today. The researcher utilized grounded study as the framework. Specifically, the approach was social constructivism, which Cresswell and Poth (2018) compared to gaining insight into the world in which a researcher lives. Charmaz (2014) elaborated on the view of Cresswell and Poth by stating that researchers worked to create and interpret the data they collected. This chapter summarizes the data results with a focus on understanding the development of the theory based on the themes that emerged from data collection.

Data Collection

The researcher selected semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection. Initially, the researcher intended to conduct face-to-face interviews. However, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Zoom was the option chosen by most participants. Of the ten interviews, six were conducted using Zoom, and four were conducted face-to-face. All face-to-face interviews occurred within the participant's schools by their choice. The alternative Zoom interviews occurred within the researcher's and the participant's homes, respectively.

All interviews were recorded using Zoom, allowing the researcher to utilize transcription protected within the Cloud account through Minnesota State University – Moorhead. The transcriptions were also downloaded into MAXQDA, a software program that allowed the researcher to code and memo data within the program. MAXQDA also enables the audio and transcript to be loaded into the system for review to correct mistakes

found on the Zoom transcript. The MAXQDA program was only installed on the personal laptop of the researcher, which was locked using a password.

Participant Demographics

This study focused on Black teachers in the seven-county metro area in Minnesota who were enrolled in a teacher preparation program within the past three years. The researcher recruited participants through email, Facebook, and Twitter. The researcher intended to use purposive sampling by having interested participants complete a short Qualtrics survey to ensure they met the criteria for the study. This method could have worked more effectively as the researcher received over sixty responses, with only two meeting the eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria were stated on the flyer shared through email, Facebook, and Twitter. To meet eligibility criteria, participants needed to:

- Identify as Black or African American
- Be currently teaching full-time in a K-12 school within the seven-county metropolitan area
- Have a Tier 2, 3, or 4 license through the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)
- Enrolled in a teacher preparation program within the last three years

Tier 1 licensure was excluded as individuals in a teacher preparation program would automatically qualify for a Tier 2 license.

The researcher contacted potential participants by phone or email based on the information the prospective participants provided to review the criteria and excluded those who still needed to meet the requirements for participation. A few people also sent direct messages through Facebook messenger; however, the researcher received most participants

through emails. Snowball sampling was considered by the researcher but was used by only one participant. The researcher offered participants the opportunity to refer other teachers to the study, but only one participant referred another teacher. In addition, the researcher did not use a convenience sample and excluded individuals they previously supervised within a school setting as the researcher was a former Administrator. The researcher believed that the responses gained from participants who they previously supervised would contain a bias towards their responses provided. In addition, the researcher did not want them to feel compelled to respond in a certain way, given the researcher's position as an executive leader within the school district. The researcher attempted to gain participants from teacher preparation programs, but no participants were referred. No discrete list of Black teachers was available through PELSB to target specific Black teachers for participation in the study.

Of the ten participants who provided data for this study, seven identified as female and three as male (Table 1). Participants ranged in age from the early twenties through the mid-sixties. The participants worked in four of the seven different counties in the metropolitan area of Minnesota. Participants taught grade levels in kindergarten through 12th grade, a few of whom were Special-Education teachers. Due to the potential for violating the confidentiality of participants, more specific demographic information, such as exact age, marital status, or the number of children, was not reported as the low number of Black teachers in many settings would likely reveal their identities. In addition, specific content areas were not mentioned for the same reason.

Table 6. Demographics of Study Participants

Name*	Age range	Gender	Work County
Vanessa	20s	F	Ramsey
Angela	30s	F	Hennepin
Regina	40s	F	Hennepin
Morris	40s	M	Hennepin
Michael	30s	M	Hennepin
Kerry	30s	F	Hennepin
Halle	40s	F	Hennepin
Chloe	60s	F	Hennepin
Lena	20s	F	Anoka
Darren	30s	M	Dakota

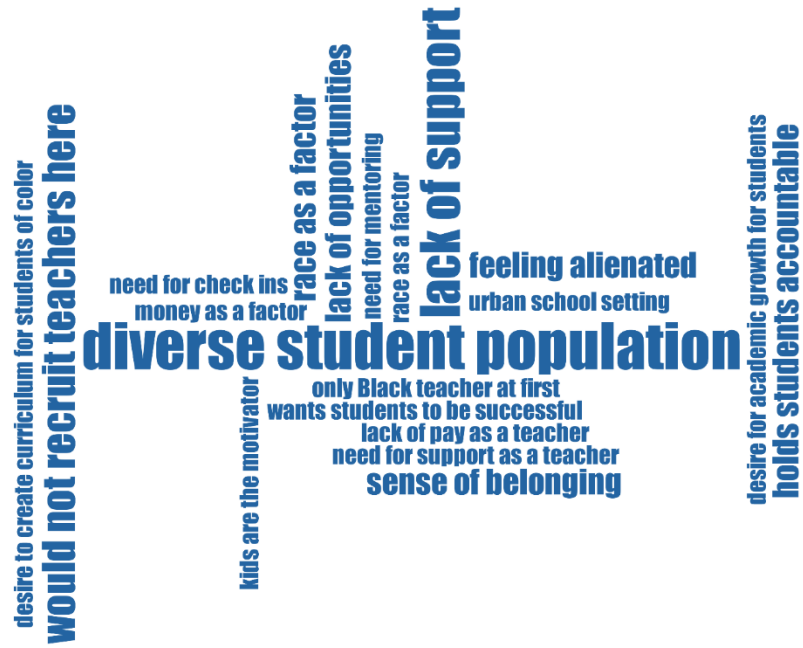
*Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity

Data coding

All interviews were recorded using Zoom and transcribed through Zoom as well, including those that were face-to-face interviews. The audio files and transcription were uploaded into MAXQDA for review. The researcher reviewed the transcripts to clean up the text from errors through transcription. Approximately 2,000 codes were identified using line-by-line coding initially. The researcher also wrote free memos within the MAXQDA program during this process. The researcher kept other memo notes on their phone or notepads since MAXQDA was only loaded on the researcher's laptop. Following the initial line-by-line coding, the researcher used Focused coding. The researcher collapsed some codes and worked to determine the key themes that emerged (see Appendix D). MAXQDA

has a code Cloud feature that the researcher used to provide an image for some of the codes most used (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Code Cloud



Findings

The findings provided an understanding of how individuals who identify as Black see their roles and motivation for the pursuit of teaching within Minnesota. The research questions for data collection were:

RQ1: What reasons for entering the teaching field do individuals who identify as Black provide?

RQ2: What factors do individuals identifying as Black provide as to why they would leave the teaching field?

RQ3: What factors influence individuals who identify as Black to persist within teacher preparation programs?

RQ4: What do individuals identifying as Black teachers need to remain in the teaching field?

Research Question One: What reasons for entering the teaching field do individuals who identify as Black provide?

Theme 1. Students as the primary motivation. The most common response of participants was that students were the primary reason and motivation for entering the teaching field. Participants often reflected on their experiences in K-12 education and the desire to have someone as a champion for them. Some participants identified a teacher by whom they were influenced; however, most participants stated that the students were the reason for entering the education field.

Subtheme 1. Role model. Many study participants believed they could be the role model they lacked as students in K-12 education. Some participants shared that they had never had a Black teacher or teacher of color as a student, impacting them as learners.

Participants experienced isolation and feelings of inadequacy in K-12 education that they wanted to eliminate for their students. Morris shared his rationale for entering the field,

...One of the biggest reasons why I chose elementary was to make sure that they had someone that looked like them early...and give them the guidance that they needed to get through the education system because it's not easy.

Being a Black teacher at the beginning of a student's academic journey was a valuable addition for Morris. He saw himself as someone who could impact his students differently from his White colleagues.

Michael shared a similar way of thinking related to his entry into the field of education,

Oh, for me, I had a lot of positive, you know, influencers in my life—male role models and women as well. I still talk to my second-grade teacher to this day. I actually went to visit this summer with my family. She met my family, my wife, and my kids for the first time. And they always told me I was gonna be special. So you know, when people tell you that you're like, okay, whatever. But I was a coach, you know what I'm saying, and like, to reach kids. You really have to be at school. It's like once I started, like working in the school, and I was coaching. I'm like, it's way easier to reach a kid from working in schools. It was just for me; as I said, I always wanted to work a job that I was gonna be able to give back. I had a lot of positive figures through my academic career to help me, you know, get through what I needed to go through throughout the school systems and the different schools I was at, and I knew I was the perfect person to do it as well.

Michael's experience was working in a middle school environment, but he had a shared goal of wanting to be someone his students could look up to, just as he looked up to his former teacher and influencers.

In contrast, Chloe did not use the word role model but realized her potential by formally becoming a teacher. Chloe said,

I was able to just connect with individuals that were often being said, or you know what you're gonna have to keep an eye on this person, or you know you're, you're not gonna get through to this little one, and they're just too much—and things like that. I was always able to connect, and people say you should be a teacher, you should be a teacher...It never dawned on me. You know that those skills and that connecting, and even when you're working with people, you don't really realize that you're actually instructing...

Chloe's experience about looking out for specific behaviors in some children relates to how Darren perceived himself. Darren described himself as an obnoxious student at times but was also drawn to teaching to be a role model for his students. Darren stated,

Really, I was motivated by...I knew that my experience had led me to feel like I was ostracized because of being from a different class and creed, and so I just wanted to be able to provide an experience that I didn't have and have people feel like they could relate to or have students feel like they could relate to teachers. Because I know that I significantly lacked that in my high school situation.

Darren's desire to be someone he didn't see in his K-12 experience emphasizes the idea repeatedly expressed about being a role model for his students.

Subtheme 2. Desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students.

The desire to create opportunities for students connected to ensuring that Black students achieved growth like their peers. Most study participants repeatedly stated their desire to create opportunities for rigor and high expectations for Black students. Participants noted that they often did not experience having teachers who had high expectations of them as students in their K-12 educational journey. Kerry shared,

I've had families hug me after conferences, tearing up after conferences, just so thankful that they have a teacher that has these high expectations for their child, and I won't back down because I know the child should be able to do it. You know? So I'm loving, but I also mean business. So they might say that I don't play, right? But that's just because I love them, right? But I think that's important.

Kerry admitted that she often made sure her students had no excuses for why they could not perform. She recognized when students were unable instead of when they were unwilling to do the work in her classroom.

Angela shared that she held students to a high standard, similar to how she views herself. Angela said,

I have a respect level for my students because I'm going to give them respect until they behave in a way in which we have to have a conversation and come to an understanding. So with my students, I set the tone with them all the time. Um, I'm very firm with them. I hold them accountable. I expect them to hold me accountable.

Angela was determined to make sure students knew she believed they could achieve.

Similarly, Michael expressed this need but took the standard beyond the classroom. Michael stated,

That's what frees you is you being educated enough to choose for yourself...And that's teaching these kids what they need to know, so they can better themselves and better their families. Yeah, that's the point to me, to give people so that they have their own opportunities.

Michael saw having high expectations of his students, so they were educated as a mechanism of freeing themselves from a lack of opportunities for their future.

While Michael and Vanessa held high expectations for their students, Vanessa also spoke in detail about her desire to create a curriculum specifically for Black students so they could see themselves in it. Vanessa shared her experience as a teacher with this specific goal,

...So my desire is to write curriculum for black and brown students, seeing...on a scientific level, there are a lot of disconnections made in the curriculum, and so that has been like my drive as a science teacher being one of the few in sciences, I'll say I think I'm, there's only two...So for me, that's like thriving and motivating and something that I saw more of a need for students to see, um, along with providing a curriculum that they could obviously learn from.

Vanessa's experience was unique as she is in a content area not frequently dominated by women nor Black teachers. Vanessa wanted to ensure a culturally responsive curriculum that includes students learning about scientists of color that are rarely discussed.

RQ2: What factors do individuals identifying as Black provide as to why they would leave the teaching field?

Theme 2. Barriers to success. Participants often shared a variety of challenges that they had within the field of teaching. Most participants identified barriers to success as a factor for concern. Although they were in teaching roles, many expressed concerns about

their ability to remain within the field for several reasons. One participant, Kerry, outlined a challenge early on with being seen as a behavior person and not a teacher. Kerry stated,

I actually started in...district, and I worked on the behavioral intervention team. That was where I did my student teaching after student teaching, and it's right down the street from where I'm now. Two different districts are kind of weird. So I got hired there after my student teaching, and I was a behavioral interventionist and really loved it. I was able to be in all the grades. It was fairly easy for me to get that position because I was already in the school, and they needed somebody. It was a little bit tricky because I didn't feel valued at that school. I wanted a classroom for the following year. I knew what I worked for. I knew what I wanted: no disrespect to any level of whatever you do inside a school. But for me, I knew I wanted to be in a classroom, and they didn't want to give it to me, and they had openings, so I wasn't; they didn't even want to interview me for it. They wanted me to stay with behavior, and then I started noticing, and my, my professor at college, he like warned me of this, and I'm like no, and then I started realizing that all of the teachers of color at the school worked in behavior, and then I felt so naive because there I was stuck in this position that I liked.

Most participants did not share Kerry's story; however, they outlined a few barriers that stood in the way of them potentially seeing themselves in the field years from now.

Subtheme 1. Licensure exams. Several participants identified difficulties passing the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam (MTLE) on their first attempt. Participants expressed frustration with completing licensure programs only to be prevented from being awarded a Tier 3 license due to exam failure. Exam failure can lead to sustaining a Tier 2 license which

does not allow the same union rights and privileges as well as job security as a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license in Minnesota. Morris had not passed the exam but expressed less concern than some of the other participants. Morris said,

Well, technically, yes. The test that you have to take, I'm still one content test short. But I mean, I think it's something I can just...I'll be Okay, I know. I probably just have to study for it a little bit better. But for the most part, that is the only barrier that I really saw...That's pretty much it.

While Morris felt it was the only barrier, other participants also noted concerns about continuing to pay the exam costs. Some participants felt that repeatedly paying for taking exams multiple times was stressful, anxiety-producing, and costly. Lena expressed,

...I am one of the licensure people as well. I just kind of, like, gave up. Well, I didn't give up, but I just kind of put it on pause, and I feel like it's just really frustrating. That's one of the barriers I feel has been making me wonder if I want to say because I'm so close to passing them. But it's like if you don't, you have to keep paying like \$40, and I don't know...after having a master's in education. It's making me wonder, like, if it's even worth it, like there's, there are so much other things in my life that I wouldn't have to be stressing about.

Lena doubted passing the exam, so she stopped herself from retaking the exam. The cost factor was natural for her; she felt that having a master's degree was no benefit due to one test. Other participants, such as Vanessa, who did not pass the exam, thought they lacked having proper resources to study and pass the exam from their licensure programs. Vanessa said,

I do believe that for me right now, I do not have a science license. I have a tier two license that will allow me to teach science because my undergrad is supported in that area. But then, when I look at the tutorials we get through PELSB, how effective have they been in allowing me to have a fair chance of passing the science exam? For me, that has been a huge barrier. Right now, I'm actually studying to receive my science license, um, middle school science license, so I'm just getting those things. I wasn't really...I didn't receive the support that I needed, but I had to go and dig for the support that I needed by going to a library and grabbing things that obviously I think could be impactful with helping me prepare and to be successful with completing this. I just don't feel there's enough support with how to do well... It's kind of just expected to do well, and I think that's part of the systems that have been put in place for us to be challenged as people of color. It's kind of like you already have a disadvantage figuring out how to advantage is really up to you....

Other participants repeated the need for support and felt that their teacher preparation programs were not offering this, although they knew it was a potential barrier. Regina passed one exam but expressed her worries about the second exam. Regina stated,

No, that's also a barrier. So I'm fifty-fifty with that and the last two. I'm nervous because...I don't know. Someone told me that I was going, and I'm thinking about it in the wrong terms. Think about it as a general ed teacher...Yeah. So, it's like, that's my barrier right now. I have to get it done, though.

Subtheme 2. Lack of collegial support. Teachers often rely on their colleagues in schools to provide opportunities for collaboration, sharing of curriculum, and feedback on working with students, especially those they previously taught. Some participants shared

instances of needing to be treated the same or provided the same level of support by their colleagues. An essential item to note is that the experience of teachers who felt that they lacked collegial support often occurred in schools where they were isolated based on race. Michael worked in a supportive environment with a high number of students and staff of color, which stood out from other participants. Michael shared,

They look out for you here. So that's why I say it's like one band myself. Everybody picks up each other's slack.

Michael's diverse school environment was a protective factor for him as a teacher. However, some participants, like Lena, were the only Black teacher, or teachers of color, within their school. Lena expressed,

Because my first year I was the only black teacher, I felt uncomfortable, but I did my best to assimilate, and like, code switch to accommodate others. But I feel that my coworkers are very accepting of me, and maybe it is because I am able to code-switch in a way that they're comfortable with. So I don't feel like they look at me differently because I'm able to make them comfortable. Yeah.

Lena's need to assimilate or code-switch to make her colleagues feel comfortable was her way to gaining acceptance and respect. She was able to get support, but it was not on her terms to be able to be her authentic self.

Angela expressed general support but noted some behaviors that did not support her as a teacher. Angela stated,

I will say that there are moments where in any setting I've been in, but we'll speak mainly to Minnesota... A lot of times, my white counterparts don't want to hear me or

give me the respect that they need to give me because of, more than likely, my, I'm going to call it my skin color.

Halle shared that without a mentor, she would not be teaching now. Her counternarrative is worth mentioning. Halle had transitioned from working as an education support professional, similar to many participants, and noted the lack of support from colleagues. Halle did not feel included in meetings with colleagues and reported often feeling isolated from them. Halle stated,

I have a co-worker... definitely has held me up several, several times when I need help with IEP meetings and preparing. And if it wasn't for her? I probably would have lost it all last year when I started my first year teaching.

Subtheme 3. Lack of administrative support.

Teachers in school often speak to the need for administrative support. Most participants saw this as an administrator checking in on them and ensuring they had what they needed to succeed as a teacher. Most participants expected administrators to be proactive about doing this with all staff, not something they would need to initiate or seek out. Most participants reported not feeling the support they should receive from a supervisor. Vanessa stated,

I wouldn't really say the support from the staff or the admin has been impactful, and my why.

Vanessa emphasized the importance of her students keeping her motivated to remain in teaching despite the need for more support from her administrator. Vanessa shared that her purpose is what kept her grounded in her work.

In contrast, Lena noted that she had some support, which was insufficient for her. Lena stated,

I feel supported, but I feel like I could be supported even more. But sometimes, when I learn about my other friends of color and the support they're getting at their schools. Yeah, I don't necessarily feel that way, like I feel supported to a certain extent, like, yes, If I reach out, then I will get support. But it's not like; it's not like they're reaching out and asking if I need help.

Lena lamented the need to seek someone to notice her and consider what she needs as a teacher. She believed it should be something that administrators automatically do. Darren shared a similar perspective on the lack of administrative support. Darren said,

I feel like when it comes to my admin, it's like trying to pull teeth to get them to communicate with me and communicate with me in a realistic way, in a way that isn't stuffy....

Darren focused on how his administrator communicated or could not communicate effectively with him. He sought advice like what he believed other colleagues received.

RQ3: What factors influence individuals who identify as Black to persist within teacher preparation programs?

Theme 3. Diversity within the program. The researcher sought to understand what factors would support Black teachers remaining within teacher preparation programs. Most participants reported that students were their primary motivators for persisting, which resembled their reason for entering the teaching field. The primary theme resulted in having diversity within their teacher preparation programs to counteract what they would face within the field. Regina participated in a grow-your-own program where she started as an education assistant and was supported through her district with some of the program's costs. Regina said,

It was...they were very, very resourceful. I never felt alone at all, and I'm not like a person who would like to reach out to people. I try to, like, figure things out on my own. But the...program, the instructors that work there, that I mean, they work with the program. They reach out to you...You need help? It's no way that you cannot feel accomplished with all the help they're trying to offer you. So, I just stuck with it.

Regina felt that having individuals who were also education assistants and diverse individuals helped to support her persisting through the teacher preparation program. Morris attended a designed for those who work in urban environments as a teacher. Morris stated,

The fact that we had diversity seriously, and they actually talked about the diversity, was one of the first things they made us look at, especially me. Being a Black male is that you will be looked at differently, coming into an education field, and honestly, it kind of shocked me because I wasn't, not expecting that, but, like seriously, they really made it emphasize the fact that you will make a difference.

Morris valued the talk about diversity and the types of conversations he had with other students within the teacher preparation program. He knew he would have different challenges from his colleagues and appreciated the opportunity to embed those conversations into his experiences in teacher preparation education.

Angela was more critical about how professors prepared students for diverse environments. Angela said,

I think that we need to be more transparent, and I think that a lot of the programs need to push on their student teachers into as many diverse settings as possible and not shelter them into an ideal situation.

Angela shared that she worked in schools where teachers needed a more realistic

understanding of what it meant to work in environments where most students were students of color. Angela hoped there would be more emphasis on teaching about diversity and ensuring student teaching occurred within those environments. While Angela wanted more emphasis, Michael agreed with wanting to see diversity, such as having professors of color. However, Michael also argued for differentiation of instruction around race as he is a Black male. Michael said,

Yeah, we need more professors of color. That's the main thing, really. And just be mindful, like don't try to push that race card on us. We already know what it is. Don't push it on us. It's, that's for the other people that don't have it. I don't know about it. They have not experienced it. Stop trying to make classes about that. That's not what we need to know about. We need to know about how to best service these kids, so they can learn and be successful in life.

Michael believed that race and understanding are important, but he wanted prospective teachers to retain sight of how essential it is that they learn how to teach all students, including students of color.

RQ4: What do individuals identifying as Black teachers need to remain in the teaching field?

Theme 4. Hope for the future. Most participants had a strong desire to remain in the field of teaching. Despite their barriers, the impact they believed they could have on students kept them focused on being a teacher within their school. Participants identified a belief that the future could look better than the reality that they teach today. They were hopeful for improvements within the field, so they would want to remain in education, whether as a teacher or future administrator.

Subtheme 1. Valued through better opportunities.

Angela saw herself as highly qualified and previously supported other teachers as a coach until the role became overwhelming. She did not feel valued for her work and effort.

Angela said,

...Black teachers are seeing themselves in these roles and have that support system they need to stay. And you're paying those individuals for their worth and their value. So a lot of the time they need to look at what they already have, and then the principals need to create those opportunities for them to move into more of those leadership roles and then help within the school...

Angela wanted to be seen and validated by her principal to access opportunities that provide leadership for her. Kerry shared a similar idea yet added that part of the challenge is understanding how to navigate the system to receive access to new opportunities. Kerry said,

Because it's not always about you just being in the classroom and teaching the student. There are so many outside hurdles, you know? There are different organizations, or even moving up on that ladder where you get your... You know, they never showed us that ladder of things on the like the pay scale, you know. When you're a principal, you get this amount or whatever. So maybe even introducing jobs within education that are more geared towards empowerment on a larger scale.

Kerry's need for navigation and hope for future opportunities mirrored what Vanessa expressed. Vanessa stated,

I would say right now; I want to be an administrator. It's like: okay, great, that's my desire, but I'm out researching and finding out how to do things on my own. So maybe having other educators, maybe, that would open up the door for educators to

advance or to want to take it a bit further. I think having those... For me, it's just like I'm missing some things, how do I; how do I get to the next level in the district? What are the things and steps I need to take? Are these put in my face, or these things I gotta go and drag and dig out of somewhere to figure out how to navigate so that I can be that admin one day or that I can have that support that I need? Like just being able to know that there is support. There are chances and opportunities given, you know? You don't have to stay in the classroom, but you can move on and elevate to the next level and be more impactful and other ways; I don't feel as though I know what all of those ways are.

Vanessa had desires for future advancement similar to other participants, and the need for better opportunities was evident.

Subtheme 2. Better pay.

Pay is discussed as a concern for the future sustainability of working as a teacher. Most participants were hopeful that things would improve for them to want to remain in teaching. Michael shared,

I feel like, man; they need to, they need to pay us more... We're counselors, father figures all that, like, and we need to get paid way more. You know? So that's something that's not really talked about. How can we teach kids to be doctors and lawyers but can't get paid like this? It doesn't make sense. You know what I'm saying. How is the teacher getting less money than the person they teach it to? That's the real topic we need to be talking about now. That's what they need to be teaching. How can we figure out how we can get paid more? Why isn't there laws where it's a minimum

of eighty thousand dollars? You will give an engineer the same thing. You'll give a lawyer the same thing; we taught them that. We taught them that.

Michael believed that without teachers, there could be no other professionals, and many were paid significantly more for their work.

Chloe talked about receiving less pay but doubted being paid the same as a White colleague. Chloe mentioned that her placement on the teacher contract was less than her colleague although she saw herself as having the same level of experience. Chloe said,

...my other colleague, we're doing the same thing. We went to the same thing. I don't know how this person was able to be at step level three, and I'm still at the step level, two, and we've done everything. We've done everything together, simultaneously together. But yet, and still, this person is doing this, and you see my application, which says something different? No...

Subtheme 3. Diverse school environment.

Most participants shared experiences where they felt isolated in K-12 education as learners or in their current teacher roles. Most participants were either the only teacher of color or one of the few teachers of color in their building. The participants often desired a diverse school environment for teachers and students. Darren shared,

...[I] want to reiterate the fact that it's really profound to have [a Black teacher], especially in a building where most of the kids are of color. When they don't see anyone that looks like them motivating them, it changes the perception of what they're able to do.

Regina shared a similar desire for a diverse school environment to support students, especially Black students. Regina said,

I think we do need black teachers because we have a lot of black students, and I feel like when they identify with their teacher. It makes them comfortable. They're able to share things that they normally wouldn't share with people they're not comfortable with, and I think that's huge... Everybody wants someone they can identify with.

Regina's desire for Black teachers identified with her and her students' identity. Kerry elaborated on this idea as she considered her English learners and her Black students. Kerry stated,

I mean, in general, it would be nice for all the kids to be able to access books. And then, of course, diverse folks, what I would like to see more of even in our school... I would love to see books that are in different languages but also have English at the bottom of the page. So then, that way, my students can still read in the languages they choose to read in...

Kerry wanted a diverse environment of students and teachers and learning materials that students could access at school and home.

Grounded Theory

The purpose of this study was to determine why Black teachers entered the field of teaching. The collected data led to the Theory of Black Teachers' Occupational Choice. The theory is informed by the themes that were developed:

- **Theme 1: Students as the primary motivation.**
 - **Subtheme 1: Role model.**
 - **Subtheme 2: Desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students.**
- **Theme 2: Barriers to success.**

- **Subtheme 1: Licensure exams.**
- **Subtheme 2: Lack of collegial support.**
- **Subtheme 3: Lack of administrative support.**
- **Theme 3: Diversity within the program.**
- **Theme 4: Hope for the future.**
 - **Subtheme 1: Valued through better opportunities.**
 - **Subtheme 2: Better pay.**
 - **Subtheme 3: Diverse school environment.**

Based on the data collected from the ten participants, the theory that emerged was a need to address the barriers to success to allow entry into the field and better opportunities to maintain Black teachers within the field. What became clear through the interviews was that students were the primary motivation for Black teachers to enter the field. The participants' experiences as Black students in K-12 education ignited a desire to be role models and create opportunities and academic growth for students they did not always have. The only way they believed things could change for Black students was for them to be that change in the classroom as a teacher.

Two needs exist and must be addressed to increase the number of Black teachers within the field of education: barriers to success and better opportunities to provide hope for the future. Participants outlined the obstacles to success and the potential to increase the number of Black teachers in the field by addressing each concern. In isolation, the remaining two barriers could be challenging to overcome. For example, you could have more support from colleagues but without administrative support; you would likely still feel invalidated in your work as a teacher. In contrast, collegial support may help you once you enter the field,

but failing to pass licensure exams will result in PELSB not allowing you a license to teach.

The researcher initially saw the two areas as in contrast. Still, iteratively considering the emerging themes, the researcher determined that each area could be regarded as both a barrier and a hope (see Figure 2). The desire for a Black teacher to work within a diverse school environment is a protective factor, as most participants expressed feeling isolated if they were the only teacher of color within their school environment. The hope for the future is that administrators will keep this in mind as they work to hire new teachers. With appropriate administrative support, there is a possibility that Black teachers would feel valued and be considered for future opportunities that open within the school and be seen as teacher leaders. The themes, although separate, are linked together when it comes to reviewing the data collected from the study's participants.

Figure 2. Barrier and Hope



To impact Black Teacher Occupational Choice and employ hope for the future, schools must be diverse environments and offer better pay and opportunities. Administrators can impact choice of Black teachers through being supportive to their needs when they enter schools not having passed licensure exams by connecting them with supportive colleagues who can act as mentors. As they acclimate to the school environment, Black teachers should be recognized and affirmed through additional opportunities for future growth and development. If these themes were systematically addressed at the local and state level, the end result could lead to increased numbers of Black teachers in Minnesota.

Conclusion

This grounded theory study sought to understand the perspectives of Black teachers in the seven-county metropolitan area in Minnesota. The purpose led to the Theory of Black Teacher Occupational Choice that outlined the barriers as well as hopes for the future to increase the number of Black teachers in Minnesota. The first theme that emerged was that students were the primary motivation for entry into the field of education. Participants expressed subthemes of being role models and a desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students.

The second theme that emerged was barriers to success. Participants identified subthemes related to licensure exams, lack of collegial support and lack of administrative support as those barriers to success. With regard to experiences within teacher preparation programming, participants identified the third theme of diversity within the program as an area of need. Finally, the fourth theme related to hope for the future. Participants believed that things could get better within the teaching profession. The subthemes identified were being valued through better opportunities, better pay, and diverse school environments. The

insight of Black teachers who faced their barriers and are currently teaching was identified and explored. The data collected has provided an initial set of data to be further explored by future researchers.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the findings based on the semi-structured interviews of ten participants in the research study. The ten participant interviews were analyzed and coded into themes, initially line-by-line, then focused coding. Data were analyzed within MAXQDA to support the development of the Theory of Black Teacher Occupational Choice. Four primary themes emerged from the data.

- Theme 1: Students as the primary motivation.
 - Subtheme 1: Role model.
 - Subtheme 2: Desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students.
- Theme 2: Barriers to success.
 - Subtheme 1: Licensure exams.
 - Subtheme 2: Lack of collegial support.
 - Subtheme 3: Lack of administrative support.
- Theme 3: Diversity within the program.
- Theme 4: Hope for the future.
 - Subtheme 1: Valued through better opportunities.
 - Subtheme 2: Better pay.
 - Subtheme 3: Diverse school environment.

In this discussion, the researcher returned to the information gained through the literature review to determine whether the data either corroborated existing literature or contrasted with it. In addition, this chapter will provide an analysis of the limitations that

exist within this study, given the participant sample. Lastly, the researcher offered suggestions for future studies based on this research.

Interpretation of the Findings

As outlined above, the findings led to the development of the Theory of Black Teacher Occupational Choice.

Theme 1. Students as the primary motivation.

The ten participants provided data leading to the theme of students being the primary motivation to enter the teaching field. The subthemes identified were role model and the desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students. Villegas et al. (2012) identified the idea of teachers of color being seen as role models for all students. They argued that many students do not typically see people of color holding professional roles in settings like schools. Having teachers of color supports students in being able to see themselves as teachers. Villegas et al. (2012) cited several studies (see Gordon, 2000; Ochoa, 2007; Su, 1997) that preservice teachers shared that their primary reason for entering the teaching field was to act as role models for students. Within this research study, the ten participants expressed this desire as well. Williams (2018) described the idea of being a role model in the sense of "other parenting," fictive kin, and caring as a role model. The research shared that the Black teachers who participated in the study saw being role models as a part of their responsibility as teachers.

Theme 2. Barriers to success.

Licensure exams, lack of collegial support, and lack of administrator support were all subthemes of barriers to success for Black teachers. As mentioned previously in chapter one, PELSB made a change to MTLE test cut scores in collaboration with Pearson, the testing

vendor. The change made in January of 2023 allowed 95% of test takers to have a passing score. The passing score resulted in an unknown number of teachers moving from Tier 2 licensure to Tier 3 licensure as their lack of a passing score was the barrier for transitioning to the higher tier. PELSB did not explicitly name race as a rationale for this change in the guidance issued on January 10, 2023. However, the researcher wondered if this recent change would impact individuals pursuing teaching as a career, and the change warrants future study.

The challenge of licensure testing won't be the barrier that it was when this research began. However, participants expressed challenges with teacher colleagues and lack of administrative support were raised by participants. Hopper et al. (2022) highlighted the needs of teachers to have a strong sense of culture and climate that is built within the school. Principals are typically responsible for leading these efforts. Dolph (2017) noted,

Conversely, some school settings may require greater focus on selected aspects of leadership such as more directive or participatory leadership due to situational variables. What this implies is the situation or context, comprised of leaders, followers, and required tasks, dictates leadership behavior; there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach (p. 372).

The responses provided by participants alluded to a lack of support from their principals to guide them in the work they needed to do within their respective work settings to contribute to the school culture, climate, or student achievement. The approach needed to meet the needs of teachers and create a climate where true collegiality occurs is necessary. Khalifa et al. (2016) specifically call out the need for culturally responsive school leadership which may be the missing element expressed by participants that is focused on school climate with a

specific lens to working in urban schools with higher numbers of minority students and teachers. The behaviors that Khalifa et al. (2016) believed were essential were “recruiting and retaining culturally responsive teachers, securing culturally responsive resources and curriculum, mentoring and modeling culturally responsive teaching, or offering professional developments around culturally responsive school leadership (p. 1281).”

Theme 3. Diversity within the program.

Participants in the study outlined their concerns related to diversity within their teacher preparation programs. Participants studied at different colleges and universities and mentioned some elements of discussing what occurs within their programs with increasing knowledge of diversity. Benson et al. (2021) stated, “Black pre-service teachers frequently enter pre-service programs with a critical consciousness of how racism in schools impede the academic achievement and lifetime outcomes of students of color (p. 664).” Plachowski (2019) focused on data review of preservice teachers of color and found that microaggressions and stereotypes were hindrances experienced by students pursuing undergraduate degrees. The ten participants in this research study echoed some of that statement as they had personal experiences that they believed impacted their personal outcomes in K-12 education as well as their pursuit of obtaining a degree and subsequent teacher licensure.. For the participants, this drove them to be changemakers. However, the researcher wondered if this also led away a group of potential teachers based on how they personally experienced school.

Theme 4. Hope for the future.

The ten participants within this study believed in hope for the future. They recognized the barriers and challenges but held out hope for change. The recent change related to PELSB

changing cut scores for the MTLE is an example of a change that would potentially address two subthemes found by the researcher: valued through better opportunities and better pay. For individuals with a Tier 2 license, they lacked the same opportunities as their colleagues. Tier 2 teachers are in the bargaining unit but are not probationary and do not have continuing contract rights. This created a disadvantage for many of them related to future employment, pay, and the opportunities that they could access. The removal of the testing barrier will impact some of the participants who had completed their programs but were unable to pass their exam and take advantage of opportunities as they were employed year to year. By adding to the number of Black Tier 3 and Tier 4 teachers in the field, the hope would be a continued growth of diversity within the school environment that was consistent over time.

Implications for Social Change

Social change to address the realities for Black teachers is attainable. An organization in Minnesota, The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota, was founded in November 2015. The Coalition has worked to advocate for increasing the number of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) by raising awareness, working on a legislative platform, and creating affinity spaces. The Coalition made a website to provide information to the public and has hosted events to build community within TOCAIT in Minnesota. When you subscribe to their page, they provide updates on the status of legislation and opportunities to testify for legislative bills in the Minnesota Legislature. The Coalition's work is admirable yet will require more community members and organizations to be made aware of this work to grow the efforts within Minnesota. Another organization leading similar work is Elevate Teaching. According to <https://www.elevateteaching.us/>, Elevate Teaching is another initiative in Minnesota focused

on creating a campaign to attract teachers of color to the field. Elevate Teaching has worked to assemble teachers of color and organizations that support teachers of color to leverage them as change agents within the field. Their campaign is focused on using the voices of current practitioners to help use word of mouth to be the change within the teaching profession.

Recommendations for Action

Action requires working towards a goal. To achieve a goal, there should be specific action steps that are outlined with measurable ways to determine if the steps being taken are resulting in the desired outcome or change. The researcher proposed five recommendations for future action:

1. Grow Your Own (GYO) funding increases targeting teachers of color
2. Create an intentional high school campaign focused on concurrent enrollment options
3. Provide increased pay and explanation of benefits for teachers
4. Implement administrator training for school and district leaders related to culturally responsive leadership
5. Require differentiated culturally competent training for all educational staff

For Minnesota to increase the number of Black teachers, there must be a continued investment in grow your own (GYO) programs. GYO programs are beneficial as they remove a barrier related to financing education; however, the structure of the support for GYO programs often does not fully address the needs of Black preservice teachers to get through the program and have help to complete the program. Many participants in this study were first-generation college students who needed support linked to programs that could provide tutoring support or advice on college coursework. These expenditures for this type of

support are not always part of the GYO funding framework. Referring participants to college programs, such as tutoring or writing centers are an option. Yet these programs do not address the concerns related to microaggressions or stereotypes held by the other students within their program. Minnesota House of Representatives (2023) House File 320 and Minnesota Senate (2023) Senate File 619 were proposing up to \$35 million per year specifically set aside for GYO funding.

In addition to the consideration of funding for adults, the researcher believed creating a high school campaign focused on concurrent enrollment options was needed. In the same legislation referenced above, there was a request for up to \$500,000 per year for introduction to teaching courses offered through concurrent enrollment. If additional money and support from colleges with declining enrollment occurred, there would be a possibility that more Black students and students of color would consider the field of teaching. A campaign would be needed to offer a variety of ways to communicate these opportunities to students and their families. Students need to be made aware and offered opportunities to explore teaching as a career in a similar fashion to how students are able to gain hands on experience in career and technical education type courses. What would the field look like if students had the opportunity to teach a younger group of students for an hour a day similar to how a student interested in culinary arts are able to explore making recipes and creating them?

Exploration of career options is important for high school students just as understanding pay and benefits within the profession is for adults. The researcher believes that pay is a factor that has been discussed at the state and national level but there is no immediate legislation in Minnesota to address this. One item of note from informal conversations that the researcher has had with individuals is the lack of knowledge of the

benefit structure within the field of education. For many individuals whose parents did not work in a contracted environment, there was a lack of understanding related to retirement benefits within the field of education. Education Minnesota and local school districts offer workshops as individuals get closer to retirement, yet early career professionals would benefit from this understanding as well.

A fourth recommendation is to implement administrator training for school and district leaders related to culturally responsive leadership. Khalifa et al. (2016) referenced specific behaviors that culturally responsive school leaders should possess. The researcher believed that the current structure of education related to licensing for most administrators does not assess for those behaviors. Waiting for the state to make changes to requirements would take time. However, districts create their own internal expectations for administrators related to professional development, and this could be implemented within those structures first with continued advocacy for more change in the future.

The final recommendation is to require differentiated culturally competent training for all educational staff. Currently PELSB has a culturally competency training that is required for those renewing licenses since 2020. However, this requirement only applies to those with a license. Within a school setting, there are many roles that impact the culture and climate of a school. To achieve diverse school environments that recognize and appreciate the diversity of students and staff, more training is necessary to ensure that everyone is continually examining bias, stereotypes, and the impacts of systemic racism.

Recommendations for Further Study

The researcher believed that more studies would need to occur within this area. Limited research was available about Black teachers, whether in Minnesota or nationwide. The

researcher wondered if the research would represent respondents outside of Minnesota as regional factors could influence the lack of Black teachers. Minnesota has a unique model for licensing teachers and has often declined to provide full licensure to individuals licensed in other states, leading to lawsuits. Could this be a factor in Minnesota only that makes the licensure process unique? As mentioned earlier, PELSB made changes to cut scores for the MTLE, but this change does not address some of the other legislative language related to the tiered license structure.

Since this research began, the need for teachers nationwide has grown tremendously. The perceived lack of respect for teachers and educators, in general, was demonstrated during the coronavirus pandemic. The difficulty of transitioning to virtual learning with little time to receive the professional learning needed to become effective online educators was challenging. In addition, many teachers were parents themselves and needed to address their children's needs while simultaneously balancing their students' needs. Some teachers' working conditions were unbearable, with little public support as a buffer. In addition, the pay was not improved to support the field being an attractive choice for today's college graduates. The teaching field has issues with income and related benefits, such as parental leave or flexibility with taking a break when needed for their mental or physical health. The researcher recommends further research could focus on addressing some of these challenges within the larger teacher population as well as specific impacts for Black teachers. Burnout and fatigue as well as teacher pay are all topics that deserve further investigation.

The researcher focused on individuals who were Black and had been enrolled in a teacher preparation program within the last three years. Although there is some merit to recalling their experiences more readily, there is a lack of perspective in limiting participants

to this timeline. For example, have there been structural changes to programs that are more appealing for new preservice teachers, or would the perspectives provided by teachers who completed their preparation yield similar results? The researcher thought that further study could address teachers who had been in the field for ten years or more to determine how they see teacher preparation following the initial difficulty of navigating teaching as a new teacher.

The researcher excluded Tier 1 teachers in Minnesota. Tier 1 teachers have at least a bachelor's degree but are not enrolled in a teacher preparation program. The researcher wondered if this exclusion prevented understanding more profound barriers that may have existed for some individuals that would not have been expressed in the data collected. Tier 1 teachers typically teach in high-needs schools that are majority students of color, in rural communities, or have many students with low socioeconomic status. The researcher wondered what their perspectives could add to this field of study.

The perspective of Tier 1 teachers, or those who work within specific educational environments, such as charter schools or private schools, would also change depending on the type of school district or environment in which a Black teacher worked. The teaching environment was not taken into consideration for this research that was conducted. The researcher considered additional questions, such as:

- What did the overall teacher diversity look like within their school?
- What was the racial background of their principal or administrator?
- How many years of experience did their principal or administrator have leading a building?
- What programs did their school or district offer to support teachers of color?

- What type of mentoring support was provided to teachers?
- How have administrators communicated opportunities for advancement to teachers?

Through the data collected, the researcher believed that more in-depth questions could lead to a better understanding of whether any factors outlined in the themes would be altered.

The researcher found a lot of variety in participants' experiences within their teacher preparation program. However, all but one participant completed their teacher preparation program in Minnesota. Would the responses have changed if individuals had been trained in another state? What if they attended a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) to complete teacher preparation programming? Would that have yielded a different experience for them as aspiring educators?

The researcher also considered how the information would be different had this been a different type of study, such as quantitative or mixed methods. In addition, the researcher thought about getting information from White teachers as well because some of the issues discussed may not be unique to Black teachers or other teachers of color. The researcher ruled them both out; however, the researcher wondered if a mixed methods study or a study comparing the experiences of White and Black teachers would have changed the outcome of the research. If there had been a mixed methods study, data could have been gathered from both groups initially. Following that quantitative data collection, Black teacher voice could have been gained through semi-structured interviews to dig deeper into the data that resulted from the quantitative study. The researcher would recommend doing this in the future to gain a broader perspective to be able to target the best strategies for increasing the number of Black teachers in the field of teaching.

Researcher Reflection

The researcher identified as Black, which required constant reflection and reminders of their bias when considering the topic. The framework for this study was a grounded study, and the researcher intentionally chose this because they felt it would allow for the data to determine the themes that emerged. The research could have been seen differently, for example, if the researcher had chosen critical race theory as the lens through which to view the data. The researcher often thought about positionality as they reflected on their journey within the field of education and were privy to conversations held about Black teachers by White leaders within the workforce. Colleagues often did not see the bias they had related to how they connected or were unable to connect with these teachers within their building and see how this could link to the performance of those teachers.

As mentioned above, the researcher considered approaching the study from a different research methodology; however, the reality of the inherent bias of the researcher led them to the grounded theory approach. The researcher was also passionate about this topic as the researcher spent time working on projects related to the recruitment of teachers and working to support grow your programming focused on teachers of color within their district. The researcher believed that educational leaders are responsible for helping individuals who aspire to become teachers, especially those who identify as Black or individuals of color. These ideals and values impacted the researcher's frame of mind as they entered the research process.

The researcher embarked on this research journey and often had to reflect on the questions being asked of the participants. Was the question too direct? Did the positionality as a Black researcher impact their responses, good or bad? How were they feeling about

being asked about their own K-12 experiences? Was it traumatizing, or could they understand why the question was being asked? The researcher conveyed to participants an understanding of the connection between the questions being asked and the purpose of the study. The researcher was able to direct participants to an organization that supports teachers of color as a resource for them as they work in the field of education. The researcher acknowledged that the topic was a challenge yet believed that the result of this information being shared with educators would be transformative for the participants and the broader education community.

Conclusion

The researcher set out to gain the perspectives of ten participants who are Black teachers. The purpose of this research was to identify a theory that identified why individuals who identified as Black chose to enter the field of teaching. The grounded theory study produced the Theory of Black Teacher Occupational Choice. The primary themes that emerged were:

- Students as the primary motivation
- Barriers to success
- Diversity within the program
- Hope for the future

The data gathered from participants provided an opportunity to consider factors that impact Black Teacher Occupational Choice that further research can expound upon.

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APPENDIX A. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Race Matters: Factors that Impact Recruiting Black Teachers in Minnesota

Start of Block: Demographics

Instruction You are invited to participate in a study as one of twelve participants to better understand the factors that influence individuals who identify as Black choosing to become a teacher within the State of Minnesota. Participants will need to meet criteria related to the study to participate so please answer all questions below.

You have the choice to opt out of participation in this study at any time without providing a reason why. The study is voluntary and meant to provide an understanding to support the recruitment and retention of Black teachers in Minnesota. If you have any questions, please contact Co-Investigator Tonya Allen at tonya.allen@go.mnstate.edu and I will be happy to provide clarity about the study. The Principal Investigator and Chair is Boyd Bradbury, Ph.D.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will participate in a one-on-one interview face to face lasting 60 to 90 minutes with semi-structured interview questions. The interview will be audio recorded using Zoom. A participant may elect to do a Zoom interview if there are concerns related to covid-19.

Data from the interview will be securely stored and participants will be anonymous. Pseudonyms will be given to participants to maintain confidentiality. Data collection will begin in July of 2022. There is no cost to participate in the study. Participants will be gifted a \$25 gift card for Amazon upon completion of their interview.

Page Break

Your Name Your Name

Email Please enter your preferred email address

Gender What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary (3)

Age What is your age?

20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70

Slide to your age ()	
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Page Break

Race/ethnicity Do you racially identify as Black or African American?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Education What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS) (1)

Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd) (2)

Doctorate or professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, PhD) (3)

Marital Status What is your marital status?

Single (never married) (1)

Married, or in a domestic partnership (2)

Widowed (3)

Divorced (4)

Separated (5)

Employment Are you currently employed full-time as a Teacher at 40 hours (or more) per week?

Yes (1)

No (2)

License Level What level licensure do you hold with PELS?

- Tier 1 (1)
 - Tier 2 (2)
 - Tier 3 (3)
 - Tier 4 (4)
-

County What county do you currently work in?

- Anoka County (1)
 - Carver County (2)
 - Dakota County (3)
 - Hennepin County (4)
 - Ramsey County (5)
 - Scott County (6)
 - Washington County (7)
-

Teacher Prep Did you complete your teacher preparation program within the past 3 years?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

End of Block: Demographics

APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your K-12 educational experience?
 - a. Probes: Where did you grow up? What type of student were you? What did you like about school? How were you as a student?

2. Where did you attend college to get your degree?
 - a. Probes: PWI or HBCU? What made you choose that school?

3. What was your initial major in college? What licensures and/or degrees do you have?
 - a. Probes: If you changed majors, why did you change?

4. What was your inspiration for entering the field of education?
 - a. Probes: Was there a teacher or other educator who inspired? Why or how did they inspire you?

5. In your opinion, what aspects of your teacher preparation program were beneficial? What aspects were not helpful?
 - a. Probes: Were there gaps in what you learned versus what you experienced once you got into the field?

6. In what ways do you feel your race and/or culture impacted your journey to become a teacher?
 - a. Probes: How difficult was it to be hired? Did you have mentors already in the field?

7. What is your current teaching position? What students are you primarily working with?
 - a. Probes: Urban? Suburban? Rural? Age of students? Type of school?

8. How do you feel you are perceived by colleagues?

- a. Probes: Rephrase if needed
9. How do you feel you are perceived by students and families?
 - a. Probes: Rephrase if needed
 10. Provide at least one example of the type of support you receive as a teacher that helps you remain within the field of education.
 - a. Probes: What does administrator support mean to you? Who can you go to for assistance?
 11. What motivates or sustains you as a Black teacher?
 - a. Probes: What do you do for self-care? Who are you able to go to when times are hard?
 12. If you could design the ideal school environment for Black teachers, what would it include?
 - a. Probes: What program elements should exist?
 13. Why do you believe there are so few Black teachers in the State of Minnesota?
 - a. Probes: Racism? Low pay? Minnesota Nice?
 14. What barriers, if any, do you believe you faced in becoming a teacher?
 - a. Probes: teacher licensure exams?
 15. If you could recruit Black teachers to Minnesota, what would be your key selling points?
 - a. Probes: Elaborate on key points that are mentioned
 16. If you could speak to professors within teacher preparation programs, what would you say needs to be done to support Black students becoming teachers?
 - a. Probes: Are there strategies that should be changed or implemented?

17. If you could speak to educational leaders, what would you say to them about why Black teachers choose to remain in the field of education?

a. Probes: What could be done differently by them as leaders?

18. Is there anything else you want to add as you consider the topic of the research?

APPENDIX C. CODING EXAMPLE

Coding Sample		
	Line by line	Focused code
<p>Vanessa: “How are we going to break some of these challenges that our students are facing? How are we disrupting the system that systemically just wants to impact our kids in a negative way, not an impact way. When I look at, I recall, taking the ACT, I don’t remember any question being geared towards anything culturally related that I could have responded to. Um, but I do recall, you know American history being so tied into there and learning about what it is to be an American but not what it is to be an African American being able to see that we’re using the standardized test to really not disrupt but to continue finding a way to implement curriculum standardized to tests and preparing our kids for these tests, allowing them to see hope.”</p>	<p>need to break challenges</p> <p>students facing challenges</p> <p>need to disrupt the system</p> <p>impact on students is negative</p> <p>personal connection to ACT</p> <p>test questions not relevant</p> <p>lack of cultural relevance</p> <p>standardized testing focus</p> <p>reflection on history course</p> <p>no learning on being African American</p> <p>focus of preparing students for standardized tests</p>	<p>Barriers to success</p>
<p>Vanessa: “It’s hard to keep teaching when you see students not being supported in ways that you know they need to be supported. That are, you know, obviously far above our hands. The curriculum being provided, this is what drives me to want to build curriculum that my Black and brown students can see themselves a part of. This is my desire to not just do it on a scientific level, but on a historic level, I think.”</p>	<p>hard to watch students not get support</p> <p>lack of say in curriculum options</p> <p>desire to create curriculum for students</p> <p>wants students reflected in curriculum</p> <p>desire to create curriculum for students of color</p>	<p>Desire to create opportunities and academic growth for Black students</p>
<p>Vanessa: “This year, having a teacher shortage has been very impactful. I’m not having a prep some days, not having a lunch</p>	<p>impact of teacher shortage</p> <p>lack of prep time</p> <p>lack of lunch time</p>	<p>Lack of administrative support</p>

<p>somedays, all of these play a factor into why teachers are just kind of, I'll say less interested in wanting to be in the classroom when they don't feel supported. Yet we're not being paid enough where we're at, we're not being supported in ways that will be impactful."</p>	<p>lack of interest in teaching teachers don't feel supported lack of pay for teachers support is not impactful</p>	<p>Better pay</p>
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