

RECONSTRUCTING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF EDUCATION: ADDRESSING THE
NEEDS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
STUDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA BEATING THE ODDS AND
HIGH PRIORITY HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

ALVERA JUNICE LESANE: Reconstructing the Autobiography of Education: Addressing the Needs of African American and Economically Disadvantaged Students in North Carolina
Beating the Odds and High Priority High Schools
(Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen M. Brown)

Universal public education is recognized as the key to equalization of opportunity. Wherein *Brown vs. Board of Education* provided greater access to “equal” classrooms, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) aspired to ensure that all students are actually learning within those classrooms. NCLB’s purpose was to ensure that all children in America, including identified—and often marginalized—subgroups are able to meet the learning standards of the federal government and the state where they live. Yet, seven years after the passage of NCLB, many of these subgroups, namely African Americans and economically disadvantaged students, have not fared favorably after reviewing educational data, including everything from achievement scores, national testing results, and suspension data to the ultimate predictor of success, graduation rates (AEE, 2008; Anderson, Medrich, & Fowler, 2007; Harris & Herrington, 2006; Harvard Civil Right Project, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Singham, 2005; Thompson, 2007). The purpose of this research is to examine how teachers and principals prioritize the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students when focusing on key categories identified in successful schools. The study will utilize a combined framework incorporating Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis to determine the degree to which identified schools with significant African

American and economically disadvantaged populations verbalize their prioritized need to focus on the marginalized groups.

I dedicate this body of work to my family. I especially honor Leona and Eugene Dalton, “Short” and Pearl Johnson, and Alice and Johnson Lesane for the foundation and instilling in me the importance of education.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BTO	“Beating the Odds” Schools
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CRT	Critical Race Theory
EOC	End of Course Tests
EOG	End of Grade Tests
EQ	Essential Question
HP	“High Priority” Schools
PIMRS	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Even though they are located in different states and different communities throughout the United States, most low-performing schools tend to have three things in common: they have a high percentage of minority students, they have a high percentage of low-income students, and they tend to be located in neighborhoods where most middle- and upper-class whites would never live. In other words, these schools are usually attended by what I call America's stepchildren. (Thompson, 2007, p. 4)

The Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) (2008) denotes that about 14% of American high schools produce more than half of the nation's dropouts. These "dropout factories" generally house the "stepchildren." Will the plight "America's stepchildren" make it into the autobiography of education? In an effort to present an insider perspective, will educators omit the marginalized, construct a romanticized story, or institute true reconstruction leading to historical change? Irving Kristol (1978), a neo-conservatist stated, "Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions--it only guarantees equality of opportunity" (p. 5). Does democracy guarantee equality of opportunity simply by living in America? In an industrialized nation recognized across the world as the land of opportunity, there continues to exist what Lui, Robles, and Leondar-Wright (2006) collectively term the "Racial Wealth Divide." This divide accounts for the economic gaps that are a result of historical and contemporary barriers to wealth creation for certain marginalized groups and the negative impact this system has on society. The racial wealth divide exists as children enter school and it pushes them into prescribed roles as they leave high schools as graduates—or non-graduates.

Statement of the Problem

Universal public education is recognized as the key to equalization of opportunity. Wherein *Brown vs. Board of Education* provided greater access to “equal” classrooms, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) aspired to ensure that all students are actually learning within those classrooms. NCLB’s purpose was to ensure that all children in America, including identified—and often marginalized—subgroups are able to meet the learning standards of the federal government and the state where they live. Yet, seven years after the passage of NCLB, many of these subgroups, namely African Americans and economically disadvantaged students, have not fared favorably after reviewing educational data, including everything from achievement scores, national testing results, and suspension data to the ultimate predictor of success, graduation rates (AEE, 2008; Anderson, Medrich, & Fowler, 2007; Harris & Herrington, 2006; Harvard Civil Right Project, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Singham, 2005; Thompson, 2007)

From the 1970s to 2004, National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) trends indicate that while there has been some closing of the achievement gap, there are still significant differences between the performance of Black and White students (United States Department of Education, 2005). The initial large gains (sometimes more than ten points within a year) have also diminished since the 1990s to less than two to three point gains, and in some cases increased gaps, in more recent years. The AEE (2008) and the Harvard Civil Rights Project (2005) have also highlighted the great disparities in graduation rates. While graduation rates for the nation are only 70%, little more than half of African American students graduate from high school, with differences between their White counterparts ranging as high as 40 to 50 percent. Additionally, a student coming from the highest quartile

of family income is about seven times more likely to complete high school as one coming from the lowest quartile (AEE, 2008). While there is evidence from comprehensive empirical studies of practices that work in schools with high minority and high lower-income students (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust, 2005a), there is limited research focused on high schools with higher percentages of *challenging* populations (greater than 50 percent African American and economically disadvantaged) that show sustained success over time. Hence, the systems and institutions that reflect and produce these disparities must acknowledge the degree to which they reproduce the inequities in larger society and make greater strides to address the needs of marginalized groups.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to examine how teachers and principals prioritize the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students when focusing on key categories identified in successful schools. The study utilized a combined framework incorporating Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis to determine the degree to which identified schools with significant African American and economically disadvantaged populations verbalize their prioritized need to focus on issues of marginalized groups. Are they silenced when it comes to discussing issues of race? Do teachers and principals reflect the same commitment to goals directed at closing the gap? Do these schools become trailblazers of success or reproducers of prescribed societal positions?

Research Questions

To attempt to meet the detailed purpose, the study was designed to answer the following question: How do North Carolina teachers and principals in “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools prioritize the needs of African American and economically

disadvantaged students across six categories of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS):

1. Goal Setting and Communication of Goals;
2. Coordination of Curriculum and Instruction;
3. Teacher Recruitment, Assignment and Retention;
4. Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction;
5. Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning;
6. Promoting Professional Development and Building Community

To build a framework for answering the main question, the study focused on answering the following distinct subquestions:

1. How do North Carolina teachers and principals explicitly target the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students in “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools across seven categories of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)?
2. How do North Carolina “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools address the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students differently across the seven identified categories?
3. How do the words utilized by teachers and principals in North Carolina “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools reflect the trends in the academic achievement of African American and economically disadvantaged students?

Definitions

For the purposes of the research, it is important to define several key terms that pervade throughout the study. These terms include: High School Resource Allocation

(HSRA) Study, “High Priority” schools, “Beating the Odds” schools, Critical Race Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Racial Discourse Analysis and Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale.

High School Resource Allocation (HSRA) Study

The HSRA Study was conducted largely in response to Judge Howard Manning’s questions regarding the connection between resources and student success in the *Leandro* case. Governor Mike Easley commissioned the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education to work with the State Board of Education and the N.C. Department of Public Instruction in an effort to conduct audits of high schools in all North Carolina school districts. The research identified high schools that succeed with struggling students (“Beating the Odds” schools) and compared them with high-priority high schools. The quantitative analysis included teacher and principal qualifications and spending patterns to determine if there are significant differences between the high-performing and high priority schools. In the qualitative phase of the research, interviews were conducted at the high priority and identified high-performing high schools to help determine how they use resources and how they deal with the barriers to success.

“High Priority” (HP) Schools

This terminology refers to specific North Carolina high schools labeled as low performing by Judge Howard Manning. In March 2006, Judge Manning wrote a letter to state education officials regarding high schools with consistent poor performance. Nineteen high schools were identified as low-performing (high priority) due to performance composites of 55 percent or less from the 2000-2001 to the 2004-2005 school year. The designation as a “low-performing” high school has been translated to “high priority” in an effort to remove

negative connotations and to highlight the need for these schools to truly become “prioritized” in their respective school systems. Taken together, all nineteen HP schools have an average African American student population of 80 percent, with no school below 55 percent.

“Beating the Odds” (BTO) Schools

In the High School Resource Allocation Study, “Beating the Odds” (BTO) schools were identified based on a criteria of 70 percent or better performance composites with *challenging* student populations, including high percentages of students from economically disadvantaged and African American households. All five North Carolina BTO schools experienced High Growth in 2004-2005, as did four of the five in 2005-2006. The BTO schools are significant because there are no high-performing high schools in North Carolina with comparably *challenging* student populations.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

With a strong focus on the work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), CRT is defined as the analysis of race as a tool for understanding inequities. Furthermore, this definition recognizes the importance of gender-and class-based analyses, but only as secondary to race.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This research adopts van Dijk’s (2001) definition of CDA as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). The theoretical framework, however, incorporates Norman Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional analysis of text to illustrate the power context from the spoken and/or written word to sociocultural practice.

Critical Racial Discourse Analysis

Therefore, CRT and CDA combined challenge cultural assumptions through the selection of research questions based on work of scholars who highlight the contradictions between points of leverage (i.e., accountability vs. equity), structure their research questions around the issues of their marginalized clients and declare that only the critical consciousness of administrators, teachers and students will foster social change rather than reproduction (Apple, 1996; Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speigman, 2004; Banks, 1999; Brosio, 1994; Nieto, 1999a, 1999b).

Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) developed an instrument for measuring the instructional leadership behavior of principals called the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). This instrument assesses how much instructional leadership principals are providing, based on their performance across ten dimensions of instructional management job functions associated with leadership in effective schools. The instrument contains fifty statements about principal behavior, indicating the degree to which the principal is active in that function. This research utilized an interview protocol based on questions addressing six of the dimensions from the PIMRS as the background for secondary analysis.

Delimitations and Limitations

Research is affected by controlled and uncontrolled factors that ultimately have the potential to impact results. Some of these factors are defined as delimitations and limitations. Delimitations narrow the scope of a study, while limitations are potential weaknesses that may impact the study (Creswell, 2003).

Delimitations for this study include the selection of schools. The study includes North Carolina high schools with significant populations of African American and economically disadvantaged students. There are, however, no schools in North Carolina that are recognized as “High-Performing” with populations reflective of the ones included in the study. Therefore, aligned to the High School Resource Allocation (HSRA) Study, the study focuses on identified “High Priority” and “Beating the Odds” high schools.

The study was further delimited by the selection of schools for which a full realm of data could be obtained. This includes demographic data as well as clear and complete transcriptions of interviews. I did not want to rely on interpreted data in cases where full transcriptions were not available.

This study has a number of limitations beyond the control of research. First, numerous factors were uncontrolled by the researcher due to the use of a secondary data set. While I participated in data collection for the initial HSRA Study, there was also a reliance on data from other interviewers. Interviewees were asked questions regarding the seven identified categories mentioned above, therefore limiting the possibility of deeper inquiry or additional questioning. There was also no control over the interview protocol.

Additionally, participants were asked specifically about students from African American or lower socioeconomic backgrounds. While the interview protocol provided an opportunity for them to have an open forum to discuss issues of race and socioeconomics as priorities, it also did not specifically give them the opportunity to expand on thoughts and strategies they may actually possess and utilize regarding these targeted groups.

While incorporating a framework that combines Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis provides the platform for a unique perspective, it also limits the study. A

tenet of Critical Race Theory is the counter-story. The counter-story is the story of the marginalized group (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Yet, the HSRA Study does not incorporate the voices of African American and economically disadvantaged students. In, fact it does not even include the voices of their parents. Solórzano and Yasso (2002) broaden the definition of counter-story-telling as “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories or racial privilege ... shatter[ing] complacency, challeng[ing] the dominant discourse on race and further[ing] the struggle for racial reform” (p. 32). There is great value in the counter-story, but it was limited in this research in terms of hearing the voices of the students and parents. While the methodology implemented creates a counter-story, the construction of the point of view includes the words of the principals, teachers and the researcher. The study also did not include interviews with counselors or other educational personnel.

Positionality

Walking through the hallways of the HSRA study high schools in jeopardy and the ones wearing a badge of honor (yet still not being so far away from the jeopardized status themselves), I saw many faces that were like looking in the mirror at myself. As I walk through the hallways of other high schools doing my daily work, the same images call me. In the wake of Judge Howard Manning’s decision in the Leandro case, about 10 percent of the state’s high schools were identified as “failing” or low-performing based on the End of Course (EOC) testing. In these high schools, less than 60 percent of the students are proficient EOC. When looking at the schools on Judge Manning’s list, all were schools with 50 percent or more of the population being African American students. In more recent times, a great deal of research has focused on the role of socioeconomic status in student learning, to the degree of declaring student achievement is not as related to race as the correlation to

whether or not the child lives in poverty. Yet, the schools that are on the list, while having 50 percent or less free or reduced lunch populations, all have more than 50 percent African American students. Why are there no schools with more than 50 percent White, Hispanic or Asian students? Why are there no higher performing schools with more than 50 percent African American students. Interestingly enough, the high school I attended could have been on the list except for the fact that enough African American students did not attend. Yet, the city high school had all of the markings of the high priority schools, largely due to its composite population.

My positionality was the center of this project choice. I wanted to create dialogue about the “elephant in the room” . . . that our history of racial division still plays an active role in determining the opportunities for our children. I want the disenfranchised “others” to see the value of their positions . . . along with the choices that are often too difficult to see. While I have taken advantage of the opportunity education has afforded via honors and advanced placement classes in high school to my current efforts seeking this terminal degree, for all the successes I can document that happened largely due to the educational system, there are numerous accomplishments—while not without supports—achieved *despite* the system.

Significance of the Study

This study strove to begin construction of the counter-story for African American students within the context of North Carolina high schools. In the construction of the counter-story, however, there must first be a call within research to hear of the voices of those impacted most by the discussion. Although parts of the counter-story reflect generations of inequities for African American and economically disadvantaged students, it

is critical for America to acknowledge the degree to which it truly believes that *all* children can learn. Brown (2008) asserts:

Changing demographics of the student population of the nation's schools (i.e., more students of color), the stable demographics of the teaching force (i.e., White, middle class, females), and the growing contrast between the two sets of demographics support the need for all educators to increase their knowledge and social responsibility toward diversity and equity related issues. (p. 9)

This process begins with awareness and acknowledgement of the majoritarian assumptions and how they impact the process of education. As the autobiography of how America educates its "stepchildren" is written, however, this awareness and acknowledgement must be translated into action if the legacy is going to be one of true change.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction: The Autobiography of Education

[We] do not leave their values at the door . . . On the contrary, as much as [we] might want to hide or avoid them, [our] values and beliefs slip in the door with [us]. In fact, [we] bring [our] entire autobiographies with [us]: [our] experiences, identities, values, beliefs, attitudes, hangups, biases, wishes, dreams, and hopes. It is useless for [us] to deny this; the most [we] can do is acknowledge how these may either get in the way, or enhance, [our] work with students . . . “Even in our indifference, we take a position.” [teacher quote] If this is true, then the best that [we] can hope for is to candidly confront [our] values to understand how they help or get in the way of [our] work with students. (Nieto, 2003, pp. 24-25)

Like the teachers Sonia Nieto speaks of in this selection, all key players in the educational realm bring their “autobiographies” to their jobs and, more importantly, their positions within those jobs. The “autobiographies” of teachers, counselors, principals, central office support, superintendents, boards of education members and policymakers have shaped the larger life history of education in America. Yet, in an industrialized nation recognized across the world as the land of opportunity, there continues to pervade what Lui et al. (2006) collectively term the “Racial Wealth Divide.” This divide accounts for the economic gaps that are a result of historical and contemporary barriers to wealth creation for certain marginalized groups and the negative impact this system has on society. This racial wealth divide exists as children enter school and it pushes them into prescribed roles as they leave high schools as graduates—or non-graduates. Irving Kristol (1978), a neo-conservative stated, “Democracy does not guarantee equality of conditions—it only guarantees equality of

opportunity” (p. 5). In striving to provide equal opportunities, what would American education’s autobiography say about its success in addressing the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students in serving as the equalizing force to bridge this divide?

This review establishes a context for the importance of acknowledging and analyzing the disparities that contribute to and reinforce the racial wealth divide, with a focus on African Americans and economically disadvantaged students. The focus consists of highlighting some key aspects of the “achievement gap” as it relates to differences between African American and economically disadvantaged students and their White counterparts in academic performance and graduation rates. As the focus narrows to the high school “problem,” perspectives will be provided from the national, regional and North Carolina level. After establishing the current issues requiring action, a historical context is provided with a particular focus on periods of American educational history most impacting the “gap” and ultimately leading to a rise in accountability. Finally, I will contextualize the current research based on the North Carolina events leading to the study and provide a theoretical framework.

A Call for Action: The “Achievement Gap” and the Graduation “Crisis”

Graduation rates are a fundamental indicator of whether or not the nation’s public school system is doing what it is intended to do: enroll, engage, and educate youth to be productive members of society. In today’s increasingly competitive global economy, graduating from high school is more critical than ever to securing a good job and a promising future ... On average, dropouts earn less and experience a poorer quality of life than those who graduate, but the individuals themselves are not the only ones who suffer; there are significant costs to the communities and states in which they live, as well as to society at large. (AEE, 2008, para. 1)

This quote captures not only the major purpose of schooling—to prepare students to become productive members of society—but it also highlights the failure with numerous

students to do so on an annual basis. When great disparities can be seen in the success of students to achieve this goal along racial and socioeconomic lines, additional questions about the current system arise. In addition to concerns about graduation rates, results from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) consistently show that Whites score significantly higher than Blacks and Hispanics at all tested levels in both reading and math (USDOE, 2005). From the 1970s to 2004, NAEP trends also indicate that while there has been some closing of the achievement gap, there are still significant differences between the performance of Black and White students (USDOE, 2005). The initial large gains (sometimes more than ten points within a year) have also diminished since the 1990s to smaller than two to three point gains, and in some cases increased gaps, in more recent years.

Harris and Harrington (2006) summarize different trends in policy reforms and their correlation to the achievement gap (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Summary of Policy Reforms and Achievement Gap Trends

Policy Categories	Content and Time Standards	Accountability			
		Government-based		Market-based	
Specific Policies	School days/year, Hours/day, Course require.	Promotion/ Graduation Exams	Takeovers, Oversight, Reconstitution	School report cards	Vouchers, Charters, School Choice
Achievement Gap	Large Decrease	Large Decrease	Small Increase	Small Increase	Small Increase
Approximate Years	1950s-1970s → 1980s → 1990s →				

They also admit that the association of the policies and the suggested impact on the achievement gap is drawn with what they term to be “fuzzy” boundaries. Nevertheless, while they are not suggesting causation, their framework raises important questions regarding the success (and, to a greater degree, the intent) of accountability measures. Why do reform

measures that articulate the rhetoric of equality often actually result in an increase in the achievement gap?

Achievement Gap or Education Debt?

Ladson-Billings (2006), cautions against a focus on the achievement gap. She not only asserts that such a focal point is short-term and misleading, but she continues by highlighting the “education debt.” Like Harris and Harrington (2006), she also highlights the contradictions an increasing gap in the following quote:

[T]here was a narrowing of the gap in the 1980s . . . and a subsequent expansion of those gaps in the 1990s. The expansion of the disparities occurred even though the income differences narrowed during the 1990s. We do not have good answers as to why the gap narrows or widens. Some research suggests that even the combination of socioeconomic and family conditions, youth culture and student behaviors, and schooling conditions and practices do not fully explain changes in the achievement gap . . . However, when we begin looking at the construction and compilation of what I have termed the education debt, we can better understand why an achievement gap is a logical outcome . . . [T]he historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt. (p. 5)

Ladson-Billings compares a focus on the achievement gap to the national deficit. Just as a zero deficit does not equate to no debt, closing the achievement gap does not eliminate the education debt. In other words, a failure to address these historical, economic, sociopolitical and moral aspects, particularly in relation to policy development, will only continue to multiply our education debt along with the “interest.”

Singham (2005) also supports much of Ladson-Billings’ position through his diagnosis of the complexity of the “achievement gap” by recognizing the “education debt.” He does so by outlining several myths regarding the “achievement gap.” His first premise dispels the myth that the “achievement gap” is simple along with its obvious solutions. He further details how the “achievement gap” is not rocket science, as this type of science must

be easier to understand due to its “repeatable and predictable systems,” unlike the “problems” of education (p. 30). A second myth is that gaps exist solely due to the inadequacy of “minority” educational experiences, which assumes that experiences of other groups are appropriate. He links this logic to a scene from *My Fair Lady* when Professor Henry Higgins asks, “Why can’t a woman be more like man?” This suggestion that, in a similar spirit, “minority” students could solve the gap problem by “acting [W]hite” devalues these “minorities” and hides the fact that there are many students underachieving within the educational system. The third myth highlighted by Singham most parallels Ladson-Billings’ position and centers around the assumption that the “gap” problem is a K-12 issue. This notion fails to recognize the “debt” that African American students in particular begin school with, largely due to the “Racial Wealth Divide.” It also romanticizes the abilities of K-12 education to cure the larger ills of society, when the system generally reinforces the positions of the parents. A review of the current status of the gaps at the national, southern and state of North Carolina levels reveals the importance of constructing a different story for the educational “autobiography” in order to establish a greater legacy of equality.

The National Perspective

The AEE (2007) provides perspective on the graduation rates based on 2003-2004 data stipulating that

(1) approximately 1.23 million students fail to graduate from high school, more than half of whom are from [“minority”] groups; (2) about 70 percent of students graduate from high school on time with a regular diploma, [while] little more than half of African American and Hispanic [do the same] . . . [resulting in a] difference between [W]hite and [“minority”] graduation rates . . . of as much as 40 or 50 percentage points; and (3) a [student] coming from the highest quartile of family income is about seven times as likely to have completed high school as [one] coming from the lowest quartile. (AEE, 2007, p. 1)

The Harvard Civil Rights Project (CRP) (2005) acknowledges what they call an American “crisis” in education as they highlight, “Every year across the country, a dangerously high percentage of students—disproportionately poor and [“minority”]—disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high school” (p. 1). The statistics from their research, in collaboration with the Urban Institute, also support the findings of the AEE (Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2005). Furthermore, the CRP, highlighting the gaps between Black, Latino, and Native American students and their White counterparts, aligns to the data from the AEE analysis. The CRP (2005) also notes that graduation rates are even lower for “minority” males specifically. The Harvard Civil Rights Project (2005), along with the AEE, specify the difficulty of tracking due to ambiguous, erroneous and unaligned reporting of dropout and graduation rates coupled with a preoccupation with testing data across the nation, leading to what the CRP terms as a “civil rights crisis” (p. 1).

The Southern Perspective

The Harvard CRP (2005) narrowed their focus by reviewing discrepancies in scores in the South, which has some of the lowest graduation rates in the country coupled with large and growing concentrations of African Americans and Latino populations. Additionally, the segregation/desegregation/resegregation transformation resulting from racial inequality has plagued the region. In the report, the Harvard CRP (2005) found the following results from their focus on identified Southern states:

. . . graduation rates in 2002 ranging from a high of 85 percent in North Carolina to a low of 61.8 percent in Georgia. When a more accurate measurement, the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) was used, the graduation rates for these five states [Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina] dipped far lower than these official estimates . . . In Georgia . . . the rates for Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans were all below 50 percent . . . Black, Native American and Latino males fared worst of all. Across the Southern region, the graduation rate for Black males averages only 47.4 percent, and 50.9 percent for Latinos. In only one of the five

special focus states—Louisiana—did more than half (51.1 percent) of Black males graduate on time. In Florida, Black males had the lowest graduation rate out of the five states, a mere 38.3 percent. Of the two states where data on Native American males is available, North Carolina had a graduation rate of just 31.7 percent. (pp. 2-3)

Additionally, the AEE answered the question, “Where are students dropping out?” by concluding that there are a relatively small number of “chronically underperforming high schools” responsible for more than half of the nation’s dropouts (AEE, 2007). Furthermore, they detail, based on 2003-2004 data, that

(1) about 14 percent of American high schools produce more than half of the nation’s dropouts [in] ‘dropout factories,’ [in which] the number of seniors enrolled is routinely 60 percent or less than the number of freshmen four years earlier; (2) [80] percent of the high schools that produce the most dropouts can be found in a subset of just fifteen states . . . located in northern and western cities and throughout the southern states; and (3) [these] dropout factories produce 81 percent of all Native American dropouts, 73 percent of all African American dropouts, and 66 percent of all Hispanic dropouts. (AEE, 2007, p. 1)

Juxtaposed to the lack of success in identified “dropout factories,” the Harvard CRP (2005) addressed a more recent notion of “beating the odds” schools. By spotlighting the work of researchers at Johns Hopkins University, they recognize schools that graduated a “higher than expected” percentage of students in each of the five southern states based the following criteria:

1. at least 40 percent of students qualify for free lunch;
2. where 25 percent or more of students are Black or Latino;
3. and where promoting power, defined as a school’s success in moving students from grade to grade, averaged over three years (2000-2002), was at least 80 percent. (p. 3)

The article details the results:

In Georgia, they could not identify a single school that met the criteria. In Florida, they found only two such schools, four in North Carolina, [twelve] in Louisiana, and [fifteen] in Mississippi. The problems that these schools face are likely to become more severe, because Blacks in all Southern states have faced increasing segregation since 1990 and 9/10 of highly segregated Black or Latino schools experience concentrated poverty. (Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2005, p. 3)

In addition to the minuscule number of identified “beating the odds” schools from each of the states, one must also consider the criteria, wherein a 40 percent free and reduced lunch population combined with a 25 percent Black and Latino population does not define most of the schools that are on each of the state’s “lists” or the demographics of the schools labeled as “dropout factories.” The notion of “beating the odds” itself is contradictory to the very premise of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the attempts to close the achievement gap. If NCLB sets the expectation of success at 100 percent for *every* child, then how can we accept the idea that any school would be “beating the odds” at less than 100 percent, despite their free and reduced lunch or “minority” populations?

The North Carolina Perspective

Using consistent 2003-2004 data sources from the AEE (2005) analysis, North Carolina (NC) reported an overall graduation rate of 66.1 percent. Yet, only 57 percent of the Black student population graduates with a diploma in four years in comparison to 71.7 percent of their White counterparts (Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2005). The results are equally disappointing for the Latino student population at 53.8 percent. This presents a performance gap of approximately fifteen and seventeen percentage points respectively between the White student population and their Black and Latino counterparts. Additionally, information from the Public Schools of North Carolina (2007) regarding dropout rates indicates little progress in improving these results. In 2005-2006, Black males accounted for a disproportionate amount of the increase in dropout count, as the rates for Blacks overall increased. The dropout rates for Latino and American Indian students remained high. Yet, the rate for American Indians declined, while the rate for Hispanic students continued to rise.

The increase in the number of male dropout events was also more than twice the increase in female dropout events.

Graduation and Dropout Rates: Narrowing the Focus

Though dropout or, conversely, graduation rates are largely impacted by factors that occur across pre-kindergarten through high school grade levels, the timing of students dropping out is notable. In a report from the National Dropout Prevention Center and Communities in Schools, Cathy Hammond, Dan Linton, Jay Smink, and Sam Drew (2007) reveal, with wide variations reflected in different populations, trends that suggest that the risk of dropping out increases throughout high school, with most students dropping out in the 11th or 12th grades. Though the grade levels may vary in particular regions and for specific groups, the largest majority of withdrawals from the educational process occur between grades 9 and 12. There is also evidence that there are differences in predictive factors between early and late dropouts, finding retention to be the strongest predictor of early dropout and misbehavior to be the strongest predictor of later dropout (Hammond et al., 2007, p. 20). In outlining the risk factors, and ultimately offering suggestions to address them from successful programs, Hammond et al. also identified four domains for intervention, including the individual, the family, the school and the community, reiterating a need to analyze sociopolitical factors as a multifaceted approach to tackling the issue.

In an effort to address the CRP's and other stakeholders defined "crisis" when reviewing the data, researchers must strive diligently to define what key strategies impact the success of "minority" (especially African American and economically disadvantaged) students in an environment of growing diversity and mounting accountability. With these

factors in mind, this research will focus largely on high schools, with fewer references to elementary and middle schools data and student experiences.

The Historical Context

From its inception, schooling in America has articulated the promises of democratic ideals, but it has often fallen short in the case of marginalized groups. With a history of forced migration and slavery, education for African Americans, in particular, has transformed from subjection to punishment for learning to read to the vast disparities of today. Yet, the assumption is that access to opportunities to learn is equal. In the following section, the impact of schooling on marginalized groups is reviewed with a particular focus on the segregation to resegregation eras and the changes in legal tides leading to the current state of vast differences in the academic success of African American and low-income students in comparison to their counterparts.

Segregation

Although the Fourteenth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution provided citizens “life, liberty and property” via due process, Blacks still continued to reside in a system of segregation. From 1876 to 1910, the Supreme Court routinely ruled antidiscrimination laws unconstitutional, encouraging the further development and maintenance of segregation laws in the South. Numerous segregation statutes regulated virtually every aspect of everyday life, including adoption, business licenses, health care, housing, prisons, public accommodations, public transportation, and race classification. The sentiment of the Supreme Court shifted from not only ruling antidiscrimination laws as unconstitutional to determining segregationist laws as constitutional. The most pivotal ruling of the time period was in 1896 with *Plessy v.*

Ferguson's decision allowing states to require distinct facilities for Blacks and Whites under the guise that they were "separate but equal" (Pettigrew, 2004, p. 521).

The early 1900s signaled changes in the Supreme Court that set the stage for the transformation of the segregationist trends. The Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional a number of city ordinances requiring residential segregation, "grandfather clauses" excluding Blacks from their constitutional rights, and "White-only" primaries (Pettigrew, 2004, p. 522).

Desegregation

Beginning in 1930, the Supreme Court slowly began to support the rights of Blacks, by determining that the exclusion of minorities from juries was discriminatory. During this period, the court also upheld state antidiscrimination laws, ruled for nondiscriminatory seating on trains, and held restrictive housing covenants to be unenforceable. Additionally, "separate but equal" became more narrowly defined by the Supreme Court. By 1950, in the education cases of *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* and *Sweat v. Painter*, "equal" became defined not only in terms of brick and mortar, but also characterized by such aspects as faculty reputation and prestige. These decisions provided the precedents for *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* to hold that separate is inherently unequal.

Though the Supreme Court's racial decisions have long assumed psychological and sociological phenomena without evidence, *Brown* provided such evidence through the use of social psychologists as expert witnesses to prove the impact of the segregation on African American students. Despite the fact that the initial *Brown* decision passed with a nine-to-zero vote, the Court fell short with its retreat from the implementation order to vaguely indicate that schools be desegregated with "all deliberate speed" in *Brown II*, thus returning the

enforcement to southern district courts without specific guidelines. This critical decision delayed the implementation of school desegregation for almost twelve years.

By the 1970s, however, the South had more racial desegregation, transforming the region from the most segregated to the most integrated area in the United States. During this period, the Supreme Court continued to rule in favor of desegregation. In 1968, in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, “freedom of choice” plans were overturned. In *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education (1969)*, the Court declared that public school desegregation must be achieved “at once” and “operate . . . hereafter only on a unitary basis.” In 1971, in the famous North Carolina case of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education*, the Court rejected the district’s plan that maintained racial segregation and approved busing to desegregate each of the system’s urban schools.

In 1973, *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1* resulted in the final major court decision during the desegregation period. In this case, the Court not only rendered its first important ruling on racially segregated schools outside the South, but it also recognized the right of Latino children to desegregated education (Pettigrew, 2004). These Court decisions provided a “brief window when the nation belatedly began to live up to its Constitutional promises to its Black citizens” (Pettigrew, 2004, p. 523).

Resegregation

One year after *Keyes*, the Court abruptly reversed the course of its pro-desegregation decisions. Pettigrew (2004) discusses how *Milliken v. Bradley (1974)* compares with *Dred Scott* and *Plessy* as one of the Supreme Court's most destructive rulings in the nation’s racial history, though, like *Plessy*, it initially received little recognition. In *Milliken*, the Court struck down a metropolitan solution ordered by a district court to remedy the intense racial

segregation of Detroit's public schools. In the following passage, Pettigrew (2004) continues by detailing the impact of this critical decision:

What makes this decision so regressive is that such remedies are the *only* means available to desegregate the public schools of many of the nation's largest cities (Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Pettigrew, 1975, 1981). Moreover, between-district segregation is now by far the major component today in metropolitan school segregation (Clotfelter, 2004, p. 120). This harsh reality was fully understood at the time. By ignoring this reality, the Court gave its blessing to having the boundaries between largely minority central cities and White suburbs act as racial Berlin Walls. But the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and united Germany. These Berlin Walls, bolstered by continued racial discrimination in housing, have only grown stronger and divided America. (p. 523)

The Court further ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley II* (1977) that states could be ordered to pay for remedial programs that were presumed to repair the harm that decades of segregation had inflicted. The *Milliken* decisions, therefore, abandoned *Brown's* premise that separate is inherently unequal, opting for special financing for a limited time for unproven programs as a substitute (Pettigrew, 2004).

Supreme Court decisions continued to support *Milliken's* logic, including *Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia* (1986). Verdicts rendered under the leadership of President Ronald Reagan's appointee, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, strengthened the movement by turning the tides towards resegregation. Several notable cases include *Freeman v. Pitts* (1992) and *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1995) which both greatly limited desegregation efforts by lifting enforcement methods. Most recently, in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002), the Court sent another strong message indicating a reversal of *Brown* by allowing public monies to go to private and suburban schools through vouchers. Pettigrew (2004) highlights the impact of this decision by pointing out that:

Apart from separation of church and state issues, the five jurists showed no concern that these private schools would remain selective in their student bodies, be unaccountable to the public, and enhance racial segregation. To be sure, some

unlikely coalitions support school vouchers, with some inner-city Blacks joining pro-segregationist Whites. But all this signifies is the desperation of some Black parents whose children are trapped in deteriorating ghetto schools because the *Brown* promise of integration has been eliminated by the High Court . . . Never has the Court's majority admitted that it is in effect overturning *Brown*. Instead, they talk of favoring local authority over court control and focus on remedial compensation in segregated settings. This obfuscation is consistent with the findings of social psychology. The central characteristic of modern prejudice is its use of ostensibly nonracial reasons for anti-Black attitudes and actions (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Such attitudes are typically denied—even to one's self. Instead, socially acceptable reasons are advanced to justify the action. (p. 524)

Pettigrew (2004) continues with a detailed account of how this swift change in the Court occurred. He further stipulates, "In short, *Brown* has been largely reversed. The [political impact of the appointment of the] law clerk [Rehnquist], who in 1954 supported *Plessy*, as chief justice, [coupled with other lifetime appointments] revived segregated education" (p. 524). While the 1990s recorded an accelerated retreat in racial desegregation of the public schools, by 2000, African American children were more likely to be attending majority-Black schools than at any time since the 1960s; 70 percent went to predominantly Black schools, and 37 percent to schools with 90 percent or more Black students. The greatest retrogression during the 1990s occurred in the South, the region that had previously witnessed the greatest gains (Orfield & Lee, 2004, 2005). Orfield and Lee (2005) illustrate these regional differences as African Americans (and Latinos) are finding themselves in more segregated environments during the school day (see Table 2.2).

In addition to combating misconceptions that largely led to these resegregation trends, Pettigrew (2004) captures the importance of these trends by detailing studies from numerous researchers indicating that African American students from desegregated schools are more likely to attend and complete courses of study at predominately White colleges; have better jobs in integrated environments; live in interracial neighborhoods; benefit from higher

incomes; and experience relationships that enable them (and their White counterparts) to have more positive attitudes towards other races.

Table 2.2. Percentage of Students in 50-100 Percent Minority Schools in the South and Border States by Race, 2003-04

	1991-1992			2003-2004		
	US Total	South	Border	US Total	South	Border
White	8.5	13	4	12	19	7
Black	66	60	59	73	71	69
Latino	73	76	38	77	78	56
Asian	51	34	25	56	44	35
Native American	43	47	21	48	48	35

The Rise of Accountability

In the wake of the dismantling of the Supreme Court’s support of *Brown*, global competition, and the release of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (1983), increased accountability efforts became the focus of reform efforts aimed at closing the gap. Brown (2006) asserts:

To succeed as a nation and be competitive in the global marketplace, the United States must have diversity and equality of participation within its society in general, and within its educational system in particular, if the dream of one nation, indivisible, is to be realized. (p. 325)

It is yet to be realized whether the rise in accountability will launch the nation towards greater equalization of opportunity. Do accountability efforts that vehemently exert the language of equality help bridge the gap or reinforce the divide?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Wherein *Brown vs. Board of Education* provided access to “equal” classrooms, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) aspires to ensure that all students are actually learning within

those classrooms. Created in 2001 as the latest revision to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), NCLB's purpose is to ensure that all children in America are able to meet the learning standards of the federal government and the state where they live. NCLB is built on four key principles: accountability for results, flexibility and local control, enhanced parental choice, and instruction based on scientific research (Sattes & Walsh, 2002). NCLB substantially increases the testing requirements for states and sets a more rigorous accountability standard for schools within each state, with the use of yearly progress objectives for all students and subgroups of students. These subgroups include those of lower socioeconomic background, race and ethnicity, limited English language proficiency, and students with disabilities. The goal of NCLB is to provide a valid set of requirements for the accountability and performance of all students which are directly related to positive expectations set by teachers and schools. The NCLB Act initially required that states put new testing and accountability systems into place.

The requirements of NCLB also have implications for all educators and educational researchers who focus on K-12 education. These implications are derived from the legal requirements that schools demonstrate steady gains in student achievement and close the gap between various subgroups of students by 2013-2014. Yet, Anderson et al. (2007) highlight the following cautions when considering the ability of NCLB to be the driving force behind closing the gap:

1. Schools closing the gap are not necessarily the highest-performing schools;
2. Schools closing the gap are not necessarily making AYP;
3. Schools making AYP are not necessarily closing the achievement gap; and
4. Comparisons across states are inappropriate. (p. 550)

With all of these issues in reporting and evaluation, it is difficult to gauge the degree to which the gap is actually being closed or the validity of the data, not to mention the notion

of tracking our “education debt.” Yet, the inability of schools to adequately achieve a certain improvement status results in a mandatory offering to parents the option for their children to either attend a better performing public school within the district or to be provided with supplemental educational services at the schools’ expense. One would have to question the degree to which African American parents, mostly from economically disadvantaged households, have the cultural capital and realistic scenarios that truly make these options as widely available to them. Additionally, as an unfunded mandate, there is tremendous controversy regarding NCLB’s ability to achieve its goals without additional funding. Such inquiry has led to court action in many states, such as the *Leandro* case, which is discussed later in this review.

The North Carolina Accountability Program

The ABCs of Public Education is North Carolina’s primary school improvement program with the goals of providing strong local school accountability and exhibiting mastery of basic subjects. The program became law in 1995 and has been modified and improved to supposedly better portray school performance and to ensure that its measures are as fair and accurate as possible. Formulas are used to measure the academic growth and achievement for all schools. The system is primarily based on the increase in the average score of a group of matched students in two successive years, with minor statistical adjustments. Both growth and proficiency performance are recognized under the ABCs. Schools are rewarded based on growth in student achievement and school assistance teams are assigned to the lowest performing schools. Monetary rewards are also provided to high performing or improving schools. In November of 2005, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced a new pilot program that will allow selected states to use growth models

to determine if their schools and districts are meeting No Child Left Behind performance targets. North Carolina is one of two states whose proposed growth model was accepted by the U. S. Department of Education. Even with the controversy surrounding testing, the state continues to be a model within the United States.

Leandro

In 2002, Judge Howard Manning issued his fourth ruling in the Leandro decision, the lawsuit contesting how the state funds public schools. Previously, Manning ruled that North Carolina was not meeting its obligation to provide a sound, basic education to at-risk children. In this ruling, Manning said that classrooms must have a competent, certified, and well-trained teachers coupled with competent school leadership and the necessary resources. Manning placed responsibility upon the state to ensure that the constitutional guarantee is met with aggressive intervention, if necessary.

The ruling also encouraged more resources and support services for rural schools with high numbers of at-risk students. North Carolina lawmakers responded by creating the Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Fund (DSSF). In 2004 and 2005, sixteen rural school districts received DSSF money due to their status in the *Leandro* case. In 2006, the General Assembly decided to give DSSF money to all 115 school districts. In an effort to utilize a type of equity formula, the original districts received \$22.5 million (the same allocation they got in 2005) and the other 99 districts split \$27 million. In 2006-2007, the original districts received between \$732 and \$1046 per disadvantaged student, and the other districts received only between \$55 and \$175 per disadvantaged student.

Though these attempts by the state to address equity issues are admirable, Judge Manning and his supporters quickly pointed out that people often rely on money as a type of

quick fix to longstanding issues. During a December 2004 hearing, Judge Manning specifically used a school system with the fourth highest per pupil spending rate in the state to reiterate his point. After commenting favorably on elementary and middle school performance for the 2003-2004 school year, he expressed disappointment in the high school performance, indicating that 69 percent of North Carolina's high schools had composite scores below 80 percent. Citing the one school district, Manning stipulated that ten out of fifteen high schools had composite scores below 70 percent, yet they have more than adequate per pupil spending. In 2004, Judge Manning targeted 44 high schools (since reduced to 35) having performance composites less than 60 percent. While admitting that these targeted schools (and the districts housing them) have obviously challenging student populations, with high free and reduced lunch and diverse student percentages, Judge Manning accepted no excuses. The comparison of schools with such diverse populations only capitalizes the issue at the foundation of the *Leandro* case--whether the "problems" with public education in North Carolina (and the entire nation) result from a lack of money or poor use of existing funds. A closer comparison of the individual schools within the districts also brings to the forefront questions of equity. In the spirit of *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the premise of NCLB, one must question how much of the "high school problem" is an issue of socioeconomic status and—first and foremost—race.

In response to Judge Manning's questions regarding the connection between resources and student success, Governor Mike Easley commissioned the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education to work with the State Board of Education and the NC Department of Public Instruction in an effort to conduct audits of high schools in all North Carolina school of success with *challenging* student populations and compared them with "High Priority"

schools. The analysis included teacher backgrounds and spending patterns to determine if there were significant differences between the higher-performing and “High Priority” schools.

In the qualitative phase of the research, interviews were conducted at identified “High Priority” and higher-performing high schools to determine the use of resources and how they deal with the barriers to success. This study focuses on the comparisons between the BTO and HP high schools. It should be noted that North Carolina has no high-performing high schools that can be easily compared with BTO or HP high schools due to dramatically different populations. The interview protocol for the qualitative piece of the study related to specific focus areas, including (a) Goal Setting and Communication of Goals; (b) Coordination of Curriculum and Instruction; (c) Teacher Recruitment, Assignment and Retention; (d) Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction; (e) Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning; and (f) Promoting Professional Development and Building Community. The focus areas were based on Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, which details fifty identified behaviors of effective schools.

Evidence from Successful Schools

Several notable studies have been conducted to determine what practices have contributed to the success of schools with diverse populations in improving student performance on standardized tests and closing the “achievement gap.” This review summarizes several of the most extensive studies from a high school perspective.

Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students

This study conducted by Education Trust (2005a) studied identified “high-impact” schools that exhibited statistically significant achievement growth among lower performing students. Additionally, four identified “high impact” schools were compared to three identified “average-impact” schools. For the purposes of the study, “high-impact” schools were defined as those with (a) “greater than expected” growth over three years; (b) at least average performance on state assessments in reading or math; (c) smaller than average achievement gaps; (d) a Promoting Power Index at or above the state average, as defined by John Hopkins University’s instrument for approximating graduation rates; and (e) 60 percent or greater low-income student population or 50 percent or greater non-White population coupled with 20 to 60 percent low-income population. The average-impact schools also had comparable demographics. In addition to site visits, classroom observations, administrator, teacher and student surveys, data (i.e. transcripts, schedules, assignments) were collected over the course of a year. The study team also conducted teacher and student focus groups. Three of the four high-impact high schools are located in North Carolina. The practices at the two types of high schools were compared and the results were published based on five spheres, including culture, academic core, support, teachers, time and other resources (Education Trust, 2005a). In every sphere studied, the researchers found significant differences in key practices of “high-impact” and “average-impact” high schools and how they operate. Yet, the study is careful to note that there is still a need for implement more powerful reform strategies even within the “high-impact” schools (Education Trust, 2005a).

Closing the Gap: Lessons from Successful Schools

This study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (Billig et al., 2005) identified four high schools that narrowed or closed the gap and sustained their success over at least four years. These large comprehensive high schools serve large percentages of “minority” students. The success stories include high schools that narrowed the gap between White and Latino students and another that closed the gap completely. The other two high schools narrowed the gaps between their White, African American, and Latino students between 10 and 15 percentage points. This study also involved the use of focus groups of teachers and administrators that explored teaching and learning strategies in the content areas, culture and school climate issues, leadership for change, and the change process itself (Billig et al., 2005). The following key themes emerged from this research across the identified areas:

1. Expectations must be high and consistent for all students with a variety of support services in place to help students reach those expectations.
2. Schools must use data to identify deficiencies and to drive instructional decisions.
3. Talent, creativity, and resources are present in schools and must be channeled in constructive ways to address the academic and social needs of minority students . . . includ[ing] highly dedicated and motivated teachers along with supportive leadership.
4. Working collaboratively in developing and aligning the curriculum is paramount to student success.
5. Leadership for change can come directly from the departments charged with narrowing the gap as long as they are given the appropriate resources, professional development, and administrative support. (p. 18)

School Climate and Culture

The conceptual framework for the Educational Leadership Program in the School of Education focuses on “equity and excellence” in the preparation of leadership in a “democratic society. This premise begins with the establishment of a nurturing school

climate and culture. In determining what leads to success in addressing the needs of students from “challenging” populations Billig et al. (2005) identified the following practices:

1. *High expectations for student achievement.* Schools exemplify high expectations by eliminating remedial classes and offering more demanding courses such as honors, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes. Schools also encourage minority students to enroll in demanding classes through targeted outreach by counselors and teachers and/or open enrollment. Expectations are high for teachers as well and teachers are given decision-making authority to implement changes directed toward increasing student achievement.
2. *Learning supports to help students meet expectations.* Educators at each of the schools put into place tutoring, study skills programs, and other supports to help students become proficient in reading and math. Teachers also provide personalized attention to students on an on-going basis to support the higher expectations. Teachers themselves receive support in the form of professional development on effective teaching strategies for reading and math.
3. *Emphasis on accountability and assessment to determine when additional help is needed.* Accountability is emphasized in each of the successful schools. Teachers and administrators analyze data from state and school level tests to guide changes in curriculum and instruction. Classroom assessments are often used to see which teaching strategies work best with specific populations of students. Many of these educators feel that student achievement is a joint responsibility of teachers and students.
4. *Collaborative and optimistic attitude.* Adults in the schools are passionate and enthusiastic about their schools and the schools’ accomplishments. They accept no excuses and consistently tackle tough challenges, saying that if they work together, they can succeed. Teachers in these schools collaborate often and share ideas for how to improve. They work with parents and community members in establishing a culture of success at the school. (p. 2-3)

The Education Trust (2005a) study captured similar trends. Furthermore, it also outlined the specific differences between the identified types of schools by noting the differences with the high-impact schools more focused on preparing students for life beyond high school while the average impact schools were only focused on preparing students for graduation. Regarding school policies, the high-impact schools’ policies centered on academics while the average-impact schools focused on rules. High impact schools also exhibited more consistency regarding direction and schools. Finally, the high impact schools

embraced external standards and assessment and even created them in areas in which they did not exist.

Curriculum and Instruction

The following themes were consistent in the arena of curriculum and instruction:

1. *Curriculum alignment and standards-based instruction.* All of the educators stress the importance of teaching the state and district content standards that reflect expectations for knowledge and skills in the content areas. Staff from the schools aligned their curriculum with state and local standards and to state and district assessments. Data is used consistently in making curricular decisions. Additionally, in high-impact schools, barriers to upper level course are removed and additional assistance is offered to support students through challenging courses (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust, 2005a).
2. *Changes in class schedules to allow more time for instruction.* Administrators recognize that more time is needed to teach such critical core subjects as Algebra I. Changes in class schedules, as well as classroom practices, happen quickly when the benefits for students is seen. Though the amount of time that students spend in “academic” classes is about the same in both school types, more time is dedicated to grade-level or “college-prep” courses in high-impact schools in comparison to “support” or “remedial” courses in low-impact schools (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust, 2005a).
3. *Engaging teaching techniques.* Teachers recognize that students learn better when they find their classes more interesting and personally relevant. Schools with a higher impact also stress higher *expectations* regardless of the student’s prior

performance. Everyone takes responsibility for helping students succeed (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust, 2005a).

These themes highlight a difference in expectations. High schools experiencing success with challenging populations put systems in place that encourage students to rise to a certain level of expectations rather than residing in a mentality of remediation.

Support Systems, Family, and Community Connections

Continuing with a focus on difference in expectations, Education Trust (2005a) found some key differences between high and average impact schools regarding support systems, including:

1. In both high- and average-impact schools, students who arrive behind get extra instructional time in English and math. [H]igh impact schools provide help in a way that keeps students on track with college-preparatory requirements. Average-impact schools provide the extra help in a way that delays entry into grade-level courses, making it harder for students to complete college-prep requirements.
2. In high-impact schools, administrators and teachers take responsibility for ensuring that struggling students get the additional help that they need ... little if left to chance. Average-impact schools generally offer extra help to students, but make it optional.
3. High-impact schools have in place early warning systems to identify students who need help before it's too late. Average impact schools are more likely to provide remedial help after students have faltered.
4. Counselors in all schools are involved in scheduling, but counselors in high-impact schools are considered members of the academic teams and are responsible for actively monitoring student performance and for arranging help when needed. Counselors in average-impact schools are more likely to get involved with students through referrals.
5. High-impact and average-impact schools both have partnerships with businesses and colleges, but high-impact schools use those partnerships to aid in student preparation for postsecondary opportunities, while average-impact schools tend to use their partnerships for dropout and drug-abuse prevention. (p. 5-6)

The focus for this study remained on strategies that were within the realm of the school. It is notable that the themes did not place the over-arching focus on what *should* be happening within the communities and homes.

Leadership

Billig et al. (2005) noted following themes were prevalent in relation to leadership:

1. *Change is difficult, but necessary.* Administrators and teachers said the process of change was very hard, but change was necessary in order to improve the achievement levels of Hispanic and African-American students. These educators were and are motivated to ensure that all students succeed.
2. *Leadership and resources.* Sometimes the teachers lead, while at other times the administrators lead the change. Regardless of who directs the process, sufficient resources are needed to provide funding and time for professional development, materials acquisition, and student support services.
3. *Federal and state policies serve as catalysts.* The move toward standards and accountability at the national, state, and local levels clearly serves as a motivator for change. However, the specific ways in which change occurred were based on local decisions. (p. 4)

Education Trust (2005a) also focused specifically on teachers. They found the following:

1. High-impact schools use more criteria than teacher preference to make teaching assignments, looking at factors such as past student performance and the teacher's area of study. Teacher assignments are made to meet the needs of the students, rather than the desires of the teachers. In average-impact schools, teaching assignments are more likely to be determined by staff seniority and teacher preference.
2. School-sponsored support for new teachers in high-impact schools is focused on instruction and curriculum. Average-impact schools provide support for new teachers, but it is more personal and social in nature.
3. Administrators at high-impact high schools adjust class sizes to provide more attention for struggling students and are not averse to larger student-teacher ratios for students who are able to work more independently. Class sizes in average-impact schools are relatively uniform.
4. Principals at high-impact high schools exert more control over who joins their staff than those at average-impact schools. (p. 6)

The evidence from these studies reveals the power that exists within school buildings to impact change. Nevertheless, the efforts within the school building do not exist in isolation.

The politics of education and society at large indicate what is at stake. The introduction of this literature review quotes AEE's premise of the importance of education (see p. 13), but it also reiterates the everyday rhetoric heard from top politicians within the federal government to students seeking to graduate from America's high schools as they speak of their future

plans. Additionally, in more recent years greater emphasis has been placed on the process states use to calculate the graduation rate, as described in the following quote:

Although graduation rates are a fundamental indicator of how schools are ultimately performing, only recently have those rates been rigorously scrutinized and the extent of the crisis in America's high school been revealed. For decades, schools and districts published misleading or inaccurate graduation rates, and as a result, the American public knew little of the scope and gravity of the problems of far too many of the nation's high schools. Reputable, independent research has exposed alarmingly low graduation rates that were previously hidden behind inaccurate calculations and inadequate data. (AEE, 2007)

The language in the opening and the preceding quotes are filled with terms that the book entitled *Why Is Corporate America Bashing Our Public Schools* would scrutinize in their chapter "The Words that Bind." This book begins by quoting Dennis Potter stating, "The trouble with words is that you never know whose mouths they've been in" (Emery & Ohanian, 2004, p. 5). Emery and Ohanian (2004) chides the use of political language in a effort to manufacture a crisis in the interest of the corporate world, frequently referred to in the work as *Standardistas* connected to the *Business Roundtable*. The language from the two aforementioned quotes that Emery and Ohanian (2004) warn against includes terms such as "critical," "costs to the communities," "crisis," "misleading," "inaccurate," "problems," and "alarmingly" when addressing to the current state of education and words such as "engage," "productive members of society," "competitive global economy," and "reputable independent research" in reference to the desired goals for education if certain reform initiatives "intervene." The selection specifically addresses the renowned producers of two of the major studies mentioned in this paper. Education Trust is labeled as a co-conspirator in the efforts of the Business Roundtable to ensure public schools, or private if necessary, provide a competitive and compliant workforce for Corporate America. The motives of Education Trust are questioned in the following passage:

. . . Education Trust executive Kati Haycock intones, “It’s a new century. It’s time to set aside our Industrial Age curriculum and agree on a common core curriculum for the Information Age.” Education Trust might just as well have subtitled it’s a *New Core Curriculum for All* paper *Denying a High School Diploma to Other People’s Children*. In her introduction, Haycock chides *educators* . . . for being comfortable with the fact that minority children do not go on to college. Maybe we should ask her if it’s better to be comfortable with the fact that now that she and her Business Roundtable cronies are in power, young people who fail a test based on college-prep curriculum are denied a *high school* diploma. (p. 21)

These questions and more led to the use of a theoretical framework that is also *critical* in nature. In this autobiography of education, is corporate America using education as a pawn in a larger chess game in which private business is winning? Are the interests of a capitalist society better served by marginalized groups that to a large degree remain in prescribed positions of subordination.

Theoretical Framework: Establishing a Context for Critical Racial Discourse Analysis

As the doctor’s treatment is aimed at a disease rather than at the symptoms, educators’ examinations of the education of the culturally disadvantaged must further diagnose the nature of the disease, rather than offering prescriptions aimed at alleviating only the symptoms. (Warren, 1966, p. 283)

The above quote from Dr. Paul B. Warren, a retired Dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, exemplifies the great promise in the marriage of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). On one hand, Dr. Warren addresses the problem of the color line by acknowledging that the “cure” lies in the “disease” rather than the symptoms. Yet, he fortifies the power of a dominant ideology by using language of superiority as he calls for action to address the educational needs of the “culturally disadvantaged.” While CRT recognizes the centrality of race as the key to naming the “disease,” CDA addresses the relationship between the power and language that produce and sustain the superior-inferior relationship. Therefore, CDA becomes the ultimate test

revealing the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral maladies identified through CRT.

Critical Theories

The two methods of CRT and CDA are united in that they are both critical theories. These theories fall within the realm of a larger set of critical theories (i.e. post-structuralism, post-modernism, neo-colonial studies) generally focused on issues of power and justice and the ways social systems are constructed, reproduced and transformed through race, class, gender, religion, education, sexual orientation and the economy. One common theme among critical theories, however, is a belief that thought is mediated by historically constituted power relations. In other words, facts are never neutral and are always embedded in historical contexts that are embedded in power relations. Some groups in society are privileged, and this privilege leads to differential access to services, goods, and outcomes.

Another shared assumption of critical theories is that one of the most powerful forms of oppression is internalized hegemony, which includes both coercion and consent (Gramsci, 1973; Ives, 2004). Brosio (1994) discusses the notion of hegemony as the dominant ideology that continues to permeate through reinforced “correspondence” (language, text). Therefore, the dominant ideology is maintained largely through a structure that makes one believe the “system” works for all, though a closer look would indicate it only works for some. CRT and CDA are designed to unveil and challenge the systems that lead to hegemony.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

As education scholars, we have a duty to know and raise questions about race and racism in society, as well as an ethical responsibility to interrogate systems, organizational frameworks, and leadership theories that privilege certain groups over others (Capper, 1993; Donmoyer, Imber & Scheurich, 1995). We have a duty to challenge oppressions in all forms, and an obligation to interrogate how schools and administrators oftentimes silence students who are culturally different (Larson, 1998;

Larson & Ovando, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Indeed, we have a duty to transform schools from being sorting mechanisms in the larger global market--where people of color, women, and the disenfranchised are prepared to “fit” a particular role in society (Anyon, 1980; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)--to institutions of hope and social change. However we cannot adequately prepare future leaders to achieve these goals if we avoid exposing them to race, racism, and racial politics. (Lopez, 2003, pp. 70-71)

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) published a seminal piece of work that continues to define key premises to the expanding theoretical frameworks for CRT.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) articulated the following three central propositions that continue to drive the work of an expanding realm of critical race theorists:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States;
2. U.S. society is based on property rights;
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity. (p. 48)

Property Rights

For the purposes of this study, it is particularly important to highlight the second proposition. Not only is U. S. society based on property rights, but “whiteness” in and of itself *is* property as it has value that includes rights and privileges. Cheryl Harris (1993) details while Whiteness as property is often subtle, it “retains its cores characteristic—the legal legitimization of expectations of power and control that enshrine the status quo as a neutral baseline, while masking the maintenance of white privilege and domination” (p. 1715). Embedded in the “status quo” are the same types or privileges experienced by more tangible property owners, including the “exclusive rights of possession, use, and disposition . . . the right to transfer or alienability, the right to use and enjoyment, and the right to exclude others” (Harris, 1993, p. 1731). When examining the disparities between African American and economically disadvantaged students and their White counterparts, this

evidence of these property rights are clearly exemplified, especially the right to “exclude” from being promoted to the next grade, racially identifiable advanced classes, and even the ability to exit with a diploma.

The Tenets of Critical Race Theory

CRT includes five basic tenets that extend across the wide variations in implementation: (a) the centrality of race and racism and their “intersectionality” with other forms of subordination; (b) a challenge to dominant ideology; (c) commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge which acknowledges a legitimization of the perspectives of people of color through “counter-storytelling”; and (e) a transdisciplinary perspective that highlights the importance of contextual and historical analysis (Banks, 1993; Bell, 1995; Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002; Yasso, 2005). Bell (1995) further details, what is often included as a sixth tenet, the notion of “Interest Convergence.” The following is more detail regarding each of the tenets.

The Centrality of Race and Racism and Their Intersectionality with Other Forms of Subordination

In addition to the significance of race in establishing inequities, CRT recognizes race as a central factor in the marginalization of groups of people. It also combines with other forms of subordination (i.e., gender and socioeconomic class) to form a “layering” of oppression. Yet, even within this context, race pervades as the dominant factor. Though differences between race and class are identifiers for subjecting oppression, CRT scholars propose that socioeconomic class analysis alone cannot explain what first and foremost

reflects racial oppression (Barnes, 1990; Russell, 1992; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

The Challenge to Dominant Ideology

Calmore (1992) articulates that CRT “challenges the traditional claims that the educational system and its institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity . . . traditional claims act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U. S. society” (p. 70). This tenet critiques the assumptions, norms, backgrounds and paradigms of the dominant culture (Cook, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995).

The Commitment to Social Justice

CRT focuses its work on issues of social justice in an effort to empower marginalized groups and, ultimately, eliminate racism, sexism and poverty. Solórzano and Yasso (2001) further stipulate that the foundation of this process begins with an acknowledgement that “educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize co-existing with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 598).

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge—Legitimization of Perspective

CRT also recognizes the experiential knowledge of marginalized groups as legitimate, appropriate and necessary in order to understand, analyze and, ultimately, overcome racial and other types of subordination. In valuing this experiential knowledge, certain methods of study become particularly useful, including storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables and narratives. These methods, though powerful in nature, are often challenged as means of valid study by those opposed to CRT (Bell, 1995; Collins,

1991; Crenshaw, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002).

The Counter-Story

Nevertheless, these methods create what is often referred to as the “counter-story,” the story of the marginalized group (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Solórzano and Yasso (2002) broaden the definition of counter-story-telling as “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories or racial privilege . . . shatter[ing] complacency, challeng[ing] the dominant discourse on race and further[ing] the struggle for racial reform” (p. 32). Counter-stories (or counter-narratives) are deeply entrenched in the African American tradition, and often exist in the form of personal accounts, the telling of others’ stories, or through the composition of narratives that may be based on biographical and autobiographical data from individual or multiple people (Delgado, 2000; Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). These counter-stories have the following five pedagogical functions:

1. Building community among those among the margins of society;
2. Challenging the perceived wisdom of the dominant ideology;
3. Exposing the new realities of those at the margins of society through shared experiences;
4. Teaching others that, by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct a new reality that is richer than either the story or the old reality alone; and
5. Providing a context for understanding and transform established belief systems (Delgado, 2000; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001).

The Transdisciplinary Perspective

This tenet of CRT insists on providing a historical context to the analysis of institutional practice. Solórzano and Yasso (2001) further illustrates that a CRT pedagogy “challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses and insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them in both a historical and contemporary context” (p. 599). Analysis on this level mandates a transdisciplinary approach that encompasses history, sociology, law, ethnic studies, women’s studies, and other fields to gain clearer insight to marginalized perspectives.

Interest Convergence

According to Bell (1995), interest convergence involves the phenomena that the interests of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites. On a broader spectrum, the argument can be expanded to address the phenomena that change only happens within larger society when the interests of the dominant group converge with the interests of marginalized groups. The benefits that allow interest convergence to occur are often hidden, but may be obvious.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA compliments CRT based on its tenets, including (a) a focus on social issues; (b) a recognition that power relations are discursive; (c) the idea that discourse constitutes society and culture; (d) a belief that ideologies are produced and reinforced through discourse; (e) a focus on the relevance of a historical context; (f) an explanation of how the connection between text (language) and society is mediated; and (g) an interpretive and explanatory premise (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Gee, 1992, 1996; Gee, Hull, & Lakshear, 1996; Gee, Michaels, & O’Connor, 1992).

The Focus on Social Issues

While CDA focuses on language and language issues in general, it is particularly committed to how language produces and reinforces social and cultural processes. CDA follows a critical approach to social problems in its endeavors to explicate power relationships which are frequently hidden. It aims to derive results which are of practical relevance to the social, cultural, political and even economic contexts (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Power Relations are Discursive

CDA explains how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through text (written and spoken) (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Gee (2004) further highlights different approaches to CDA by encouraging others to "treat social practices in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power" (p. 33). Within CDA, discourse has even been defined as a social practice. That is, discourse moves back and forth between reflecting and constructing the social world. Therefore, language in and of itself cannot be considered neutral (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Gee, 2004), thus leading to the next two tenets of CDA.

Discourse Constitutes Society and Culture

Since language cannot be neutral, every instance of language use is important. Each makes its own contribution to society and culture through the reproduction and transformation of power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Van Dijk (2001) continues by detailing how the relationship exists on a micro (language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication) and macro (power, dominance and inequality) level in

analysis. Van Dijk highlights ways to analyze and bridge the levels through consideration of the following:

1. *Members–groups*: Language users engage in discourse *as* members of (several) social groups, organizations, or institutions; and conversely, groups thus may act "by" their members.
2. *Actions–process*: Social acts of individual actors are thus constituent parts of group actions and social processes, such as legislation, newsmaking, or the reproduction of racism.
3. *Context–social structure*: Situations of discursive interaction are similarly part or constitutive of social structure; for example, a press conference may be a typical practice of organizations and media institutions. That is, "local" and more "global" contexts are closely related, and both exercise constraints on discourse.
4. *Personal and social cognition*: Language users as social actors have both personal and social cognition: personal memories, knowledge and opinions, as well as those shared with members of the group or culture as a whole. Both types of cognition influence interaction and discourse of individual members, whereas shared "social representations" govern the collective actions of a group. (p. 354)

Ideologies are Produced and Reinforced through Discourse

Ideologies are also produced through discourse. In addition to analysis of text, the discursive practice of how the texts are received and interpreted must also be considered (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

The Focus on Historical Context

Discourses can only be understood fully in reference to their historical context. CDA, therefore, refers to extralinguistic factors such as culture, society and ideology in historical terms (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

The Connection between Text (Language) and Society is Mediated

CDA is concerned with making connections between sociocultural processes and structures along with properties of texts (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Gee, 1999, 2004; van Dijk, 2001). CDA also acknowledges the complexities by recognizing that the relationship not necessarily be deterministic but a type of mediation (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). Fairclough

studies this mediated relationship between text and society by looking at orders of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). Van Dijk (2001) also introduces a sociocognitive level to CDA.

The Interpretive and Explanatory Premise

CDA goes beyond textual analysis. It is not only interpretative but explanatory in intent (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Discourse is a Form of Social Action

A final tenet of CDA uncovers power relations. Therefore, it strives to impact change through examining ways of communication and social action (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

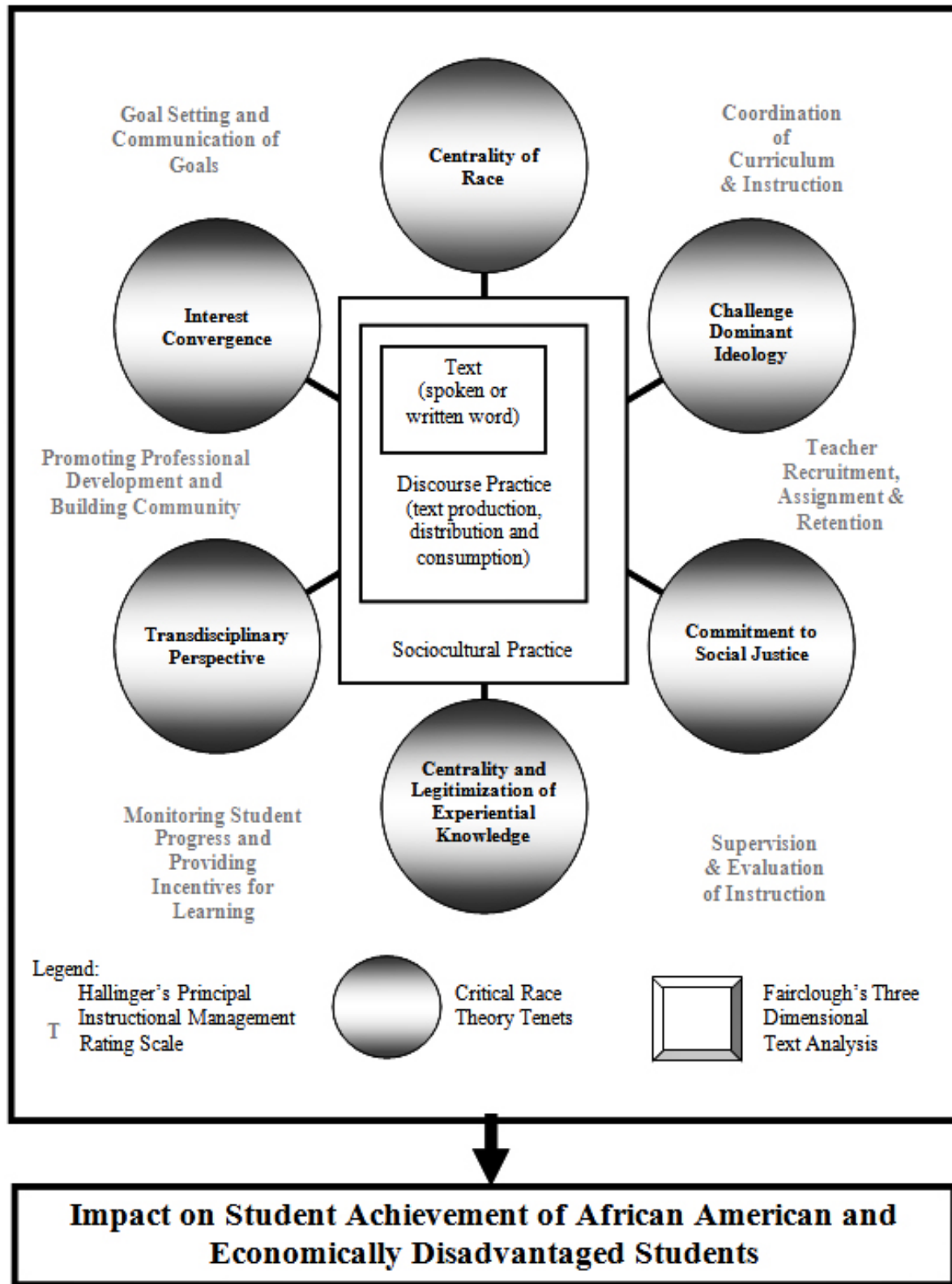
Critical Racial Discourse Analysis

Therefore, CRT and CDA combined examine and challenge cultural assumptions through the selection of research questions based on the work of scholars who highlight the contradictions between points of leverage (i.e., accountability vs. equity), focus on the issues of their marginalized clients, and declare that only the critical consciousness of administrators, teachers and students will foster social change rather than reproduction (Achinstein et al., 2004; Apple, 1996; Banks, 1999; Brosio, 1994; Nieto, 1999a, 1999b). If we truly believe *all* children can learn, how do our actions within the educational system match our words? If we are to transform, we must begin by recognizing that impact of race in America in order close the gap between our words and our actions and ultimately the gaps between our students' opportunities for success.

Therefore, a combined model for research would utilize the six tenets of CRT to encompass Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis of text (language). Fairclough's analysis is based on three components, including description, interpretation and explanation. Linguistic properties of texts (spoken word) will be described and analyzed. Then, the

relationship between the processes of discursive practice and the texts will be interpreted. Finally, the relationship between discursive practice and social practice will be explained (Fairclough, 1995). As Fairclough's model attempts, this establishes a systematic method for exploring the relationship between text and its social context. On the periphery of the combined CRT-CDA model are the categories from the interview protocol for the initial study (i.e., Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale).

Figure 2.1. Theoretical Framework: Critical Racial Discourse Analysis



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methods for the study. Following are details regarding the purpose of the study, site and participant selection, data collection and methods for analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how teachers and principals prioritize the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students when focusing on key categories identified in successful schools. The study will utilize a combined framework incorporating Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to determine the degree to which identified schools with significant African American and economically disadvantaged populations verbalize their prioritized need to focus on issues of marginalized groups. Are they silenced when it comes to discussing issues of race? Do teachers and principals reflect the same commitment to goals directed at closing the gap? Do these schools become trailblazers of success or reproducers of prescribed societal positions?

Theoretical Framework

In the construction of the counter-story, a combined model for research utilizes the six tenets of Critical Race Theory to encompass Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional analysis of text (language). Fairclough's analysis is based on three components, including

description, interpretation and explanation. Linguistic properties of texts (spoken word) will be described and analyzed. Then, the relationship between the processes of discursive practice and the texts will be interpreted. Finally, the relationship between discursive practice and social practice will be explained (Fairclough, 1995). As Fairclough's model attempts, this establishes a systematic method for exploring the relationship between text and its social context. CRT will then be used to interpret the results of the textual analysis. On the periphery of the combined CRT-CDA model are the categories from the interview protocol for the initial study, adapted from Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale.

Research Design

Within the context of CRT and CDA, this study will utilize the counter-story as a methodology for deconstructing the HSRA interviews. This research borrows from the methodology implemented by Solórzano and Yasso (2002), creating counter-stories from (a) data gathered from principals and teachers for the HSRA study (including transcriptions and notes; (b) existing literature; (c) my professional experiences; and (d) my personal experiences. They further highlight the use of a concept called "theoretical sensitivity," which is referred to as:

a personal quality of the researcher. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data. One can come to the research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending upon previous reading and experience with or relevant to the data. It can also be developed further during the research process. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't. (p. 33)

In addition to the interview transcriptions, existing literature, my professional and personal experiences as the researcher, basic demographic and achievement data were also

utilized. The use of the quantitative data was triangulated with the qualitative data for verification purposes. Utilizing of the broader definition of triangulation, this research incorporated multiple researchers from the original study and the combination of multiple theories in the establishment of the theoretical framework.

In reviewing the transcriptions, connections were drawn with the literature review and the individual school data. The information was filtered for statements related to the African American and economically disadvantaged students. Once these various sources of data were compiled, examined, and analyzed, two composite schools were developed to draw comparisons, protect individual school identities and enhance the ability to tell the counter-story.

This study focused heavily on description, identification of themes and interpretation coupled with researcher reflexivity, as language is examined to determine the degree to which teachers and administrators prioritize the educational needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students. The study is designed to examine central themes that arise when discussing key aspects of school improvement planning and decision making with teacher and principals from HP and BTO high schools.

Major Research Questions

In an attempt to meet the detailed purpose, the study is designed to answer the following question: How do North Carolina teachers and principals in “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools prioritize the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students across six categories of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS):

1. Goal Setting and Communication of Goals;
2. Coordination of Curriculum and Instruction;
3. Teacher Recruitment, Assignment and Retention;
4. Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction;
5. Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning;
6. Promoting Professional Development and Building Community

To build a framework for answering the main question, the study will also focus on answering the following distinct subquestions:

1. How do North Carolina teachers and principals explicitly target the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students in “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools across six categories of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)?
2. How do North Carolina “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools address the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students differently across the six identified categories?
3. How do the words utilized by teachers and principals in North Carolina “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools reflect the trends in the academic achievement of African American and economically disadvantaged students?

Rationale for Qualitative Approach

Creswell (2008) defines qualitative research as that “in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective biased manner” (p. 46). The deep reliance on the words

and positions of the participants drives this need for the study to originate from a qualitative perspective.

Role of the Researcher—Researcher Reflexivity

As mentioned earlier, Creswell (2008) recognizes researcher reflexivity as a key characteristic of qualitative research. In this method of study, the role of the researcher is recognized as being critical to the process itself. Creswell exemplifies this concept in the following passage:

As individuals who have a history and a cultural background themselves, [researchers] realize that their interpretation is only one possibility, and that their report does not have any privileged authority over other interpretations that readers, participants, and other researchers may have. It is important, therefore, for ethnographers to position themselves within their report and identify their standpoint or point of view. (p. 485)

Therefore, my role as researcher begins with my position as an individual. I am first and foremost an African American woman. This positioning drives my interest in this study. Having experienced the American educational system from the margins, I am invested in the research from a very personal perspective.

Secondly, in the wake of Judge Howard Manning's decision in the *Leandro* case, about 10 percent of the state's high schools were identified as "failing" or low-performing (high priority) based on the End of Course (EOC) testing. In these high schools, less than 60 percent of the students are proficient on EOC testing. As part of a team, I was invited to participate in the HSRA Study designed to determine whether the level of resources provided to school districts and the use of the resources within the schools accounts for their failure to produce adequate student performance. The study was interested in potential differences in how higher and lower performing schools utilize these allocations. Secondly, the leg of the study in which I was actively engaged was the qualitative piece clarifying how the high

priority schools differ from higher performing schools with similar demographics, and determining what improvement strategies have been selected in these schools, what evidence supported the selected strategies and whether they have been fully funded and implemented.

While I wholeheartedly agree with the clear rationale for a need to look at the differences between the higher and lower performing high schools, on a more personal level, I had additional motives for getting involved in the study. When looking at the schools on Judge Manning's list, all were schools with 50 percent or more of the population being African American students. In more recent times, a great deal of research has focused on the role of socioeconomic status in student learning, often to the degree of declaring student achievement is not as related to race as to whether or not the child lives in poverty. Yet, as the schools that are on the list have an updated average African American population of approximately 80 percent, the average free and reduced lunch populations is approximately 70 percent (see Table 3.1). Why are the schools with higher concentrations of other ethnic groups (especially White students) not on the list? Why are schools in the state with higher percentages of free and reduced lunch students and higher percentages of White students not on the list? It is important to investigate what teachers and principals have to say, or do *not* have to say, about this in the context of the study.

Site Selection and Participants

Initial site selection and the identification of participants were limited by the selection and identification criteria for the HSRA Study. Within the initial study, the team identified four sets of schools, based on demographics, financial expenditures, teacher quality, and academic performance. This was not a difficult task as there are many instances of natural grouping largely determined by the demographics of the schools.

Table 3.1. Summary of Demographics and Academic Performance for High Priority High Schools in North Carolina

School	Performance Composite (percent)						ADM	2006-07	
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07		Percent Needy	Percent Black
HP 1*	49.30	50.50	56.00	53.70	46.50	39.50	1070	66.17	61.12
HP 2	43.80	41.40	44.10	45.50	47.50	35.50	1347	72.98	73.69
HP 3	44.10	50.70	52.50	53.20	42.70	41.80	946	92.60	84.44
HP 4	45.10	42.00	46.50	45.60	39.50	36.70	1004	57.77	68.58
HP 5	37.20	48.50	45.60	50.90	51.70	44.50	1473	66.46	95.54
HP 6	50.20	54.20	54.70	51.20	52.90	49.40	1214	67.71	88.13
HP 7	40.20	42.40	40.70	48.40	49.30	48.20	1151	64.99	56.55
HP 8	36.70	39.00	44.90	42.70	45.50	50.00	1518	78.46	67.41
HP 9	45.10	52.80	50.40	53.50	52.80	42.90	645	96.43	98.01
HP 10*	36.20	46.80	39.90	48.30	41.30	35.40	1058	59.17	81.91
HP 11	46.50	49.00	49.80	47.30	43.50	40.90	1376	58.72	91.96
HP 12	46.10	48.00	56.90	50.70	51.60	43.40	815	60.74	55.87
HP 13	39.90	47.80	49.80	46.40	46.50	57.90	348	72.70	94.25
HP 14	40.90	44.40	43.70	39.10	35.20	30.90	854	58.55	86.10
HP 15*	39.70	42.00	54.00	50.60	49.00	42.20	521	66.03	83.45
HP 16	29.70	35.70	43.70	37.20	34.70	38.30	560	79.46	98.05
HP 17	52.80	54.90	53.10	54.10	44.80	39.90	1456	47.80	76.05
HP 18	31.20	25.50	31.00	37.10	40.40	46.10	1790	75.36	87.87
HP 19	48.10	44.00	48.00	47.90	48.00	52.20	1964	67.46	64.19
AVG	42.25	45.24	47.65	47.55	45.44	42.93	1111.05	68.92	79.64
HP 20*	50.90	56.60	58.20	59.20	53.10	42.30	1483	52.66	64.65

Sites

Data from the 2004-2005 school year was used to distinguish three different categories of North Carolina high schools—High Priority, Beating the Odds and High-Performing. The data reviewed included seven variables used to predict NC high schools' performance composites: eighth-grade reading and mathematics EOG scores and the percentages of free and reduced lunch, Black, Hispanic and disabled students in the school. These areas were identified based on prior research indicating their significant impact on achievement scores. The regression analysis also revealed three key student background variables that accounted for the largest shares of variation across high schools. These variables were eighth-grade mathematics scores, the percentage of students receiving federally subsidized free lunches, and the percentage of students who are Black.

The quantitative team used ranked standardized residuals from a multiple regression procedure to identify several schools with high proportions of minority and low-income students that performed well above the expected growth benchmarks. This process yielded the first nine schools included in Table 3.2. After removing schools that failed to show consistent improvement over a five-year period, this procedure yielded a set of five schools with challenging populations that were focused on for the study.

High priority schools were chosen based on demographic similarities to the five BTO schools of focus in the following areas: (a) the percentage of students participating in the Free Lunch program; (b) the total percentage of students who were African-American, Hispanic, or Native American; (c) mean eighth-grade math scores; and (d) mean eighth-grade reading scores. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate that while these attempts were made, there are still significance differences in the demographics of the high priority and BTO schools.

Table 3.2. Summary of Demographics and Academic Performance for “Beating the Odds” High Schools in North Carolina

School	Performance Composite						2006-07		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	ADM	Percent Needy	Percent Black
BTO 1	51.00	61.00	79.20	76.80	66.20	50.60	195	55.90	41.81
BTO 2	51.70	59.70	65.00	69.50	57.80	43.50	677	73.26	63.25
BTO 3	62.80	71.20	72.50	75.40	68.90	61.00	738	72.90	42.93
BTO 4	62.40	67.30	77.50	78.10	63.80	57.40	859	54.83	52.81
BTO 5*	56.60	55.80	65.40	73.50	68.40	56.70	343	84.84	88.65
BTO 6	51.50	50.30	60.40	65.40	57.00	49.10	342	74.56	78.70
BTO 7	46.60	55.70	63.50	72.00	73.80	66.90	907	68.36	34.68
BTO 8*	66.50	68.50	73.10	71.20	68.90	56.00	803	58.90	64.43
BTO 9*	76.80	72.30	74.90	71.30	65.20	55.50	710	57.32	56.68
AVG	58.43	62.42	70.17	72.58	65.56	55.19	619.33	66.76	58.22
<i>BTO 10*</i>	<i>79.30</i>	<i>83.30</i>	<i>89.10</i>	<i>90.70</i>	<i>85.30</i>	<i>83.50</i>	<i>1831</i>	<i>27.31</i>	<i>39.65</i>

Although the two sets of high schools correlate favorably regarding their economically disadvantaged populations, there are significant differences when comparing the percent of Black students and student enrollment (ADM).

The selection process yielded twenty high schools for study. The teams were unable to visit two of the identified high priority schools, resulting in a total sample of 18 schools for the project.

For the focus of this study, additional considerations had to be made to conduct the secondary analysis. Some principals and teachers refused recording during the interviews, so these high schools were removed from the sample. Interviews from other schools were not recorded successfully, further restricting the sample. A total of eight high schools are

included in the sample, two being outliers. On Table 3.1, HP 20 is a high school that provided complete data, but it has been removed from the list of identified high schools. Nevertheless, a closer review of the deemed it appropriate to be included in the sample. It was not included in the averages for the sample. Also, on Table 3.2, HP 10 is actually a high performing school, but its demographics and academic results are significantly different from the other BTO high schools. HP 10 is also the only high performing high school with a significantly diverse population. For comparison purposes, however, it is affiliated with the BTO schools for sampling. It was not included in the averages for the sample.

Access

Access to participants in the initial HSRA Study was arranged by the team. The study was commissioned by the Governor in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the NC Department of Public Instruction. Therefore, schools tended to be more receptive in response to the study's affiliation these state agencies. On the other hand, this connection made some interviewees cautious of their remarks.

Also, the principal at each site was responsible for selecting the teachers to be interviewed. For smaller high schools, such as the trend for the BTO Schools, this posed no significant challenge (see Table 3.2) for average daily membership (ADM). With smaller faculties and the initial selection criteria of teachers from core subject areas, most of the faculty was interviewed. For larger high schools, as is the case for most of the high priority high schools, the number of teachers interviewed was a much smaller representation of the entire staff (see Table 3.1 for ADM).

When determining access to the data for a secondary analysis, however, additional challenges arose. First, permission had to be granted for a secondary analysis. Once

permission was granted, I had to obtain copies of all the digital recordings from the interviews. Due to computer error, several of recordings are no longer accessible, restricting the population to be included in the study.

Data Collection

The study involves several levels of data collection. As part of the HSRA Study, I participated in a group that conducted two-on-one private interviews with principals. These interviews generally involved two team members, in which one served as a recorder. Focus group interviews were conducted with teachers of core subject areas within the same identified sites. An interview protocol was developed for both groups (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

Additionally, the study will incorporate document review and analysis. The document review involved a brief analysis of the following information for each school:

- Student Population
- Free & Reduced Lunch Rate
- Student Race/Ethnicity Rates (including Black, White, Hispanic, American Indian, Multi-Racial and Asian)
- Per Pupil Expenditure
- Cohort Graduation Rate
- SAT Average/Participation Rate
- 2002-2003 through 2005-2006 EOC Proficiency Rates
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 School Designations
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Growth Status
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 AYP Status

- Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers
- Percentage of Classes Taught by Teachers Designated as “Highly Qualified”
- Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees
- Number of National Board Certified Teachers
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Teacher Turnover Rates
- Percentage of Teachers with 0-3, 4-10 and 10 plus Years Experience in Teaching

This information was initially utilized to determine the full picture of the school’s current status, to develop additional questions that may need to be addressed during the interviews, and to verify information obtained through interviews. Supplementary materials (i.e. handbooks, lesson plan templates, school improvement plans) were also collected at the school site based on questions asked and information volunteered by the participants. The information will be updated to be utilized in the study to verify and analyze information obtained in the interviews.

The final level of data collection involves digital recordings and transcriptions of the four HP and four BTO high schools. Glesne (1999) highlights the benefits of recording by indicating that it “provides a nearly complete record of what has been said and permits easy attention to the course of the interview” (p. 78). Due to the establishment of a Critical Racial Discourse Analysis framework, the digital recordings are invaluable for capturing the language that will be analyzed and interpreted.

Data Analysis

Corresponding with the collection of different types of data, the study also involves a layered approach to analysis. Creswell (2008) confirms that all ethnographic processes

develop a description, analyze the data, and provide interpretation regarding the meaning of the data. He further states:

In a critical ethnography, you need to consider a balance among description, analysis and interpretation so that each becomes an important element of your analysis . . . Specifically, you need to interpret your findings in view of the changes that need to occur. (pp. 489-490)

Therefore, the three models contributing to the development of the theoretical framework assist in the balance of the description, analysis and interpretation processes. The PIMRS-based framework from the interview protocol will largely be used to describe what teachers and principals stated in general regarding key processes that contribute to the success of schools. CDA will be used to analyze the degree to which teachers and principals discuss the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students when considering strategies evidenced to be successful. Finally CRT will provide the lens through which the findings are interpreted in terms of impacting change.

Establishing Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study exists on several levels. Trustworthiness can be defined as the degree to which qualitative inquiry is “worth paying attention to” according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290). This is quite different from the qualitative methods need to show validity, soundness, and significance. Trustworthiness is based on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a “credible” conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was obtained through the triangulation of transcriptions, existing literature, personal and professional experiences as the researcher, basic demographic and achievement data. Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of the HSRA Study, I was able to compare my findings in reviewing the transcriptions to those from the qualitative portion of the larger study. Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study incorporated multiple theories in the use of the PIRMS as a framework to utilize the combined CRT and CDA methods. Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My findings were also reviewed a peer who served on the HSRA Team. In addition to these attempts to establish trustworthiness, the use of the Critical Racial Discourse Analysis framework warrants that focus on the experiential knowledge of the researcher.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations beyond the control of research. First, since this research involves a secondary data analysis, numerous factors are uncontrolled by the researcher. While I participated in data collection for the initial HSRA Study, there is also a reliance on data from other interviewers. Interviewees were asked questions regarding the seven identified categories mentioned above, therefore limiting the possibility of deeper inquiry or additional questioning. There was also no control over the interview protocol.

Additionally, participants were asked specifically about students from African American or lower socioeconomic backgrounds. While the interview protocol provided an opportunity for them to have an open forum to discuss issues of race and socioeconomics as priorities, it also did not specifically give them the opportunity to expand on thoughts and strategies they may actually possess and utilize regarding these targeted groups.

While incorporating a framework that combines Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis provides the platform for a unique perspective, it also limits the study. A tenet of Critical Race Theory is the counter-story. The counter-story is the story of the marginalized group (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Yet, the HSRA Study does not incorporate the voices of African American and economically disadvantaged students. In fact it does not even include the voices of their parents. Solórzano and Yasso (2002) broaden the definition of counter-story-telling as “a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories or racial privilege . . . shatter[ing] complacency, challeng[ing] the dominant discourse on race and further[ing] the struggle for racial reform” (p. 32). There is great value in the counter-story, but it will be limited in this research in terms of hearing the voices of the students and parents. While the methodology implemented creates a counter-story, the construction of the point of view includes the words of the principals, teachers and the researcher. The study also did not include interviews with counselors or other educational personnel.

Positionality

Walking through the hallways of the HSRA study high schools in jeopardy and the ones wearing a badge of honor (yet still not being so far away from the jeopardized status themselves), I saw many faces that were like looking a mirror at myself. As I walk through the hallways of other high schools doing my daily work, the same images call me. In the wake of Judge Howard Manning’s decision in the Leandro case, about 10 percent of the state’s high schools were identified as “failing” or low-performing based on the End of Course (EOC) testing. In these high schools, less than 60 percent of the students are proficient EOC. When looking at the schools on Judge Manning’s list, all were schools with

50 percent or more of the population being African American students. In more recent times, a great deal of research has focused on the role of socioeconomic status in student learning, to the degree of declaring student achievement is not as related to race as the correlation to whether or not the child lives in poverty. Yet, the schools that are on the list, while having 50 percent or less free or reduced lunch populations, all have more than 50 percent African American students. Why are there no schools with more than 50 percent White, Hispanic or Asian students? Why are there no higher performing schools with more than 50 percent African American students? Interestingly enough, the high school I attended could have been on the list except for the fact that enough African American students did not attend. Yet, the city high school had all of the markings of the high priority schools.

My positionality is the center of this project choice. I want to create dialogue about the “elephant in the room” . . . that our history of racial division still plays an active role in determining the opportunities for our children. I want the disenfranchised “others” to see the value of their positions . . . along with the choices that are often too difficult to see. While I have taken advantage of the opportunity education has afforded via honors and advanced placement classes in high school to my current efforts seeking this terminal degree, for all the successes I can document that happened largely due to the educational system, there are numerous accomplishments achieved—while not without supports—*despite* the system.

Significance of the Study

This study strives to begin construction of the counter-story for African American students within the context of North Carolina high schools. In the construction of the counter-story, however, there must first be a call within research to hear of the voices of those impacted most by the discussion. Although parts of the counter-story reflect

generations of inequities for African American and economically disadvantaged students, it is critical that America acknowledges the degree to which it truly believes that *all* children can learn. Brown (2008) asserts:

Changing demographics of the student population of the nation's schools (i.e., more students of color), the stable demographics of the teaching force (i.e., White, middle class, females), and the growing contrast between the two sets of demographics support the need for all educators to increase their knowledge and social responsibility toward diversity and equity related issues. (p. 9)

This process begins with awareness and acknowledgement of the majoritarian assumptions and how they impact the process of education. As the autobiography of how America educates its "stepchildren" is written, however, this awareness and acknowledgement must be translated into action if the legacy is going to be one of true change.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Whether told by people of color or Whites, majoritarian stories are not often questioned because people do not see them as stories but as “natural” parts of everyday life. Whether we refer to them as monovocals, master narratives, standard stories, or majoritarian stories, it is important to recognize the power of White privilege in constructing stories about race . . . [T]his standard distorts and silences the experiences of people of color. Using “standard formulae,” majoritarian methods purport to be neutral and objective yet implicitly make assumptions according to negative stereotypes about people of color. . . . For example, when White middle-class people fall victim to violence in their own neighborhoods and their schools, the shock comes from the standard story: “How could this happen? This is a good neighborhood” or “We never thought this could happen here. This is a good school.” . . . [A]t the same time, the standard story infers that communities of color and working-class communities may be more accustomed to violence . . . Within the silence . . . the unspoken discourse is that White communities are “good” communities that house “good” schools, and these “good” places do not experience such tragedies . . . “other” communities, “colored” communities, or those “bad” communities are the ones who experience such events. (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002, pp. 28-29)

For the purposes of this research, I developed a structure for organizing and ultimately constructing the dominant themes revealed through the data. Interpretation followed the tradition of CRT through the creation of the counter-story, which also incorporates CDA of the interviews from the HSRA Study. The methodology sought for examples in which the majoritarian story hid the counter-story. As the BTO and HP High Schools, respectively, are blended into the illusion of one, I utilized some poetry to create a portrait of the collective story and the silenced story. Therefore, I, as the researcher, played

an active role in listening, looking and questioning in search of counter-story. This active role incorporates my professional expertise as well as my personal experiences.

Data Collection

My primary data collection method involved the use of digital recordings from the HSRA Study. I was limited by access to the complete sets of both principal and teacher recordings. In narrowing the scope, I limited my span to four identified “Beating the Odds” and four “high priority” schools. The HSRA Study Interview Protocol (See Appendix A) was utilized to interviews, with the interviewer maintaining the freedom to expand on the interviews based on responses, yet ensuring that the six main categories were covered. The interview protocol also streamlined the data collected among nine different interviewers. Additional data collection methods included observer notes from the different sites and document review and analysis of the following information for each school:

- Student Population
- Free & Reduced Lunch Rate
- Student Race/Ethnicity Rates (including Black, White, Hispanic, American Indian, Multi-Racial and Asian)
- Per Pupil Expenditure
- Cohort Graduation Rate
- SAT Average/Participation Rate
- 2002-2003 through 2005-2006 EOC Proficiency Rates
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 School Designations
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Growth Status
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 AYP Status

- Percentage of Fully Licensed Teachers
- Percentage of Classes Taught by Teachers Designated as “Highly Qualified”
- Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees
- Number of National Board Certified Teachers
- 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Teacher Turnover Rates
- Percentage of Teachers with 0-3, 4-10 and 10 plus Years Experience in Teaching.

These combined data in conjunction with existing literature and my personal and professional and personal experiences were filtered through the Critical Racial Discourse Analysis Framework to answer the established research questions.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2003) indicates, “The process of data analysis is eclectic; there is no ‘right way’” (p. 153). Data analysis for this study illustrates the unique approaches that can be utilized in data analysis. In addition to utilizing data that was framed around the PIMRS, the data was then tested against the tenets of CRT through CDA. Transcripts of the digital recordings were saved as rich text files and imported into the computer-based ATLAS.ti program. This programming was used to first go through the data for all eight schools with a coding protocol that was the six PIMRS categories. Once all the data was arranged into the six categories by school types and principal/teacher responses, I then utilized open coding to identify themes that emerged within each category. Upon identifying the most compelling themes, I then condensed the most salient quotes, memos and notes exemplifying those themes into one document. These themes were then tested against the observer notes and document reviews. The interview data were given more weight in the analysis than observer notes and the document reviews. In an effort to build comparison, construct the counter-

story, and maintain the identity of the individual schools, raw data from the combination of each of the school types was condensed into two “stories” that combined the recurring themes for each category, creating the “BTO High School” and the “High Priority High School”. The thematic coding results were then compared to the results from the empirical studies included in the literature review. Finally, I, as the researcher, filtered the themes through the Critical Racial Discourse Analysis framework to identify findings that help address the performance results differences in African American and economically disadvantaged students.

Evidence of the Master Narrative

Culture

buses – here vs. there, us vs. them

*downtown – poor, violent, perpetrators, housing projects, jail
diversity? Black? poverty? or Poverty? black? – difficult, challenging*

Good, Suburban, Honors

International – exotic, intriguing

Values, Respect, Motivation

Ministry

Savior

Interviews first revealed evidence of the master narrative in discussions in which the interviewees actually interjected the issues of race or economic disadvantage. Yet, one of the major observations that arose was the limited discussion of race given the performance results of both schools. Although some references were more substantive than others, use of ATLAS.ti’s word analysis feature revealed only twenty-five references to race. A more in depth analysis revealed more references through the use of race code words (Enaharo, 2003), such as those found in the poem. The poem outlines a foundational piece as it is structured like a fraction, a mathematical of representation of a proportional relationship. Within the fraction, numerator includes code words associated with African American and economically

disadvantaged students and the denominator encompasses language associated with more “positively” viewed groups in the schooling context. In the spirit of these often juxtaposed perceptions, it is notable that the numerator can be—and often is—decreased to zero, the denominator cannot. The expanding language of race code words works in the same manner as the rhetoric of education has adopted words that reinforce power structures that privilege some and marginalize others—giving “value” to the foundational denominator while the value of the numerator may be non-existent (zero). Some race code words lead us to silences that further limit our possibilities of achieving progress with the comfort of uncomfortable silences.

Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)

Since the initial interview protocol (see Appendix A) did not include questions specifically asking about race, it is important to build the context of what the combined sample groups revealed about each of six categories: goal setting and the communication of goals; coordination of curriculum; teacher recruitment, assignment and retention; supervision and evaluation of instruction; monitoring student progress; promoting professional development and building community. Table 4.1 outlines the comparisons of the two schools in each of the categories, followed by a detailed analysis.

Goal Setting and Communication of Goals

An understood goal that he does not come out and say is obviously *our* test scores. *We* won a national award for closing the gap among African American students. Academics is *our* focus in the classroom. They also expect *us* to be just that good in everything that *we* do. *We* are not to do poorly in anything.

The voices of teachers expound with a sense of pride on the success as they exclaim all the reasons for their success. At the BTO High School, teachers confirm the principal’s

leadership in the establishment of school goals, which are recorded in the school improvement plan. The principal identifies goals, generally related to AYP and growth (via percent proficient) as well as a focus on the attendance rate. The goals as well as the ownership of those goals are embraced across the school. Additionally, there is an intense and strategic focus on the data. This finding corresponds to what Billig et al. (2005) discovered in high-performing schools, nothing that (a) Change is difficult but necessary; (b) Leadership and resources exists at all levels to meet goals; and (c) Federal and state policies serve as catalysts, but strategies of reaching the mandates is locally driven. In the BTO High School, teachers routinely acknowledged the single factor impacting their success the most as leadership.

Table 4.1. Summary of the BTO High School and the High Priority High School

Comparisons

	The BTO High School	The High Priority High School
Goal Setting and the Communication of Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal guides goal setting, clearly communicates goals to stakeholders and cultivates buy-in • Goal setting and communication regarding progress is based on data • Teachers are vested in goals and often lead the progress at school, departmental and classroom levels • Development of a common language regarding goals—it is like a mantra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While principal still largely guides goal setting, not meaningful to a significant percentage of stakeholders • Goal setting is based on performance measures and external pressures • Teachers tend to be passive players in the process, yet feel a tremendous amount of pressure to meet external demands • Teachers and principals alike exhibit a lack of ownership regarding the future

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal clearly articulates the incorporation of goals addressing racial/ socioeconomic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blame tends to be placed on the demographics of the school in relation to not meeting goals
Coordination of Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are actively engaged in the coordination of curriculum with the leadership of the principal Teachers follow the guide of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, and mastery of the standards (preparation classes) Sense of control over the curriculum and room for creativity Strategic assignment of students to classes and teachers based on performance (best teachers have challenging classes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disconnectedness from coordination of curriculum process—handled by department heads, principal and district Focus on pressures of test and the feeling that so much testing does not allow time to adequately teach the curriculum; focus on NCSCOS Lack of feeling of control over the curriculum and little to no room from creativity Although there is lots of data available, decision are not always made on the results
Teacher Recruitment, Assignment, and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative culture assists in the recruitment of teachers—sense of community Leadership focuses and provides support to new teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment is challenged by negative perceptions of the school environment Teachers are often assigned to classes based on experience and fear they may leave
Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision is differentiated based on the needs of teacher There is a comfort level with others entering classrooms Non-punitive methods to address areas needing improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling that administration is more visible due to negative aspects of the environment Demands on principal often take them out of the building Management issues often supersede instructional needs
Monitoring Student Progress and Providing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative and summative assessments are utilized and the teachers find them meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of benchmark testing but not fully developed or utilized to alter instruction

Incentives for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement provided to students • Evidence of principal relationships with students • Efforts to relate instruction to student experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative views of students and their homes articulated • Evidence of principal disaggregating scores, but little teacher involvement • Little effort to relate instruction to student experiences
Promoting Professional Development and Building Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of developing and advanced Professional Learning Communities • Meaningful professional learning occurs within the school community • Common planning times are effective in planning for student success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning Communities are in the infancy stages • Professional learning is uncoordinated and often from external sources • Common planning times are not utilized

More importantly, this leadership did not simply reside within the realm of the principalship, as teachers confirm the establishment of departmental goals as meaningful to the everyday work. These goals are developed by the teachers and supported by administration. They define the percentage point gain to be achieved in each subject area. While some teachers believed that the school has clear test-based goals but lacks an overall vision for the future, they also recognized a joint vision for the school that created by the faculty. This vision has existed for a number of years and survived the changing helms of leadership. As defined by the principal, most school goals are focused on higher test scores.

Other goals are based on building teams and developing effective working conditions. The faculty knows how many students must score proficient to achieve AYP in each subgroup. Remediation is also constant and built into the original school planning. One teacher stated the following:

Everyone is bombarded with the message [that] it is important to achieve. It is all the time . . . all the time . . . The kids know from the 9th grade on that EOCs are important, those scores are important, that SAT's important, you need to get your information into the guidance office. There are scholarships available. It is all the time. It never stops.

The message of success extends beyond the measure of test scores into a school climate and culture that maintains high expectations, which is another characteristic that defines high-impact and higher performing schools (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust 2005a).

Teachers also expressed great acceptance, and even desire, regarding their diverse population. They strive to see things from the perspective of their students. The principal intentionally mentioned the goal of “targeting” an identified population exhibiting low performance within the school. He even states, “I want the faculty to reflect the diversity of the student body . . . White males have white male teachers they can talk to and our African American males have African American male role models. That’s been important in the relationships that our teachers try to cultivate.” Teachers further highlight the involvement of leadership in the process:

He looks at data. He looked at for instance last years test scores and attendance. I don’t know how many hundreds of students, he looked at and he said, “You gotta to keep these students in school because we want them to be successful because these are the ones that are not being successful.”

This type of targeted focus is revealed in the performance measures for the school (i.e. AYP, growth, “gap” analysis).

When the principal and teachers were asked about their goals at the HP High School, their objectives were also related to student success. The teachers articulated the principal’s primary goal as achieving AYP and the minimum proficiency to be removed from the list. Test scores are still largely the focus, but from punitive standpoint. In the spirit of deficit

thinking, the following exchange illustrates the lack of internalization of the goals and their application to building student success:

Teacher: Yes, our school improvement team...our school improvement plan is very specific. Per department with goals and benchmarks to get us to 50, 60, 70 percent proficiency over the next few years, it is spelled out. The school improvement team constantly monitors us and [the coordinator] ... she would really be a good person for you to talk to and she is here today.

Interviewer: And it recognizes problems and it sets goals, but the question is how broad is the buy in? It is a sense of is it all buy in or is it no buy in? What would you say in terms of? Is there a...

Teacher: 25 percent. And it is discussed departmentally. It is discussed at staff meetings. We have our committee meetings every month. It is plenty of information exchanged with teachers and teachers are allowed feedback and input. It is just no excuse. If you have the opportunity for input and you choose not to then I don't understand how you can 1) complain and 2) refuse to buy in.

Teacher 2: It's been communicated in staff meetings. Everybody gets a copy of the school improvement team's plan. Whether they read it or not of course is a whole other issue. I think they know I really, talking to staff, I think there's a real feeling that 60 percent is not reachable here with the current set of circumstances at the school. And I hate to say that because I believe in hope and I believe in faith that students are going to do well, but with many of the challenges that we see on a daily basis, I think that EOC results at 60 percent, I don't think many people are buying it, to be honest. I try to hope and pray for the best and try to prepare my students for the best, but 60 percent in my regular US History will be unbelievable.

Some teachers mentioned a technology goal and grant-related goals. Additionally, the principal mentioned goals related to specific programming, such as Learning-Focused Schools and Balanced Literacy that are largely directed by the district. Though the teachers acknowledged the existence of a three-year plan and verified that the information within the plan was shared with teachers and students, it did not appear to be very personal to them. Even the principal's description of goals often included statements regarding the central office starting an initiative or the goals from grants that began prior to his arrival. While the teachers at the BTO High School felt a sense of empowerment, the principal at the HP High

School even acknowledges the need for increased teacher empowerment in the following quote:

We do try as best we can to get our best teachers in those EOC classes within the constraints that we don't want teachers teaching three preparations and teaching in three different rooms, three different periods, those sort of things, but we do try to give the departments a lot of voice about who teaches what and we do try to oversee that and say this person maybe doesn't need to be teaching Algebra I, they may need to be teaching Geometry instead or whatever. Other decisions as far as pacing and so forth, they come from Central office.

The HP teacher groups were particularly expressive about the external establishment of goals and the impact the pressure is having on the school environment. When asked to articulate the goals, one teacher, said, "We would like to control our own future as a school." Another continued, "We would like to not be told what to do all the time and maintain our own setup design." A third continued:

We don't want to be taken over. I think I can speak for everybody, but we want to change the climate that the kids feel. It's not that we just want to change the numbers. We want the kids to want to change the numbers. It's not just; I mean it's not the same thing to me. I think that our ultimate goal is that it's not the numbers, it's that the kids would want the information and value the information, but the numbers take over.

Finally, a teacher summarized the sentiment in the following statement:

Yeah, the numbers take over ... The pressure on us to reach certain numbers. We turn around and teach classes differently, I mean maybe with a different attitude or atmosphere that the kids might feel when they come into the room the pressure in we have jobs here and we have stake in that. A lot of times the kids will shut down if you over pressure them and I think they might be feeling that, but that is what we are hoping doesn't happen.

The feelings expressed by the teachers, and to some extent the principal, capture a lack of ownership regarding the future of the school. Though the desire is strong to do what is felt to be in the best interest of students, the teachers do not sense they have the power to determine what is done in their classrooms.

Within the walls of schools across American that are rising to the occasion, rather than just “beating the odds,” the centrality of race is recognized as a force with which we must be reckoned. These schools are willing to have the “crucial conversations” (Singleton, 2005) necessary to drive change for all.

*Am I included in your promise?
Am I a priority or an afterthought?
Should I be one to sit at the table
With brothers and sisters to share the lot;
Or must I wait until all are finished to see what scraps are left?
As we enjoy the fruits of democracy,
Am I able to discuss my contributions to the successes of the day,
Or is my story lost in on the ears of the lighter tradition that everyone longs to hear?*

Coordination of Curriculum and Instruction

At the BTO High School, principal and department chairs make curriculum decisions. Teachers acknowledge that they are given opportunities for input and leadership responds positively to their ideas and preferences. Though leadership sometimes has to make decisions without teacher input (or in spite of teacher input), teachers and the principal confirm that these times are rare. Billig et al. (2005) highlights the difference that such collaborative spirit in “closing the gap” efforts, noting particularly the collective responsibility and unwillingness to accept excuses for failure. Leadership in the BTO High School also tries to match strengths and preferences with student needs, and with consideration teacher desires. Education Trust (2005a) notes that high-impact schools consider multiple factors in effort to match students and teachers. Departmental leadership is selected by the principal and is viewed by teachers as having great influence in making curricular decisions with the principal. The principal acknowledges that while he has the final say the teachers are the

curricular experts. He defers to them on student-level decisions, and states, “If they weren’t experts, I wouldn’t have hired them.” The curriculum facilitator also provides assistance.

Teachers are expected to follow the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) and to adhere to pacing guides aligned to the NCSCOS. The school places a tremendous focus on the basics first. They offer few electives and few AP courses. During the summer, leadership engages in intensive collaboration to work on pacing guides, prioritize the curriculum, and create reading lists, and all the other things necessary to be prepared to begin instruction on the first day. In implementing standards-based instruction, the curriculum is aligned and data is used consistently in making curricular decisions, as observed in high-impact schools (Billig et al., 2005; Education Trust, 2005a). The principal constructs a detailed portrait of the depth of these processes in the following passage:

It starts for us in the summer. And what we do differently at this high school than probably most high schools is that we—me and the rest of the assistant principals myself go through every registration form ourselves. You see, starting school it is unacceptable . . . for even one student to even be short one class . . . And I’ve been to schools and on the first day of school and they have a 150 kids in the auditorium because they don’t have schedules or they have long lines . . . We also start establishing relationships. We eat lunch together. We talk. And then every assistant principal understands about scheduling. We go through every schedule and after we go through every schedule we make sure that kids are signed up for what they’ve asked for and for what they are eligible to take. For example if I’ve got a student who has signed up for Chemistry, but yet failed geometry . . . the prerequisite for geometry is Algebra 2. After we get the schedules then I make the assistant principal go through and mark the core classes So, we balance every schedule. Now, what happens when you balance their schedule, well it is much easier for a kid to do well because they are not overloaded.

This process is described as “organizing for success.”

One teacher stipulates:

This school’s success is based on focusing sharply on the basic NCSCOS [North Carolina Standard Course of Study]. Some students need a bit more or a bit less, but the focus must remain on ensuring that every student first masters the material outlined on the SCOS. For students’ who are not reading at grade level, they do not

need any more than what is required until they have mastered the basics. Many of [BTO High School] students do not have the home support to review what is being taught at school.

This focus on the basics is highlighted by the fact that a large percentage of students at the BTO High School take introductory classes or participate in Success Academies. For example, Introduction to English I, a remediation course to prepare for English I, is taken in the first semester of ninth grade. If students pass the introductory course, they are able to take English I in the second semester. Algebra I, English II, Physical Science, and Biology also take introductory classes. The introductory classes are essential since many students are reading at the fourth- and fifth-grade level upon their entrance into high school. On the other hand, the implementation of these remediation classes decreases opportunities for electives. The introductory classes and academies models are racially identifiable classes. Nevertheless, the teachers feel the sacrifice is producing the results they need, as evidenced by the following statement:

The size of the classes, the size of the school, and the size of the district are important. Struggling students get the vast majority of resources and the vast majority of time. Best students are targeted to those students who need remediation. Twelve students are in the English I course. No matter how they begin, you can catch most of them up because of the amount of one-on-one time with them. While the small size, does limit the number of elective and AP courses, it helps us with the vast majority of our students who need remediation.

This is one notable difference that could impact the degree to which schools are successful in closing the gap. Education Trust (2005a) discovered the following:

In both high- and average-impact schools, students who arrive behind get extra instructional time in English and math. [H]igh impact schools provide help in a way that keeps students on track with college-preparatory requirements. Average-impact schools provide the extra help in a way that delays entry into grade-level courses, making it harder for students to complete college-prep requirements. (p. 5)

This system of tracking largely explains continued disparities in the schools that are “beating the odds.” Additionally, the interests of other stakeholders are vested in the leveling of students that occurs when preparatory courses separate “honors” students from classroom that are largely filled with African American and economically disadvantaged students, while majoritarian stories tell us this is a “necessity” to “prepare” these students for grade level work. The Education Trust saw the results of high-performing schools that keep students on “track” with higher level courses.

Another key point highlighted by the BTO High School teachers was the fact that they still feel they have some degree of control over what is taught. One teacher expressed:

Teachers have a lot of flexibility for the material to be taught within their prioritized curriculum. That is a crucial reason why some of them stay at the school. They appreciate the respect for their judgment. They also know that the ability level of their students vary widely from student-to-student and class-to-class and they need the flexibility to adjust their coursework accordingly.

EOC courses are assigned on the basis of performance. If a teacher is assigned an EOC course and does not do well, they may be reassigned and teamed with a more experienced teacher as a mentor. The principal and teachers also reported a concerted effort match the lowest performing students with the best teachers. The principal works with department chairs to assist with the assignment of teachers and students. Finally, while teachers express similar frustration to the BTO High School regarding testing, there is an acceptance and an approach that seems to be the sentiment of the school in general, as expressed in the following quote:

Testing is stressful, but it makes us teach the kids. I think that’s the state’s goal. We would love to think that teachers would teach the curriculum without the stigma of the test standing over their head but we know that we are not in a perfect world. We allow ourselves to slack up. I have to say myself sometimes we will. But we know there is something at the end that we are going to be accountable for. It kind of drives us.

At the HP High School, teachers expressed concerns about disconnectedness and feelings of being overwhelmed. When asked about curricular decision-making, numerous responses were given related to departments, principal perspective and conflicts. Great potential resides in the action groups, based on subject taught, that meet monthly regarding curricular issues. The teachers felt these opportunities were helpful and have been in existence for a few years. The principal, however, stressed that teachers with more than one subject only had to attend one meeting. Therefore, these valuable collaborations did not necessarily reach all teachers for all subjects taught. The principal also discussed efforts to increase the involvement of teachers, particularly department chairs, in the development of the schedule and the assignment of teachers to sections of courses. Some teachers expressed a failure to include this type of involvement for certain departments.

A number of teachers and an instructional coach addressed the barriers to making curricular decisions, particularly testing. One expressed:

. . . I have tested every single day since sometime in November and even though sometimes in small groups of students you are talking about students who are losing instructional time simply because I have to pull out to test them. Whether that be eighth-grade competencies that they didn't pass or computer skills, I mean there is a list a mile long that they have to be tested for and I just don't know if it is fair to them as teachers or to our students to take them out of class and say, "Well you are going to miss two hours out of first and second period because it takes more than one period to test."

Another teacher continued:

Typically it's your lower level students that get tested again and again, and they are the ones that can't afford to miss three class periods in a week, especially my LEP students who are struggling to understand English as it is and keep up with classes . . . Particularly, those borderline students who aren't quite proficient enough to keep up with the class, but are proficient enough that they don't qualify to be in a supported program. Those are the ones who are in the testing time after time after time.

The HP High also utilizes quarter tests, but not in all subject areas. Tests are not even available for all EOC subject areas. Additionally, teachers in some subject areas questioned the validity of the test and expressed that they were not necessarily aligned to the standards. Some comments were even made regarding the usefulness of the information. Some felt as though they just received a lot of numbers, and though they were used, there was tremendous opportunity for improvement. Also, the school district stipulated that quarter tests must count as a grade for students, but not necessarily on a consistent basis. For example, the quarter test could count as much as one-fourth of a student's grade in one class and another teacher might calculate the score as a five percent. Numerous teachers also talked about the fact that the quarter tests included information not necessarily covered yet in the course, revealing a great need for better coordination of curriculum by the school district and the school.

Some teachers expressed feelings of disconnectedness regarding administration's ability to understand their perspective, as illustrated by the following quote:

I think that part of the problem with administration in the Science department is that they don't understand what it is like to be a Science teacher. People up there . . . two of the four are old Math teachers and the other two . . . one is Social Studies and I don't know what [AP] is. So they don't understand what it is to be a Science teacher, so when we request certain things be done a certain way it's to facilitate the learning of the children based on what we are trying to do and they just don't understand it. They look at it as a Science teacher trying to travel is just like an English teacher having to travel and that's not the case.

Again, the principal and the teachers do not appear to be coordinated. In this exchange, when asked about planning, the principal stated:

They don't want to look at the data. We see the data and we know what the data says. They don't understand and I have said before we got to teach all kids because that's the population when you have 62 percent, make that percent come up some kind of way or you are going to be up the creek. Again we are moving . . . That might be my fire drill for the day . . . We have great planning and great focuses. Remember a plan is only as good as you can model it. So, yes, we have a plan, we have a sequence that

looks good on paper, and if we can tear out the plan we probably would be shooting up there. Remember within in the plan you have to have people to carry out that plan.

A teacher who was formally on the School Improvement Team indicates:

The school . . . the school improvement team, principal, we have some grant writers that have helped us with a lot of things. Some local girls have helped work on it and once the school improvement plan is put together our departmental action plans are turned in so that we can feed in per discipline what we think is going to boost student achievement.

The differences in these models of coordinating curriculum are also reflected in performance data for the two schools. In this loose coordination, there is little room for targeted focus on strategies that would work for the African American and economically disadvantaged students who are often the focus of why the school is not being successful.

Regarding coordination of curriculum, it the differences between the two schools again reveal a difference in organization, planning, leadership and culture. The degree to which teams crossing all levels of the organization are willing to work together and to determine how the needs of all are best met determines the degree to which African American and economically disadvantaged students are set up for success. The effects of a history of segregation, desegregation and the most recent resegregation cannot be healed in isolated, non-strategic attempts to meet the demands of external stakeholders. Ladson-Billings (1995) references a need to build “culturally relevant teaching”, which not only includes the development of students academically, but nurturing and supporting “cultural competence” and building critical consciousness. While these efforts may not be fully implemented across the entire school, one teacher at the BTO High School captures the spirit of culturally relevant teaching by declaring, “We are teaching children and not curriculum.” Another teacher concurs by saying, “When you walk into our rooms, the whole child walks in.” The successes of all students also do not have to be opposite those demands in daily

execution, as evidenced by schools that have been and continue to be successful by making the educational process relevant.

*Can you offer me what it takes for me to be successful,
Both when you are in control and when you are not?
Or does pressure on you mean that I lose?
Do you look AT the numbers,
Yet PAST the zeros to see me in ways that no one else does
Because they choose not to when it is too truthful, too full of pains of the past?
Can you relate?
Can you make it relevant?*

Teacher Recruitment, Assignment, and Retention

Teachers and principals declare that the retention of the experienced core of faculty members who teach the EOC courses has been a key to the success of the BTO High School. The teachers have a strong commitment to their students and a strong work ethic. The small community feel has been a positive for teacher recruitment efforts. The establishment of valid professional learning communities have aided in the community building process.

Education Trust (2005a) indicate:

High-impact schools use more criteria than teacher preference to make teaching assignments, looking at factors such as past student performance and the teacher's area of study. Teacher assignments are made to meet the needs of the students, rather than the desires of the teachers. In average-impact schools, teaching assignments are more likely to be determined by staff seniority and teacher preference. (p. 6)

Leadership is also a major factor in the recruitment process. The principal speaks of the assignment of teachers in the following passage:

Principal: We take our new teachers and so many times you take new teachers and you stick them to teaching 6 classes a day of pre-algebra. [That's] the lower level classes. It's killing them. We try to offer our teachers some classes where we might have a first year teach teaching some upper level classes along with some other classes that we need teaching. So what happens is that they are not overwhelmed.

Interviewer: You are distributing those most challenging students across teachers. [You're] not just assigning your new people to teach the most challenging classes.

The experienced teachers model a strong sense of community for the new teachers. The teachers see the students in classroom, on the field, at church, and in town, so they know their students and the families well. The teachers believe that the community knows them and would take care of them and they do the same for the students. The teachers shared quite a few examples of an even larger sense of seeing the students as they would their own children. The principals also model high expectations. The principal stated, “The teachers know that we expect you to expect them to expect the best of themselves . . . The [students] see that we believe in them.” Though the teachers recognize that there are still a few teachers who isolate themselves within the culture of independence that naturally occurs in high school, they also proclaim that there is “a quiet disdain” that results in pressure that forces them to ultimately “rise to the occasion” or they find somewhere else to work.

At the HP High School, recruitment is more challenging. With the more recent changes in principals, a number of teachers left the school. The principal, however, declares that this is not necessarily a negative occurrence. The teachers and the principal also talked about the reputation of the school in comparison to others in the district. Yet, they also felt that this reputation is becoming more positive. The principal and the teachers also felt strongly that those who had an opportunity to see what the school is actually like generally like what they see. Two teachers summarize some of the issues regarding the more recent high turnover rates:

Teacher 1: It’s pretty high, but we have had so much going on here. We brought in . . . we had a principal who got us into this program and then got us in a magnet grant. Well, all of that comes with a lot of governmental issues and things and so through all of that, that principal got us there. Then he left. So, our principal came in and morale hit bottom because of all the red tape we had to go through with the grant and the paperwork and all the changes that happened that I think the teacher turnover is high here in the last 3 or 4 years and there are a lot of reasons for it that you can’t even begin to understand. If it were a normal situation without the grant, without

everything, teacher turnover wasn't high in the past 10 years in my opinion. We had a Math department that was solid for many, many years then last year, except for 3 people, they all left.

Teacher 2: It was a very tight net group. We were very much an extended support group. Family kind of where we even socialized together. We were very close and the disruption and the changes that went on all at the same time really segregated us a tremendous amount.

Some teachers are still lamenting the loss of the previous principal. Though there is a lot of respect for the new principal, the previous leader apparently had a personality and the charisma that even the new leader concedes to not having. The principal also discusses the difficulties of recruitment due to the reputation of the school:

[HP High School] doesn't have the most stunning reputation of any school in [the] county. I am assuming that some of the reputation that [HP High School] has was accurate at one point in time. The word on the street is that we have 6 fights here every day and that we have police here all the time and all of that. We do have fights here like everybody else but I worked at 2 other schools in [other] counties and I don't see any more fights here than I did at those schools. So, that hurts us to some extent. . . . That it is a problem in recruiting magnet students and is a problem in recruiting teachers. I just interviewed an English teacher for a position that is going to be open next year. It is very promising and I think that she is interested, but her last question was I hear all these things about [HP High School] and all this stuff about drugs, fights, and weapons everywhere. Can you tell me what's going on and I told her the same thing I told you. I think that she saw enough of the school that day that she had a feeling that was true, but that does hurt us a little bit. To be honest with you last summer it hurt us when we made the newspaper a few times. Each time we made the newspaper I had offered some positions to teachers, not a lot, but about 2 or 3 each time and I thought it was a matter of going home and talking to their husband or wife and coming back and accepting, and [HP High School] hits the front page as a priority high school and I never hear from them again and I can never find them.

Once teachers are recruited to the HP High School, the principal continues with a critical point on teacher assignment and retention:

In education sometimes we are hypocritical. We say some things and do some others. We know that this kid needs the best teacher that is out there that means the best skills; a teacher that has all the pedagogy down; one that has the relationship down and those are the ones that should teach the difficult kids. But you don't get that teacher wanting to teach the difficult kids. They feel like after a while I need to teach this Honors kid. You run into that situation and with us we have some of that but

because we don't have but so much Honors . . . you still have to teach the regular kids and your results are quite different.

The hypocrisy defined is critical to the current state of disparity. In the HP High School, the principal often succumbs to the will of a teacher in fear that if their wishes are not met, they will be yet another classroom to fill. Therefore, the desires of the teachers often override the needs of the students, particularly those along the margins.

Hiring, assigning and retaining teachers is as much about the establishment and building of relationship as it is for the teacher and the student within the classroom context. In building true professional learning communities, the focus is on the learning that is taking place. Resources are important to the cultivation of this process, with the most compelling one being the ability for teachers to have to collaborate and work together on what most impacts students. In the discussion of students, we also have to be mindful of the tendency to feed deficit thinking that negatively paints African American and economically disadvantaged students.

*Prepare them to teach me
Prepare them to see me for me
Recognize that to teach me is an honor
And my motivation in being here is honorable . . .
If you can learn what it takes to teach me.*

Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction

BTO teachers report different degrees of supervision by administration dependent on experience and performance. While some see administration two to three times per semester, others receive almost daily walk-throughs. Teachers confirmed that administration visits struggling teachers, new teachers, and classrooms working with disruptive students more often. The superintendents even visit classes often. Regarding formal and informal observations, teachers know what the consistent strategies the administrative team seeks,

including, but not limited to, engaged students, well-controlled classrooms, the use of technology, group activities, adherence to the NCSCOS, posted essential questions, an updated word wall, an organized classroom, and a lesson plan available and in use. The structure of this process of the school is recognized as critical to its success.

Despite the frequency of observation, some teachers also remarked that they never felt uncomfortable trying a new or novel instructional methods as long as it can be justified as a part of the learning process. Several teachers agreed that the students feel comfortable with the principal in the classroom. After a drop-in observation, the principal will often make a positive comment to a teacher later in the day about something they have observed. The principal also makes an effort to acknowledge students' positive behavior on the daily announcements. Engaging teaching techniques has also been defined as a best practice among high-impact schools (Billig et al, 2005; Education Trust 2005a).

When a teacher is struggling, the department chairs become an accessible resource. The teachers understand that their students' scores will reflect on them and they cannot wait until the end of the year to seek help. If the department chair needs to talk to a teacher about a more serious problem, some will ask the principal to do so with them. When the school was in School Improvement status, all teachers had to turn in their lesson plans twice per month. Lesson plans are now submitted on different time lines depending on the administrator assigned to monitor each teacher. First year teachers are required to turn in lesson plans in more often. Teachers use a standardized format for lesson plans that incorporates the school goals. Administrators check the lesson plans periodically and provide feedback on a checklist.

Though not to the same level of strategic development as reported at the BTO High School, teachers at the HP High School attest the visibility of administration. They declare that the environment demands it. In addition to supervision of students, there is a clear process for the observation of teachers. One teacher stipulated, “I am an experienced teacher and they have been in more this year than I have seen them in the past 9.” The administration utilizes a tool similar to the BTO High School to check expectations for classroom visits, in addition to formal observation protocol. These expectations are illustrated in this teacher exchange:

Teacher 1: I know when they walk in I am like, “this graphic organizer that we were working on yesterday.” I am meeting at the word wall.

Teacher 2: They come in and you are like, “Oh God, please, is my EQ [essential question] on the board?”

Teacher 3: One time mine wasn't. I had come into the room, because I travel in between classrooms and the other teacher was leaving and I didn't have time to put my stuff up on the board and I walked in and I was like you know what, I had my bellringer up, had my kids working, and I had just moved on and totally forgot about the EQ. You know what I was like if they are going to sweat me on that one then they will sweat me on everything because I am moving on.

Though the teachers were laughing during this exchange, the expectations were clear and all the teachers confirmed that the feedback they received was useful. Just as teachers need feedback on their progress, students do also.

*Principal, when you are looking at them do you see me?
Do you ever ask, “What did they teach you in that school today?”
Do you focus on what I learned,
Or are you more concerned with me staying in line?
Is it true that what is measured matters?
If so, how do you measure when considering whether or not my future is lost in the
bureaucracy of a PALM?*

Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning

The BTO High School utilizes benchmark tests to monitor and evaluate student progress in each End-of-Course (EOC) subject area. Some are designed by teachers, under the leadership department chairs, from test items available in the district's test item bank. The tests are formatted, timed, and administered under the same conditions as state EOC exams. Central Office scores the exams and provides detailed analysis. The administration monitors 6-week CRTs throughout the year and EOCs at the end of the year. The principal reviews and distributes the results for data driven decision-making throughout the year. The Curriculum Facilitator provides weekly data updates to the principal on individual students, especially those in danger of failure. Smaller communities are created so that the administration has the opportunity to know students by name and are well-informed about their individual academic performance. The principal describes the detail of this process:

What I've done is that I have devised a draft just like the NFL Draft, I get my assistant principals together, we put all of the names on the board and I say you have first draft choice—Who do you want? He says I'll take Coach -he never turns in discipline. Okay-Round B-2nd pick who do you want-I'll take Wyatt, she does not . . . And then we draft and what happens when we get down to the last 7-8 teachers who turn in a lot of discipline. They are spread out more evenly among the staff. Now we have time to do what...to take care of our discipline in an appropriate way. When you can take care of discipline because you have time, it makes it a lot easier for teachers to teach. And those are just a few of things and I could go on and on.

It also makes it a lot easier for each administrator to gain perspective on all aspects, and not just administrative *or* instructional leadership, providing students and teachers with a greater number of leadership resources. Billig et al. (2005) and Education Trust (2005a) both highlight not only the importance of early warning signs and intervention, but the involvement of leadership in working with the students, similar to what is described above by the principal of the BTO High School.

Administrators evaluate data and monitor growth at the individual student level. As one teacher remarked and nearly all reiterated, “That is the primary administrative focus. They want to see . . . While we can’t guarantee every child scores a three or four; we should be able to guarantee that every child grows in a given academic year.”

Student success is acknowledged and rewarded in several ways. The teachers believe that this is important because this, “Let’s them know that the teachers believe in them and are rooting for them.” Generally, teachers “tell the administrators what they want to do for the students and they provide it . . . They are very supportive.” The BTO High School hosts an honor roll assembly every semester. All 700 students meet in the assembly center to honor students for academic success, academic improvement, good character, and good behavior. The principal also views this as an opportunity to bring all students and staff together to revisit where the school is and where they are going. Though teachers complain about the interruption in instruction, the principal believes that the benefits outweigh the losses. A more formal academic banquet is also held at the end of the year for students with a high GPA. The principal also uses ConnectED to call students to connect with them and their families. One example was the use of the calling system to congratulate students making straight As. Students have received gift certificates, rewards, prizes, and parties for academic effort, improvement, and success. Students are also given incentives for participating in EOC review and for achieving level III and IV. Another key factor is that teachers are compensated for their participation in before and after-school review for the 6 weeks prior to the EOCs. Coaches even encourage their athletes to participate in this EOC review.

Athletics are also a major focus at the school, having won several state championships for a number of years. The school adheres to state guidelines for participation

in athletics. Students must pass three of four classes in the semester to participate in a sport. Teachers sometimes encourage students to work harder by reminding them of their desire to participate in athletics. Some sports teams (including the football team) have study halls prior to practice, dependent upon the individual coach. Many teachers are willing to assist athletes prior to EOCs and the SAT. Some teachers believe that more could be done to use the leverage of the strong athletics program to encourage stronger academic performance.

The principal makes great efforts to focus on student growth. He declared his issues with defining schools strictly on the basis of proficiency. He would rather the state look at whether or not the school added value to the students. He stressed, “Growth labels are what matter.” The BTO High School has made high growth for seven years, and has proficiency level over 70percent (School of Progress). The principal also expressed some interesting points regarding “gaming the system”:

You can play with ABC scores. You can't play with AYP. But you can manipulate your ABC scores for a year or two. By that I mean, you can keep people from taking certain things for a year or two, but eventually they are going to have to take them. But with AYP, you can't manipulate that because all tenth-graders are tested. That's a true sign of how you are doing.

By far, the overwhelming factor for the BTO High School is the relationship building and engagement of students that occurs with students. The following exchange illustrates this culture within the BTO High School:

Teacher 1: They're [administrators] coming in, especially if you are doing something new or innovative. In other words, the kids are not sitting in our classrooms 90 minutes every day, and just sitting there and writing. They are not bored out of their gourd. They're up doing labs and there are discussions questions going out about real world events. Like today we discussed nuclear power energy and relating it to closed system energy transfers and thermodynamics ...

Teacher 2: We are doing genetic disorders ... and the kids are reporting on those genetic disorders ...

Teacher 3: We are talking about the N-word. We are starting *To Kill a Mockingbird* . . . so we are talking about the N-word and when it is okay and when it is now; who can say it and who can't . . . We are having a lively discussion and we are able to have that without going wild . . .

Teacher 1: But could you have that discussion at some other school?

Teacher 3: Before I taught here . . . N-O . . . That would never happen.

Teacher 2: But I think one thing collective thing here is that we are teaching the curriculum, but gearing it to the students' interests . . .

Teacher 3: Even gangsta rap and all of that in that discussion . . . We are teaching children and not curriculum . . .

Teacher 2: When you walk into our rooms, the whole child walks in.

The HP High School has much less strategic methods of monitoring student progress, and recognizing students. Though the PTSA recognizes student academic success, there are very few other initiatives to motivate students. Also, the other initiatives appeal largely to the same group of students. Teachers even expressed the need to do a better job in this arena.

When asked about administration's monitoring of student progress, one teacher replied:

I think that they are overwhelmed. I think that they are overwhelmed and can't do as much of that. I don't fault them for it at all. They are absolutely overwhelmed, but I think that it would be really helpful if they could keep a closer eye on the kids in their alphabet.

Yet, the teachers recognize an effort. Regarding test scores, one teacher stated, "And he is very meticulous about us analyzing it and he is really into data." Another continued, "With certain EOC courses he actually meets with individual teachers when the data comes back . . . One on one for about five or ten minutes to just go over it and say here are your weaknesses and here is how we are going to address it." The principal also confirmed an inability to keep up with the individual progress of students and his need to rely heavily on his teachers due to the size of the school and more pressing administrative duties.

Monitoring students is tightly linked the development of relationships with those students. Coupled with early warning signs, it is imperative that the entire school community take responsibility for student learning. A key difference in the two schools is the degree to which this ownership takes place.

*Palm ...
My future rests in the palm of your hands
You have power
I have power
Will our powers work together to weave the American Dream
Where we sit together at the table of brotherhood
Or the American Tragedy
Where power OVER is left to breed and fester?*

Promoting Professional Development and Building Community

The BTO High School teachers indicate that most of their professional development is prescribed for them with some opportunities to participate in self-selected activities. The principal offers teachers opportunities that he thinks they may be interested in attending and allows teachers to attend other sessions upon request. The department chairs also help to share information with the teachers in their department about upcoming sessions of interest. There is no set limit on the number of sessions a teacher is allowed to attend. Professional development topics ebb and flow with current trends. The district is very supportive of teachers seeking National Board certification, and the district will also pay for graduate education. A good deal of the school's professional development is done on campus monthly by the principal. Veteran teachers, however, are not required to attend. The sessions are held throughout the day during planning periods. The principal is committed to allotting at least half of the monthly faculty meeting for professional development. He proclaims that it is, "Very important for faculty to know that I am the instructional leader; that I understand good teaching."

As the instructional leader, the best professional development has been afforded teachers through their common planning times and PLCs. These are student focused collaborations. One teacher stated:

We have departmental meetings . . . The principal will pull us in and show us all the data; so that we can look and see. Not that we don't already have our own. We are pretty much on target. You know the students that we have thought about and really tried to work with. We also focus . . . look for signs during the semester . . . little red flags of students that are weak or low in an area and try to do things to try to remediate them at that time in the semester instead of waiting until the end and try to cram it all in.

Additionally teachers discuss opportunities to observe one another during the day and being highly beneficial.

With all of the disappointments expressed by teachers at the HP High School regarding their demanding schedules, the following exchange illustrates the feelings best:

Teacher 1: [The principal] says this is where we are now and this is where we have to get. He's very good about telling us that, and there's people who come and try to train us on new things. My problem as a new teacher . . . is that they teach us too much. As a first year teacher, especially in high school, I'm like what do I need to focus on & my problem is that I can't decide what to focus on. So, I finally just threw my hands up and said I am just teaching and that's basically what I ended up doing. I had all this stuff that I was supposed to be doing and I was like, I am finally now getting to understand it, but first semester I was like I am just going to teach and get through this first semester and I can implement more stuff next semester.

Teacher 2: I would support that with an example for instance, we have been given a lot of planning period meetings. One was the Collins writing thing, another was on LEP students and what not and different topics all the time. Many of which are worthy of a tremendous amount of study and training and are good things, but I don't know who said it once, but American education is a mile wide, but only an inch deep and that's the kind of training we get. It covers huge number of topics, but we get 45 minutes of it.

Teacher 3: Some of it conflicts. We are doing incidental learning or having things all over the walls; having word walls and then we are told that we have got to clear all that stuff off; clear the front for the LEP kids. It is just too much and sometimes it just really conflicts. And the things that we are trying to do conflict and what we know we need to do sometime conflict, but we are trying to do it all.

Yet, the teachers did not have a problem with professional development, and they actually craved the type of improvement opportunities they need. The current methods, however, were viewed as being irrelevant and more of a burden than a resource to help them better serve their students.

Professional growth and development it designed to address all the gaps remaining from teacher education programs. Yet, just as Ladson-Billings (1995) spoke of culturally relevant teaching, it must begin with culturally relevant professional development. Teachers must engage in reflective practice in order to learn more about themselves and to learn more about others. Professional growth and development should be broadened to choke the deficit models that tell us that some children come to school with nothing of value. If we begin to see our students as teachers instead of relying on culmination of conflicting activities, we would truly learn what it takes to teach all children--if we indeed believe all children can learn.

*You teach me,
But are you open to what I can teach you,
Not about chains that limit,
But about strengths that enable survival
Bonds that support through pain
And resilience that has withstood time,
Even my history with you?*

Summary

Through all of the categories, leadership reigned supreme as the one area that most likely determined the degree to which the school would be successful in general and particularly in addressing the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students. The leadership not only has to be able to balance the six areas detailed above, but they must also consider the very foundation of those areas. Is the story for the school a

majoritarian one . . . or one that stretches to encompass the needs, opportunities and dreams
of all children.

The Autobiography of Education

*Am I included in your promise?
Am I a priority or an afterthought?
Should I be one to sit at the table
With brothers and sisters to share the lot;
Or must I wait until all are finished to see what scraps are left?
As we enjoy the fruits of democracy,
Am I able to discuss my contributions to the successes of the day,
Or is my story lost in on the ears of the lighter tradition?*

*Can you offer me what it takes for me to be successful,
Both when you are in control and when you are not?
Or does pressure on you mean that I lose?
Do you look AT the numbers,
Yet PAST the zeros to see me in ways that no one else does
Because they choose not to when it is too truthful, too full of pains of the past
Can you relate?
Can you make it relevant?*

*Prepare them to teach me
Prepare them to see me--and accept me-- for who I am.
Recognize that to teach me is an honor
And my motivation in being here is honorable ...
If you can learn what it takes to teach me.
Principal, when you are looking at them do you see me?
Do you ever ask, "What did they teach you in that school today?"
Do you focus on what I learned,
Or are you more concerned with me staying in line?
Is it true that what is measured matters?
If so, how do you measure when considering whether or not my future is lost in the
bureaucracy of a PALM?*

*Palm ...
My future rests in the palm of your hands*

*You have power
I have power
Will our powers work together to weave the American Dream
Where we sit together at the table of brotherhood
Or the American Tragedy
Where power OVER is left to breed and fester?*

*You teach me,
But are you open to what I can teach you,
Not about chains that limit,
But about strengths that enable survival
Bonds that support through pain
And resilience that has withstood time --
Even my history with you?*

*That's the beautiful thing about autobiographies ...
If we grow, accept responsibility for the mistakes of our past,
And commit to who we want to be in the future,
The story changes
And enriches
As it embraces all we have been and all we hope to be.*

CHAPTER 5

OVERVIEW, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

As referenced in the introduction to this dissertation, I, too, am one of America's "stepchildren" (Thompson, 2007, p. 4) impacted by the "Racial Wealth Divide" (Lui et al., 2006, p. 5). Though a glance at my current situation seeking a doctoral degree may suggest otherwise, as an African American female reared in the South in a working class household, I have a counter-story. I would first like to share a snapshot of my personal autobiography to set the foundation for reconstructing the educational autobiography to one that truly acknowledges the value of the stories of all of its children.

The Wreck

During the retreat of the winter of 1997, I was driving the rural roads of Iredell County, NC, not unlike any other day. The previous day's ice storm had subsided and the sun transitioned from peeping to mastering the sky. As I drove, I reflected on the literal and lyrical journey that my parents were taking to see extended family in South Carolina. How blessed I was to have such a center, a network that had laid the foundation. I was grounded, yet resting on the shoulders of family.

The family that my parents went to visit that day was my father's family. My father was one of 24 children. Even in a household of this size, my grandparents were landowners in rural South Carolina when many African Americans remained at the mercy of the

sharecropper's field. Even in the first half of the twentieth century, my grandfather not only worked the fields and owned a home, but he also owned a store, positioning the family in very good standing within the community. Though my paternal grandparents were deceased long before I was born, the knowing of their importance permeated my earliest existence. Their presence lives on in the network; and the history, confidence, pride and respect they instilled forms the foundation of resilience that frames who we are as a family. With the disappearing ice storm, I prayed that all the members of this precious network would make it to the dwelling affectionately called the "homeplace."

All of a sudden, I began sliding. Why couldn't I regain control? As I struggled, I finally surrendered. As my car crashed in an amazingly upright position in a field, my mind raced. Was I alive? Was I okay? My life flashed before my eyes and I saw the faces of my mother's line. Though my matriarchal lineage did not have the readily visible stability of economic security, they provided me with an extensive network of wisdom and experience. I saw my grandmother, my grandfather . . . Granny, Grandma Pearl, Nanny . . . and, of course, Grandad. My great-grandfather lingered in my mind. He was illiterate, though very few people knew because of the coping mechanisms he had developed over time. Yet, out of his "secret"—and some might say his shame—he understood the importance of the opportunity not afforded him . . . education. Being the only male in a family of women, from his earliest ages, he had to work in the fields, and he continued to be a hard worker for his entire life. He was a strong and giving man who also managed to build a secure life for his family through working in the factories in Elkin, NC, which was an hour's drive from home. He instilled in us the importance of land ownership and, of course, education. You could not go to his home without reading during your stay. Part of this was due to the "secret," but, more importantly,

he wanted to ensure that we took advantage of the privilege that was ours for the taking. I can still hear him asking, “What are they teaching you in that school?” I knew that as I struggled to figure out if I was alive or dead, he would be proud. He would be proud that I graduated and was, of all things, a teacher.

I am not sure how long I sat there before I worked my way out of the car. How fortunate, I thought in my pain, that I peered across the road from the field and saw a house just a few steps away. I knew I could make it there and get help. After all, the South is known for its hospitality. As I climbed the steps to the humble house that I passed almost on a daily basis, I knocked on the door. I knocked again. It had never crossed my mind that no one would be home. But wait . . . someone was home! As I glanced down the front of the house, I could see an elderly White man peering through the curtains. As I pointed to my car, I said loudly, “I wrecked my car, sir. I need to make a phone call.” He let the curtains close. I was relieved because I knew the door would open in a minute. He never came. He never even called 911. That day I began a journey myself—a literal and lyrical journey—as I walked a half mile to the next closest house wondering if I would be turned away again. After working hard for a lifetime and internalizing the values instilled through a two parent household and an extensive network of love, that day I was just another “nigger.” Even after a Wake Forest education and a career of service educating his grandchildren, I was still a stepchild.

If my grandfather’s dream of education opening doors to equalized opportunity is to be truly realized, we must acknowledge and address what happens when the door is not answered or the phone call of intervention is not made for numerous African-American and economically disadvantaged students in America’s schools. Therefore, I unapologetically acknowledge and own this research as positioned from my perspective, as I strive to

construct a larger counter-story. After all, as illustrated in my personal snapshot, we cannot begin to address issues such as “closing the gap” or eliminating the “education debt” until we acknowledge that the “wreck” actually occurred. Honoring this historical and sociopolitical context, this chapter attempts to extend the dissertation research findings and reflect on the process itself.

Utilization of the combined framework of Critical Racial Discourse Analysis, digital recordings and transcriptions of the original study were filtered through a CDA coding process and analyzed for recurring themes, based on the tenets of CRT. Embedded in the combination of both of these critical theories is a valuing of those who speak from the margin, which includes me as the researcher. A foundational assumption in this research was the belief that priorities are discussed. This assumption included that notion that even if principals and teachers are not specifically asked about race and economic disadvantage, the degree to which these issues are a priority in goal setting, planning, coordination and recruitment efforts will be revealed. I also assumed that within my critical analysis of systems, each of the professionals interviewed maintains strong goals and desires to help students be successful within the structures that exist in the each of the schools.

As I contemplate the position of the initial autobiography that is being constructed for education through the lens of Critical Racial Discourse Analysis, there is first and foremost a need for clear acknowledgement. While some of the analysis from the previous chapter specifically referenced race and socioeconomic status, great differences exist in what we proclaim to know and what we actually do to address the disparities that still pervade all schools, and especially high schools. While the “gaps” are documented in everything from student achievement scores to dropout and graduation rates, we still largely resort to

majoritarian stories when examining why such gaps exist. These stories often blame the individuals for their lack of achievement, when the disparities indicate what may be a lacking is conformation.

A Return to the Plantation

The study focused on how North Carolina teachers and principals in “Beating the Odds” and “High Priority” high schools prioritize the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students. Working within the confines of questions based on the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), the purpose was largely to explore the level of prioritization when teachers and principals were *not* specifically asked about issues of race. As a result of my participation in the HSRA Study, numerous questions and observations arose. The context for the study itself represented and reinforced much of the much of the unique American history that led to the segregation/desegregation/ resegregation era outlined in the literature review.

Upon Judge Manning sending forth his mandates regarding the high schools, Governor Easley commissioned the study, which was led by Dr. Gary Henry (with the cooperation of a Local Education Agency (LEA) superintendents), and funded by the State of North Carolina. These White male authoritative players are defined as part of a system in which Judge Manning and Governor Easley serve masters of sometimes competing plantations Leandro, NCLB and the NC Accountability System. Although the plantations have different levels of fertility, each is expected to yield the perfect, productive crop of academic success for all. The superintendents become overseers, charged with making sure that the slaves are productive. On large plantations, overseers need slave drivers, the principals (and, in some cases, teachers), to manage and control the day to day work of

slaves. Historically, it is important to note that the slave drivers were often slaves within the system themselves, but with an elevated status. Plantation life further delineated the structure of slaves into two key groups—house slaves and, the lowest status of all, the fieldworkers. While all students find themselves “slaves” to our current systems, African American and economically disadvantaged students are too often clearly deferred to the status of fieldworkers, therefore not experiencing the benefits of being closer to the master.

Implications: Three Emerging Themes

Within the discussions of race, several key themes prevailed, including the notion of policing to maintain order, the savior mentality and deficit thinking. I found these themes particularly interesting for potential further development of the autobiography of education. Each theme keenly resembles the parts of the plantation metaphor outlined above through the exemplification of a mentality that reinforces hierarchal structures that allow some students to be afforded educational opportunities and benefits often denied fieldworkers.

Policing

One element of the plantation mentality is the notion of policing, a mechanism to ensure control of the slaves. In the BTO High School, several interviewees addressed the issue of race in a forthright manner. An African American administrator declared, “We want to be seen in a positive light, we want to continue getting the bonus, and we want to dispel the myth that Blacks students are out here doing nothing,” with the implication asserting that the *myth* currently exists, similar to the image of lazy slave. Highlighting the *myth*, a teacher asserted that the “the schools and the teachers had to create a culture within which kids learn,” contrasting the recent successes of the school to the failures of schools where “the teenage African-American culture conditions the behavior in the schools.” This *myth* also

corresponds to the CRT tenet of the centrality of race and its intersectionality with forms of subordination. Race is the central factor in this context of identifying undesirable behaviors and results. Even layering race with lower socioeconomic status, students are seen as *Black* students exhibiting a *culture* that creates negative conditions in schools.

In responding to the positive culture that existed at the BTO High School, another teacher shared,

You know I had a student, a very difficult student that came from Miami that was in a gang and she was very difficult. She was a little short Hispanic girl. And, I know that I made the commitment to work with this student. I tried with all my heart. She was difficult. She was trying to get my students to go against me one day and one of my African American students was like, “You’re not doing that or I’m putting you in the ground.”

The monovocal (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002) received agreement from the other interviewees, highlighting not only a need for “policing” of the new “urban outsider,” but also resounding a convinced positioning that the teacher had established such positive relationships with her African American students that they actually became the “police” rising to her defense and maintaining classroom order. In this context, the students were converted to slave drivers ensuring control of the classroom instigator. In reviewing the positive way the teacher perceived this interaction, it illustrates what Bell (1995) describes as “interest convergence.” If this exchange would have happened between *students* of African American and Hispanic descent, the same language may have conjured images of violence. Yet, when the Black students came to the defense of the White *teacher*, the actions then became one in which the *violent* remarks subdued another student, therefore converging with the interest of the teacher, it became an acceptable action. In this instance, there was no need for policing because the “minorities” took on the hegemonic role of “overseer” to maintain order within the classroom.

This notion of policing continued with an administrator as she passionately painted a picture of the school:

And they put on nothing to come to school, especially Hispanic girls . . . A lot of our kids come over there on buses from downtown near the [Granger] area, which is extremely poor and violent . . . And then we have the sweetest little kids from around out here by [Middleton] and here we all are. And then we have all these international students because we have a big foreign exchange kind of program here, which is a wonderful thing. And you put all these people together and *you've got to have some rules*. But you also got to know who the leaders are in the student body, and make . . . as a principal and an administrative team . . . make connections with *those* people . . . And *they've* got it so refined now that if something's going to go down, they find a 15 year old to actually be the *perpetrator* because they can't go to *jail*. And they've got it, you know, just figured out. So we . . . you just have to put it in so kids start and the word gets out that you don't want to come to here because that crazy principal's gonna get you out. And then you begin, because these kids up here are *slick*. They can get through school in a heartbeat. And they can pull the wool over their own town and somehow or another be living somewhere else and come in and have an address over here. You've got to be watching it so all my guidance people and my registrar . . . every day that somebody tries to enroll, we have to look. And I will make a call down to the placement office and say, "Why in God's name is this kid coming from [Granger] to here or [Wheaton] to here . . . you know and just constantly being on it all the time. It is just like knowing . . . you gotta know the students.

While the HP High School has experienced an increase in student performance, this passage clearly illustrates remnants of the plantation mentality in the juxtaposed views of the "sweetest little kids" from suburban neighborhood coupled with the "wonderful" international students in a special program and the "perpetrators" that must be stopped from "gaming" the system. Described above is the implementation of a strategic process to ensure that additional "outsiders" do not make it through into the highly protected "community." Embedded in these notions of "us vs. them" and protection of the "good community" from the "outsiders" with criminal tendencies are both the production and reproduction of an ideology to clearly identifies who is in a position of power and who confers rights and privileges. Just as slaves were identified by their plantations and largely discouraged from intermingling—except in cases of interest convergence—there is the apparent concern that

once students have been trained, you must ensure that they are not “poisoned” by outside influences. The students from Granger and Wheaton are not readily seen as students who have experiences of value (experiential knowledge), nor is there an embracing of an ability of the faculty to address the needs of these students. Instead there is a notion of a nationalist view that sees the communities as regions that must be divided and conquered in order to protect.

My Story: Policing

Although we often think in terms of discipline and management of students, one of the silences not largely addressed in the interviews were policing practices that have great impact on student achievement. I particularly think of these practices in relation to scheduling and the determination of what courses students are encouraged to enroll based on certain criteria. In my prior work as a high school assistant principal, one of my areas of responsibility involved curriculum, particularly master scheduling. While tradition within the high school seemed to be administrator giving the guidance counselor carte blanche in the assignment of students, I chose a more hands-on approach, largely due to a number of student complaints and my ability to relate to the concerns frequently brought forth by African American students.

When I entered the sixth grade, I had to return to my home elementary (K-8) school before advancing to high school. I spent a couple of years at the elementary school where my mother worked as a teacher assistant, where I experienced what I did not recognize at the time as two of the best teachers I would ever have. It was not even that their instructional practices were that different from previous experiences, but what they took an interest in each of their students as individuals—and I felt that they were especially interested in me. I

recognized the high expectations they had for me and I did my best to rise to the occasion, recalling my obsessive need to want to please them. As one of a very few Black students in the school (and the only one in my grade), I had some difficult situations. Nevertheless, I flourished and it was largely because the teachers recognized and accepted me for who I was, and did not try to pretend that what was noticeably different did not exist.

I left the nurturing elementary school and returned to my home school with high grades, high test scores and a strong desire to learn. Having worked in the system, my mother knew what needed to be done, and she took an active interest in ensuring my academic success continued, advocating for the teacher she felt would help me continue to grow. She met with principal and was quite surprised when she learned that I was not in the classroom with the highest performing students. Knowing “the game,” she inquired about my placement and was told that I was not in the advanced classroom because there was no room. Yet, there plenty of room in the overcrowded class that housed all the other African American students, and the principal told my mother that he was sure I would be fine. The principal was right—I was fine, but I was not really challenged during that entire year. Approximately a month later, however, a new White student was placed in the higher-performing although the enrollment had not changed.

I did not know when I was one of the first ones to greet Arielle and her mother as they arrived at the high school for her first day that I would return to thoughts of this elementary experience. I left the conversation thinking, “She is going to be an awesome student!” Although Arielle was a little shy, she was a determined young lady. Therefore, I was surprised when she and her mom entered my office a week after her exciting first day and her composure was not quite the same. Arielle and her mother were not pleased with her

classes. Upon review of her schedule, I quickly understood why. She was enrolled in mostly regular classes although she had been an honor student. One class, Tech Math, was designed for remediation. I knew it was a mistake. This young African American lady beamed intelligence and had the record to prove it. I positively assured them that the counselor must have made a mistake in her work overload, as she clearly had someone else's schedule. I reassured them that I would handle it. As I approached the counselor, I could sense her apprehension as she saw a schedule in my hand. In what had become a regular routine, I asked her why Arielle was enrolled in largely non-college prep courses with her record. Arielle was even enrolled in beginning Spanish when she already spoke Spanish, along with three other languages! She began ranting about class sizes and how she did not know what some of the classes were on the transcript, and dismissed it as a "foreign" issue (as if the Aruban credits were not of value). I immediately returned to my first day in the 6th grade, but this time I had some input.

The fears and negative posturing defined above echo the plantation mentality. Just as Orfield and Lee (2005) detail, our schools are becoming resegregated, and these trends are taking place largely due to the "us vs. them" mentality. Coupled with this ideology is a need to rank and file children from the earliest of ages, often based on where those in power think they should be, not on the data that is supposed to drive our decision-making. Whether it is discipline, scheduling, or one of numerous key calls made on a daily basis, the power of these decisions often elevate the status of the "slave drivers" (i.e. principals, guidance counselors, teachers) to "masters" of educational opportunity. As increased options become readily available, via sanctions or "Whiteness" and its privileges, the majoritarians will invoke their choices, along with many financially secure children of color, just as Arielle and

I did through the advocacy of our parents and others. As we learn more about the inability of NCLB to be the driving force toward “closing the gap” (Anderson et. al, 2007), the “education debt” (Ladson-Billings, 2006) will continue to be unaddressed and, yet, reinforced through the through the various mechanisms of policing that ultimately control the futures of African American and economically disadvantaged students.

The Savior Mentality

The savior mentality is the assumptive premise one takes in an often nobly viewed effort to save the disenfranchised from themselves, their families and their culture in exchange for savior’s way of life. This essence of this thinking is revealed at the HP High School as a White male teacher began to discuss another “policing” issue related to the dress code:

Teacher: [W]e started about seven years ago. [W]e go to the housing projects and we run about four or five buses on Saturdays. There seems to be a real hostility towards the school among a lot of the parents that I meet.

Interviewer: What do they say?

Teacher: That they don’t like the dress code that we have. You know our students have to wear uniforms. They seem to focus a lot not on academic stuff. They seem to focus on a lot of the things that we do that they disagree with as far as trying to keep order and stuff like that. And it’s almost automatically from those things that they don’t really support anything positively that we try to do academically. It’s almost like academics don’t really matter because they’re kind of upset about the dress code and they’re kid getting in trouble for not doing the dress code. The dress code is such a big issue with our parents of children in poverty and it’s not a money thing so much. I think they don’t like being told that their kid has to wear these things, and so it’s almost like they are openly hostile to the school. And it tends to be, the parents that I am talking about, tend to be from poverty areas.

In this dialogue, there is an assumption of hostility as opposed to frustration. The teacher positions themselves as the definer of what “is” as it relates to how things operate within the schooling context. Failure to adopt the dominant ideology regarding school dress extends

from being disagreement to hostility. There is also an assumption of a lack of positive will of the parents towards the academic achievement of their child, rather than what is perhaps a disagreement of methods. The portrayal indicates that the “housing project” parents (translated to mean African American parents) are more concerned about the dress code than the future success of their children. The Critical Racial Discourse Analysis framework acknowledges and challenges this positioning and the assumptions that are attached. As the interviewer probes, additional assumptions of the teacher (and potentially the interviewer) were revealed in the following passage:

Interviewer: This is helpful to me, because I have never heard that particular thing . . . this kind of . . . sometimes people will say that they are hostile because the schools treat them this way or that way, but you are not talking about that. You are talking about the whole . . . obviously you are talking about the dress code.

Teacher: Dress code is a big thing. Uh, you don’t hear generally . . . I don’t hear too many things about racism at least to me, but then again . . .

Interviewer: Here you are a white man.

Teacher: Here I am a white man in the black community, you know I . . .

Interviewer: It’s not my business to approve or disapprove, but I do admire that you are doing this it’s a great thing that ya’ll are doing. It is very important.

Teacher: Thank you . . . and we pick up all black kids and there [are] 100 black kids there on Saturday and most of them do not have fathers. And the vast majority of them tend to be in the EC department . . . and there is such a connection between low academic performance and poverty in our community and that is, from my experience, that is across the state . . . It’s difficult as it is to get kids motivated from these poverty areas and then with the pressure that comes with testing, I think there is going to be a revolving door of those high poverty schools cause teachers . . . it’s just a lot pressure.

The image of the savior is evident in even the interviewer’s movement to commend the White male teacher—as if it requires a white person to be a saint to work in a predominantly African American school. The image of presumably absent Black father also plays into

assumptions about African American males. This notion also fails to acknowledge potential role models, though not necessarily biological fathers, who may be visible in the neighborhood. It also seems that the teacher is somewhat uncomfortable talking about race as he tends to go back and forth between talking about race and talking about poverty, when clearly he is actually referring to the notion of being Black *and* being poor.

The interview continues as the teacher talks about the ministry at his church. As I began to listen to the conversation, I envisioned the image of missionaries with noble ideas to “rescue others,” highlighting the position of power that assumes that the “others” need *and* want to be “rescued.” The teacher continues:

Male: I have a . . . My experience . . . really . . . I keep with what I have learned by working in our ministry at church has had such a huge impact on my understanding of these kids. I grew up in a white suburban enterprise neighborhood in Ohio.

Interviewer: Which one?

Male: Parson. I grew up in Parson. Lily White Parson is what they called it. When I came down here it was quite a change of culture, but I learned, and my father didn't have a problem with racism, but we just grew up in a white neighborhood. That was just the way it was in places like that, when we came down here, we made a conscientious effort to understand what it was like to live in this community, both black and white. And I really have gained an understanding . . . not that I know everything about being black . . . but I've gained an understanding of what the challenges are and I realize those things and helps me to relate to the students on a more personal and individual basis . . . where automatically it's like they put their guard up because I am white. There's a lot of racial mistrust around this county. Black and white, and I think one of the things that I have been able to do since I have been here is kind of bridge that gap and it has really helped me in understanding. Teaching regular classes doesn't scare me. The kids . . . I kind of enjoy the challenge. I mentioned before there are obstacles to it, but I enjoy the challenges of it. Even though my EOC scores scare me, but I don't have any trouble teaching regular History.

Nevertheless, as this part of the discussion comes to an end, it is evident that this teacher is very reflective and he acknowledges that he does not (and cannot) fully understand the “outsider” status of many of his students. Within the savior mentality, there resides a

privilege that leads one to believe there is the potential to “emancipate or empower” via their position within the institution (Solórzano & Yasso, 2001) as he still maintains the choice to “conscientiously” reside in the environment. This is, however, the incomplete growth process of one White teacher in a predominantly African American high priority high school—where most of the faculty is also African American. Yet, even in this environment, many of the slave drivers and fieldworkers have adopted the majoritarian story. The African American principal seemed to place more value on the voice of this one teacher, confirming his position as a “savior,” in comparison to other African American teachers who have lived the experiences of many of their students. As the interviewers dialogued with the principal about the school’s progress, they stated more than once “if he says it that means something.”

My Story: The Savior Mentality

As I listened to and read the selections above, the journey of my personal experiences automatically went to the family my great-grandmother served as a maid many years, whom I will reference as the Nelson’s. Granny traveled with my great-grandfather to Elkin to work for the Nelson’s. From my earliest memories, the Nelson’s were frequently discussed as if they were royalty. Sometimes my brothers and I would accompany my grandparents on the frequent trips to Elkin. I loved playing with the Nelson’s grandchildren, but I did not always want to go on these trips. This reluctance began when I was about five or six years old. After few hours of wonderful play, my grandmother’s boss proceeded to send her grandchildren on a scavenger hunt to find all the things in the house that they could send home with, what I interpreted as, the “poor little black children.” I distinctly remember Mrs. Nelson giving her grandson a quick lesson on giving to the less fortunate . . . and then I realized that the less fortunate one was me! I listened as she went through her grandson’s clothes highlighting

what *I* could wear. I listened to her talk on the phone about how articulate her maid's grandchildren were. She gathered what seemed to be like everything they no longer wanted and sent it home with us. On one particular trip, my brother and I could hardly breathe in the backseat due to all the "goodies" we had to bring down the mountain to store most of it in my grandfather's garage until it was thrown away. Deeply buried in things the Mrs. Nelson sent home with us that day was a whole set of Playboy magazines that spanned a number of years. My grandmother was quite surprised when during what had become the regular chore of unpacking the "treasures" we discovered what Mrs. Nelson obviously did not know was included. We were also scorned to ensure we did not reveal the secret.

The Nelson's were very giving people and they treated my grandmother well. The children visited my grandmother until her death and continued to keep in contact with my mother for a long period of time. Yet, in all the years of relationships between the two families, the Nelson's never knew what life was like for my grandparents. There was always a perceived need that did not exist. My grandparents' house was a refuge for many. Anyone that needed money, food or even advocacy would often seek their support. Yet, from the Nelson's perspective, we seemed to always be on the verge of destitution. As well-intentioned and giving as they were, what happens when the Nelsons of our schools misdiagnose the needs of African American and economically disadvantaged students, proceed to provide the cure, and believe their job is done based on assumptions that have not been questioned?

Deficit Thinking

Lois Weiner (2006) defines deficit thinking as the "bureaucratic culture [that] fosters the pervasive assumption that when students misbehave or achieve poorly, they must be

"fixed" because the problem inheres in the students or their families, not in the social ecology of the school, grade, or classroom" (p. 42). As a foundational theme that reinforces the savior mentality, evidence of deficit thinking pervades through the BTO High School and the HP High School, though to varying degrees. Again, within the following selections, there is language that transitions between issues of race *or* socioeconomic status, when what is actually being described is particularly acute for marginalized students of "minority" races who are also poor. One teacher articulates, "I do think that we are going to see with the low socioeconomic scores more money because you know and I know and the world knows it harder to teach the kids with so much baggage than it is . . ." She ends the sentence before going into a description of the "preferred" student. The "knowing" the teacher claims within this exchange positions this one to place little value on the knowledge that the students bring to school, highlighting the lack of culturally relevant teaching and the legitimization of the perspective of both the children and the homes from which they come (Bell, 1995, Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999). Another teacher exclaims:

Then there are demographic reasons for that as well. Because you have to understand that another thing that the people who design all these lovely programs, and what not, do not differentiate between a school that has a 70 percent population that comes from generational poverty. As opposed to a school that is in another part of the county that has a 12 percent free/reduced lunch program and the average income of the parent body is in the 40,000 as opposed to the 20's or the teens.

In this statement, there is no acknowledgement of the value of the instructional methods implemented in the classroom; there is the assumption that the "economically disadvantaged" students cannot be expected to achieve to the same degree as wealthier students and that even the same "lovely" programs will not be effective. The premise that due to demographics there is an inevitable degree of failure also prevails

Yet another teacher even suggests that students are not motivated when stating:

We have really . . . [our principal] has made that a real push, to get some of our higher achieving African American students into Honors classes. That is sometimes difficult though. A lot of times the kids will not want to take that challenge. They will not want to go into it.

Continuing with this refrain, a male teacher provides some historical context by indicating:

The greatest challenge facing the school is the reluctant or resistant learner. School is seen by many kids as an undesirable social act. When kids get a 90 on a test that requires a 70 to pass, they think they have “overpaid,” or put out an unnecessary amount of effort. Many parents of the current generation of students must have come through the deseg[regation] era with a strong sense of the anger, tensions, and frustrations of that period. As a consequence, the parents are more concerned that their kids should feel good about school and be comfortable there [rather] than that the kids should be challenged and learning. The premium is on social comfort.

In all of these passages this notion of “reluctance,” “unchallenged,” and “unmotivated” create modern euphemisms that simply resound images of “laziness” and the “unlearned” that are reminiscent of the slave images. While the teachers presume lack of motivation, one has to wonder how many students experienced the same barriers described above in the policing of scheduling African American and economically disadvantaged students in honor courses. These refrains truly illustrate the need for more counter-stories to be added to the research. Solórzano and Yasso (2002) stress the need for counter-stories to build community along the margins, challenge the dominate ideology, expose new realities, and providing a context to lead to new belief systems. Until these refrains are changed the voices of the high priority schools cannot move to a mindset that values the students.

In examining deficit thinking, the data also revealed a recurring theme among the predominantly African American staff of the HP High School in particular. One African American teacher stated:

I think that our behavior ties . . . student behavior affects achievement. Literacy affects achievement. Socioeconomic, parental guidance—or the lack thereof—affects achievement level and the fact that our students do so poorly on their EOC is just . . . it’s embarrassing.

One argument for the recruitment of “minority” teachers is that they will be able to better relate to the students who are often marginalized as there is a greater likelihood of shared experience. Yet, this is not always the case. Solórzano and Yasso (2002) clarify that “people of color often buy into and even tell majoritarian stories . . . in the same way, misogynistic stories are often told by men but can also be told by women” (p. 28). An African American male administrator even set the stage for the interviewer to see a class change at the HP High School, stating:

As you can see we are having a change of class. You needed to be here during the change of class. I can tell you what is going to happen. They are going to go to class nicely today, but you see my kids on the block right there? They are going to wait until the last minute and they are my Afro American kids.

After conversing for a few minutes during the class change, the administrator continues:

I don't see many stragglers out there. A couple of people wandering, but not much and I don't see a lot of African American kids hanging around out there. You got those White kids out there . . .

Even in the position of an African American male in leadership, he, too, exhibited deficit thinking, adopting the majoritarian story. There was an assumption about a particular group of African American students' propensity to violate the order of the school, when in fact it was another group of students who were not assumed to need higher levels of supervision.

My Story: Deficit Thinking

Although they are not always clearly defined, high expectations are always resounded as a practice that makes a difference with all students. Deficit thinking is like a tumor of high expectations, slowly draining all lifelines from any benefits. High expectations are positive wherein deficit thinking cannot get past what one does not have. High expectations encourage, and, although unapologetic for challenges, they always empathize and seek to

understand, while deficit thinking slowly destroys. Yet, deficit thinking becomes most dangerous when its victim internalizes the message. As I researched universities trying to decide where I wanted to apply, like most high school students, I began with my guidance counselor. I began to inquire about Wake Forest University, which had a wonderful history program. I quickly learned that anytime I went to the office to retrieve information, the only universities that were discussed with me were Winston-Salem State and North Carolina A & T State. While both of these universities were well acclaimed, I had done my research and plotted my course of action. As other students had applications completed for them, scholarships applications brought to them in class, and acceptances broadcasted with great pride, I largely navigated the process without the assistance of my high school. It was like déjà vu as my older brother had the same experience, along with many other African American students. While my counselor was very cordial and nice, it became evident very quickly that she could only see me going to a predominantly African American school, even one that did not have the course of study I planned to pursue.

Years later, as a high school teacher and administrator, I would sit through each year's awards program to see the disparities in the students crossing the red carpet of the stage and examples for the peers to receive scholarships and recognitions. In my numerous discussions with students, I would hear the echo of similar experiences in which deficit thinking within the "plantation" system forced them to remain in the audience. I recall the elevated roar in auditorium when an African American *and* economically disadvantaged student actually crossed the stage to be recognized. There was a level of celebration as if there was a slave that actually made it to freedom, followed by facial expressions of disappointment of all the others who did not "cross" with them. As I watched this exchange

year after year, I realized that as much as some things changed, others, unfortunately, seemed to remain the same.

As I prepared to exit my rural high school, I was the only African American to graduate with all the academic honors available. Although I was one of the fieldworkers who “crossed over” with awards and scholarships, I was most excited about walking across the stage one final time and hearing my name called . . . with honors. As the roll of over 300 names began, I could see a whole section of the stadium that seated my support network. Relatives had traveled from near and far to support me in this milestone. My name was called. I crossed the stage and as I neared the point of shaking the hands of the dignitaries, I heard the name that had always seem to come after mine since kindergarten. As I heard “Travis,” I realized there was no “with honors”. To many people this would not seem like a big deal, and I did not want it to be. Yet, in the community in which I resided, this action was interpreted as another way to place African Americans in the “box” to which they “belonged.” After several individuals sent messages to the dais, the principal called me back to the stage and announced my name . . . “with honors.” Ten years after the experiences that sent me coded messages about what was expected of me in comparison to my counterparts, the same practices still existed--in some cases to a greater extreme—in the schools in which I served.

Further examination of the themes of policing, the Savior mentality and deeper exploration of deficit thinking in BTO and HP High Schools can extend the field of work with Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis. I recommend that the voices of those along the margin must be captured in this methodology to gather even more useful data

to combat the differences revealed between the BTO and HP high schools along with future development of the four themes.

The study is delimited by the selection of schools for which a full realm of data could be obtained. This includes demographic data as well as clear and complete transcriptions of interviews. I did not want to rely on interpreted data in cases where full transcriptions were not available.

While incorporating a framework that combines Critical Race Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis provides the platform for a unique perspective, it also limits the study. A tenet of Critical Race Theory is the counter-story. The counter-story is the story of the marginalized group (Solórzano & Yasso, 2002). Yet, the HSRA Study does not incorporate the voices of African American and economically disadvantaged students. There is great value in the counter-story, but it will be limited focus in this research in terms of hearing the voices of the students and parents. While the methodology implemented creates a counter-story, the construction of the point of view includes the words of the principals, teachers and the researcher. The study also did not include interviews with counselors or other educational personnel.

Utilizing a framework of CRT and CDA in which race was explicitly discussed in the HSRA interviews, the data revealed three major themes that emerged. Teachers and principals in both high school samples tended to reference majoritarian groups more from a positive academic position, but tended to discuss African American and economically disadvantaged from a “policing” perspective. There is a focus on establishment of positions of power over coupled with a need to “reel in” behavior deemed unruly and out of compliance with existing norms. Secondly, there are some aspects of a Savior mentality.

Several teachers in both sample groups either referred to themselves or had others refer to them as possessing some special gift for working with “challenging” students. While I appreciate the efforts of those who give so much of themselves for their students—especially when it involves them reaching so far *across* the lines of their reality—I caution the use of “romanticized” images that look more like one is reaching *down* to lift up the disadvantaged. Embedded in such good intentions are the very assumptions that perpetuate a system of failing students. The final prevailing theme is the existence of deficit thinking that is often disguised as facts rather than the stereotypes that hold African American and economically disadvantaged students to a different set of standard. The emerging themes of policing, the Savior mentality and deficit thinking directly relate to the CRT notion of “Whiteness” as property (and, hence, power), that is the hidden system to which these students have not *assimilated* and *conformed*. Further examination of the themes of policing, the Savior mentality and deeper exploration of deficit thinking in BTO and HP High Schools can extend the field of work with Critical Race Theory, especially incorporating Critical Discourse Analysis in the examination of language that produces and reproduces these themes.

Implications for Future Study

While there are elements of both the Beating the Odds and High Priority High Schools that are worthy of celebration, more recent trends indicate a need for further study regarding the proficiency rates. Included in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 are details that unveil the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 proficiency rates. The statistics reveal a consistent decline in performance rates for all schools, including the highest performing school with the least diversity. Improving achievement proficiency rates is only part of the effort, but maintaining hard earned successes is worthy of future research.

The study included North Carolina high schools with significant populations of African American and economically disadvantaged students. There are, however, no schools in North Carolina that are recognized as “High-Performing” with populations reflective of the ones included in the study. Due to this lack of these samples, more efforts should be made to identify *higher* performing predominately African American and economically disadvantaged North Carolina high schools, realizing that the scope may need to be extended to other states. Additional qualitative research utilizing the combination of a CRT and CDA could specifically address issues of race prevailing North Carolina High Schools. Modeling the work of Gail Thompson (2007), the incorporation of interviews of African American and economically disadvantages student (and parent) perspectives would provide great experiential knowledge to drive improvement efforts.

Future study could also benefit greatly from the development of a more comprehensive combined CRT and CDA theoretical framework. The application of a refined Critical Racial Discourse Analysis framework to secondary analysis data, however, must be may be questionable if utilized with secondary data that does not include the original data (i.e. digital recordings or transcriptions). This was recorded as a limitation for this research as all the digital recordings were not available for all the schools in the initial sample.

Though this study focused on African American and economically disadvantaged students, additional research might consider the reproduction of the same themes among emerging populations in North Carolina. During this study, I particularly noticed recurring themes applicable to Latino students. In reading the work of a number of LatCrit scholars, the same language is used in reference to these marginalized students. To illustrate the need

for this field work in North Carolina, following quote resonates some of the same notions of policing, the Savior mentality and deficit thinking:

You know I had a student, a very difficult student that came from Miami that was in a gang and she was very difficult. She was a little short Hispanic girl . . . But, she was difficult. I never went to the other teachers and asked how she was doing in their classes. But, over the course of a couple of years; there has been some discussion about her and it was interesting that all those teachers had made that same commitment that I had made without communicating that they we're going to look out for this little girl. We're going to try to turn her around; we're going to try to get her on the right tract. It was just being done. And I thought that was amazing. That there was no set goal like you refers to me talked about. We didn't write a goal for her. It's just something that the teacher did. Some of the coaches were picking her up and taking her to practice because she had such a horrible home life. All this stuff goes on that a lot of people probably don't know about. Our principal probably doesn't know about it. But it's just being done because they care about kids.

This passage is a continuation of the previous one in which a teacher proudly described how her African American students stood up against the new Hispanic girl disrupting disorder in the classroom. Even in all the efforts to “turn her around”, it is still detailed that there still has not been a strategic effort to really unveil the position of this student. Nevertheless a couple of years have passed. In this romanticized account exists the same silences that disallow numerous African American and economically disadvantaged students to experience academic successes.

Summary

In an effort to extend the field of CRT, this experience of working with Critical Racial Discourse Analysis has indeed sparked an interest in additional work in this arena.

Critical race scholarship [notes] that what is noticeably missing from the discussion of race is a substantive discussion of racism. We further this claim to assert that substantive discussions of racism are missing from critical discourse in education. We believe critical race methodology can move us toward these discussions. As we work from our own positions in the margins of society, we hold on to the belief that the margin can be more than a site of deprivation. (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 37)

As I strive to help redirect current the current storyline for America's stepchildren, we must provide them a voice of empowerment. In reconstructing the autobiography of education, we must implement increased efforts to ensure monovocal stories are countered with the reflections, ultimately making the autobiography a true masterpiece.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol (Principals)

1) Grand Tour Question:

- What would you say are your biggest challenges in this school? How are you addressing those?

Student Population:

Free & Reduced Meal:

Black:

White:

Hispanic:

Multi-Racial:

Asian:

Per Pupil Expenditure:

Cohort Graduation Rate:

SAT:

SAT Participation:

EOC Proficiency Scores										
	Eng I	Alg I	Alg II	Geom	Bio	Chem	Phys Sci	Physics	Civics & Econ	US Hist
2002-03										
2003-04										
2004-05										
2005-06										

2005-06:

School Designation:

Growth:

AYP:

2004-05:

School Designation:

Growth:

AYP:

2) Goal Setting and Communication of Goals:

- Is there a set of specific goals for this school overall? If so, what are they?
- How were these goals set?
- Do your staff members know what the goals are? How do they know?
- Do your students know what the goals are? How do they know?
- Have the goals just been established, or have they been in place for several years?
- What are the next challenges that you will be working to overcome?

[Goals instructional? Defined in terms of EOC results or other measurable outcomes? Data used to set goals? In written form? Stressed in opening orientation, faculty meetings?]

3) Coordination of Curriculum & Instruction:

- How are curricular decision made here?

- Do you get involved in curriculum matters? Why/why not?
- How do teachers decide what to teach in your school?
- Has this changed in the past few years?

[NC Standard Course of Study? Pacing guides? Benchmarks? Opportunity to learn?]

	School	School District	North Carolina
Fully Licensed Teachers			
Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers			
Teachers with Advanced Degrees			
NBCTs			

3.5) Teacher Recruitment, Assignment & Retention:

- Do you have problems recruiting teachers? If so, how do you address them?
- How do you decide who teaches what?
- How do you address teacher retention issues?
- Do you provide any type of incentives for your teachers? If so, what and why?
- How do you encourage and support them? How do you acknowledge their performance?
Has this changed over the past few years?

[Self-motivated, self-starter teachers? Do you do anything to get them going and keep them working hard?]

	School	School District	North Carolina
05-06 School-level turnover rate (85 teachers)			
04-05 School-level turnover rate (88 teachers)			
Andrews Years of Teaching Experience: 0-3 years: 4-10 years: 10+ years:			

4) Supervision & Evaluation of Instruction:

- Do you get out into classrooms on a regular basis? Why/why not?
- If so, what do you look for when you're there?
- Do you get a chance to talk with the teachers about what you see during those visits?
- Has your attention to instruction changed in the past few years?

[Formal evaluations of teachers? Any connection of teacher evaluations to student learning, achievement, test scores?]

5) Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning:

- To what extent do you get involved in monitoring students' academic progress?
- What sorts of things do you do?
- Do you do anything special to recognize or reward high student achievement here?
- What is your drop-out rate and how do you address issues regarding drop-outs?
- How are students assigned to teachers?
- Has your attention to student progress changed in the past few years?

[Concrete behaviors reflecting expectations? Formative assessments? Benchmarks? Emphasis?]

6) Promoting Professional Development and Building Community:

- How do you handle professional development here?
- Is the schedule set up so that teachers who teach the same subjects have times when they can meet with each other? Do they?
- Do you think much comes of these sessions?
- If one of your teachers was doing a poor job, would the other teachers call him/her on it? Why/why not? Has this changed over the past few years?

[Shared planning times? Who, how, when, where and why? Principal part of the team? Why/why not? How? How are norms set and developed? Shared purpose and collective responsibility for learning?]

7) Maintaining Visibility:

- Do you get out around the school very much? When and why?
- What activities do you attend? Why?
- What do you do when you attend activities like that?
- Has your visibility changed over the past few years?

[Participate in extracurriculars? Cover for teachers absent or late? Teach classes? Tutor students?]

8) Creating Trust:

- Do your teachers wholeheartedly support your efforts to bring about improvement? Why/why not?
- Do you take an active interest in trying to help teachers personally and professionally? How?
- Has this changed recently?

[Benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness?]

9) Protecting Instructional Time:

- Do your teachers complain much about things that cut into the time they have for instruction?
- Is there anything you do about this issue?
- What do you do to provide a safe, orderly environment?
- Any change in this over the past few years?

[Minimize interruptions? Student absence for extracurriculars? Discourage student and teacher lateness and absences?]

10) Others:

- Is there anything else that you like to share about your school--about the teachers, students, parents, and/or the community?
- Does the district hinder or facilitate your success in any way? If so, how?

[District barriers or supports?]

** Be somewhat skeptical, actively looking for ways that the school may be “gaming the system.”*

Appendix B

Interview Protocol (Teachers)

1) Grand Tour Question

- **What would you say are your biggest challenges in this school? How are you addressing those?**

Student Population:

Free & Reduced Meal:

Black:

White:

Hispanic:

Multi-Racial:

Asian:

Per Pupil Expenditure:

Cohort Graduation Rate:

SAT:

SAT Participation:

EOC Proficiency Scores										
	Eng I	Alg I	Alg II	Geom	Bio	Chem	Phys Sci	Physics	Civics & Econ	US Hist
2002-03										
2003-04										
2004-05										
2005-06										

2005-06:

School Designation:

Growth:

AYP:

2004-05:

School Designation:

Growth:

AYP: 2) Goal Setting and Communication of Goals:

- Is there a set of specific goals for this school overall? If so, what are they?
 - How were these goals set?
 - Are the school's goals clear to you? If so, how do you know what they are?
 - Do your students know what the goals are? How do they know?
 - Have the goals just been established, or have they been in place for several years?
- [Goals instructional? Defined in terms of EOC results or other measurable outcomes? Data used to set goals? In written form? Stressed in opening orientation, faculty meetings?]*

3) Coordination of Curriculum & Instruction:

- How are curricular decision made here?

- Does the principal play any role in shaping the curriculum or tracking whether and how it's implemented? Why/why not?
- How do you decide what to teach?
- Has this changed in the past few years?

[NC Standard Course of Study? Pacing guides? Benchmarks? Opportunity to learn?]

	School	School District	North Carolina
Fully Licensed Teachers			
Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers			
Teachers with Advanced Degrees			
NBCTs			

3.5) Teacher Recruitment, Assignment & Retention:

- How does the principal recruit teachers?
- Who and how do you decide who teaches what?
- What is your teacher turnover rate?
- Does the principal provide any type of incentives for teachers? If so, what and why?
- How does he encourage and support you? How does he acknowledge your performance?
Has this changed over the past few years?

[Self-motivated, self-starter teachers? Do you do anything to get them going and keep them working hard?]

	School	School District	North Carolina
05-06 School-level turnover rate (107 teachers)			
04-05 School-level turnover rate (105 teachers)			
Smith Years of Teaching Experience:			

4) Supervision & Evaluation of Instruction:

- Does the principal come to your classroom very often? Why/why not?
- What does he seem to be looking for when he does?
- Does he talk with you about what he sees?
- Has the principal's attention to instruction and changed in the past few years?
[Formal evaluations of teachers? Any connection of teacher evaluations to student learning, achievement, test scores?]

5) Monitoring Student Progress and Providing Incentives for Learning:

- Does the principal give much attention to monitoring students' academic progress?
- If so, what sorts of things does he do?
- Do you do anything special to recognize or reward high student achievement here?
- What is your drop-out rate and how do you address issues regarding drop-outs?
- How are students assigned to teachers?
- Has this changed in the past few years?

[Concrete behaviors reflecting expectations? Formative assessments? Benchmarks? Emphasis?]

6) Promoting Professional Development and Building Community:

- How do you handle professional development here?
- Is the schedule set up so that teachers who teach the same subjects have times when they can meet with each other? Do you?
- Do you think much comes of these sessions?
- If one of your teachers was doing a poor job, would the other teachers call him/her on it? Why/why not?
- Has this changed over the past few years?

[Shared planning times? Who, how, when, where and why? Principal part of the team? Why/why not? How? How are norms set and developed? Shared purpose and collective responsibility for learning?]

7) Maintaining Visibility:

- Does the principal get out around the school very much? When and why?
- What activities does he attend?
- What does he do when he attends activities like that? Why?
- Has his visibility changed over the past few years?

[Participate in extracurriculars? Cover for teachers absent or late? Teach classes? Tutor students?]

8) Creating Trust:

- Can you trust that the principal will do what he tells you s/he will do?
- Does the principal care about you as an individual?
- Does the principal take an active interest in trying to help teachers improve their knowledge and skill?
- Has this changed recently?

9) Protecting Instructional Time:

- Does the principal try to protect the time you have for instruction?
- If so, what sorts of things does he do?
- What do you wish he would do?
- What types of things are done to provide a safe, orderly environment?
- Any change in this over the past few years?

[Minimize interruptions? Student absence for extracurriculars? Discourage student and teacher lateness and absences?]

11) Others:

- Is there anything else that you like to share about your school--about the principal, teachers, students, parents, and/or the community?
- Does the district hinder or facilitate your success? If so, how?

[Barriers and/or supports?]

** Be somewhat skeptical, actively looking for ways that the school may be “gaming the system.”*

Appendix C

IRB Application

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS

Institutional Review Board

APPLICATION FOR IRB APPROVAL OF
HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH
Version 2-Nov-2006

<i>For IRB Use</i>		
Behav	Biomed	PH-Nurs
IRB Study # _____		
Rec'd _____		
Full	Expedited	Exempt

Part A.1. Contact Information, Agreements, and Signatures

Title of Study: High School Resource Allocation Project: EDUC 07-0113

Date: 1/17/07

Name and degrees of Applicant: Gary Henry, Ph.D.

Department: School of Education

Mailing address/CB #: 3500

UNC-CH PID: XXXX-XXXXX Pager:

Phone #: 962.6694

Fax #: 962.1533

Email Address: gthentry@unc.edu

Name of funding source or sponsor:

not funded Federal State industry foundation UNC-CH

other (specify): **Sponsor or award number:** Task order is included in the Appendix.

List **all other project personnel** including co-investigators, and anyone else who has contact with subjects or identifiable data from subjects.

Kirsten Kainz, Ph.D. Project Director, kkainz@email.unc.edu

Kathleen Brown, Ph.D., Qualitative Investigator, brownk@email.unc.edu

Charles Thompson, Ph.D., Qualitative Investigator, thompsonchar@ecu.edu

Deborah Eaker-Rich, Ph.D., Qualitative Investigator, eakeric@email.unc.edu

Elizabeth Cunningham, J.D., Qualitative Research Assistant, ekcunningham@lexcominc.net

Adrienne Sgammato, M.S., Graduate Student on Quantitative Team,
sgammato@email.unc.edu

Pan Yi, M.S., Graduate Student on Quantitative Team, panyi@email.unc.edu

Cary Gillenwater, M.A., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team, cgillen@email.unc.edu

Aaron Cooley, M.A., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team, aacooley@email.unc.edu

Warnele Renee Carmon, M.Ed., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team,
wcarmon@email.unc.edu

Alvera Lesane, M.Ed., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team, ajlesane@email.unc.edu

Cicily McCrimmon, M.Ed., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team,
camccrim@email.unc.edu

Chris Scott, M.Ed., Graduate Student on Qualitative Team, cescott@email.unc.edu

Include email address for each person who should receive electronic copies of IRB correspondence to PI: Kirsten Kainz - kkainz@email.unc.edu

Include following items with your submission, where applicable.

Check the relevant items below and include one copy of all checked items 1-11 in the order listed.

Also include two additional collated sets of copies (sorted in the order listed) for items 1-7.

→ **Applications will be returned if these instructions are not followed.**

Check	Item	Total No. of Copies
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. This application. One copy must have original PI signatures.	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Consent and assent forms, fact or information sheets; include phone and verbal consent scripts.	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. HIPAA authorization addendum to consent form.	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. All recruitment materials including scripts, flyers and advertising, letters, emails.	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Questionnaires, focus group guides, scripts used to guide phone or in-person interviews, etc.	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Protocol, grant application or proposal supporting this submission; (e.g., extramural grant application to NIH or foundation, industry protocol, student proposal).	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Documentation of reviews from any other committees (e.g., GCRC, Oncology Protocol Review Committee, or local review committees in Academic Affairs).	3
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Addendum for Multi-Site Studies where UNC-CH is the Lead Coordinating Center.	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Data use agreements (may be required for use of existing data from third parties).	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Only for those study personnel <i>not</i> in the online UNC-CH ethics training database (http://cfx3.research.unc.edu/training_comp/): Documentation of required training in human research ethics.	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Investigator Brochure if a drug study.	1

Principal Investigator: I will personally conduct or supervise this research study. I will ensure that this study is performed in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and University policies regarding human subjects research. I will obtain IRB approval before making any changes or additions to the project. I will notify the IRB of any other changes in the information provided in this application. I will provide progress reports to the IRB at least annually, or as requested. I will report promptly to the IRB all unanticipated problems or serious adverse events involving risk to human subjects. I will follow the IRB approved consent process for all subjects. I will ensure that all collaborators, students and employees assisting in this research study are informed about these obligations. All information given in this form is accurate and complete.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Faculty Advisor if PI is a Student or Trainee Investigator: I accept ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this study complies with all the obligations listed above for the PI.

Signature of Faculty Advisor

Date

Department or Division Chair, Center Director (or counterpart) of PI: (or Vice-Chair or Chair's designee if Chair is investigator or otherwise unable to review): I certify that this research is appropriate for this Principal Investigator, that the investigators are qualified to

conduct the research, and that there are adequate resources (including financial, support and facilities) available. If my unit has a local review committee for pre-IRB review, this requirement has been satisfied. I support this application, and hereby submit it for further review.

Signature of Department Chair or designee

Date

Print Name of Department Chair or designee

Department

Part A.2. Summary Checklist

Are the following involved?

Yes No

	Yes	No
A.2.1. Existing data, research records, patient records, and/or human biological specimens?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.2.2. Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups with subjects?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.2.3. Videotaping, audiotaping, filming of subjects (newly collected or existing)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A.2.4. Do you plan to enroll subjects from these vulnerable or select populations:		
a. UNC-CH students or UNC-CH employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Non-English-speaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Decisionally impaired?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Patients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Prisoners, others involuntarily detained or incarcerated, or parolees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Pregnant women?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Minors (less than 18 years)? <i>If yes</i> , give age range: to years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.5. a. Is this a multi-site study (sites outside UNC-CH engaged in the research)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Is UNC-CH the sponsor or lead coordinating center ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If yes</i> , include the <i>Addendum for Multi-site Studies where UNC-CH is the Lead Coordinating Center</i> .		
<i>If yes</i> , will any of these sites be outside the United States?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If yes</i> , provide contact information for the foreign IRB.		
A.2.6. Will there be a data and safety monitoring committee (DSMB or DSMC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.7. a. Are you collecting sensitive information such as sexual behavior, HIV status, recreational drug use, illegal behaviors, child/physical abuse, immigration status, etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Do you plan to obtain a federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.8. a. Investigational drugs? (provide IND # _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Approved drugs for “non-FDA-approved” conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>All studies testing substances in humans must provide a letter of acknowledgement from the UNC Health Care Investigational Drug Service (IDS).</i>		
A.2.9. Placebo(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.10. Investigational devices, instruments, machines, software? (provide IDE # _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.11. Fetal tissue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.12. Genetic studies on subjects’ specimens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A.2.13. Storage of subjects’ specimens for future research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If yes, see instructions for Consent for Stored Samples.</i>		

A.2.14. Diagnostic or therapeutic ionizing radiation, or radioactive isotopes, which subjects would not receive otherwise? <i>If yes, approval by the UNC-CH Radiation Safety Committee is required.</i>	—	X —
A.2.15. Recombinant DNA or gene transfer to human subjects? <i>If yes, approval by the UNC-CH Institutional Biosafety Committee is required.</i>	—	X —
A.2.16. Does this study involve UNC-CH cancer patients? <i>If yes, submit this application directly to the Oncology Protocol Review Committee.</i>	—	X —
A.2.17. Will subjects be studied in the General Clinical Research Center (GCRC)? <i>If yes, obtain the GCRC Addendum from the GCRC and submit complete application (IRB application and Addendum) to the GCRC.</i>	—	X —

Part A.3. Conflict of Interest Questions and Certification

The following questions apply to **all investigators and study staff** engaged in the design, conduct, or reporting results of this project **and/or their immediate family members**. For these purposes, "family" includes the individual's spouse and dependent children. "Spouse" includes a person with whom one lives together in the same residence and with whom one shares responsibility for each other's welfare and shares financial obligations.

<p>A.3.1. Currently or during the term of this research study, does any member of the research team or his/her family member have or expect to have:</p> <p>(a) A personal financial interest in or personal financial relationship (including gifts of cash or in-kind) with the sponsor of this study?</p> <p>(b) A personal financial interest in or personal financial relationship (including gifts of cash or in-kind) with an entity that owns or has the right to commercialize a product, process or technology studied in this project?</p> <p>(c) A board membership of any kind or an executive position (paid or unpaid) with the sponsor of this study or with an entity that owns or has the right to commercialize a product, process or technology studied in this project?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>A.3.2. Has the University or has a University-related foundation received a cash or in-kind gift from the Sponsor of this study for the use or benefit of any member of the research team?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>A.3.3. Has the University or has a University-related foundation received a cash or in-kind gift for the use or benefit of any member of the research team from an entity that owns or has the right to commercialize a product, process or technology studied in this project?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no</p>

If the answer to ANY of the questions above is yes, the affected research team member(s) must complete and submit to the Office of the University Counsel the form accessible at <http://coi.unc.edu>. List name(s) of all research team members for whom any answer to the questions above is yes:

Certification by Principal Investigator: By submitting this IRB application, I (the PI) certify that the information provided above is true and accurate regarding my own circumstances, that I have inquired of every UNC-Chapel Hill employee or trainee who will be engaged in the design, conduct or reporting of results of this project as to the questions set out above, and that I have instructed any such person who has answered "yes" to any of these questions to complete and submit for approval a Conflict of Interest Evaluation Form. I understand that as Principal Investigator I am obligated to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest that exist in relation to my study are reported as required by University policy.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Faculty Advisor if PI is a Student or Trainee Investigator: I accept ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the PI complies with the University's conflict of interest policies and procedures.

Signature of Faculty Advisor

Date

Part A.4. Questions Common to All Studies

For all questions, if the study involves only secondary data analysis, focus on your proposed design, methods and procedures, and not those of the original study that produced the data you plan to use.

A.4.1. Brief Summary. Provide a *brief* non-technical description of the study, which will be used in IRB documentation as a description of the study. Typical summaries are 50-100 words. *Please reply to each item below, retaining the subheading labels already in place, so that reviewers can readily identify the content.*

Purpose: The purpose of the High School Resource Allocation project is to evaluate the effects of school expenditures on high school student achievement in North Carolina, accounting for characteristics of students, teachers, and principals within schools.

Participants: This evaluation primarily will rely on extant data from records of school expenditures and student test scores and background characteristics obtained from the NC Department of Public Instruction. Additionally, personnel from 48 of the 359 traditional public high schools in North Carolina will participate in interviews to provide supplementary information on the context for spending and instruction within schools.

Procedures (methods): Primarily, this study will rely on quantitative analysis of extant data. For the purpose of complementary qualitative analyses, university researchers will interview a subset of teachers and principals at schools modeled in the quantitative analyses. A copy of the interview protocol is contained in the Appendix.

A.4.2. Purpose and Rationale. Provide a summary of the background information, state the research question(s), and tell why the study is needed. If a complete rationale and literature review are in an accompanying grant application or other type of proposal, only provide a brief summary here. If there is no proposal, provide a more extensive rationale and literature review, including references.

On March 3, 2006, Judge Howard Manning issued a letter to the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Chairman of the State Board of Education. In his letter, Judge Manning cited the chronic low performance on state tests for students in 44 high schools in North Carolina. Additionally, he provided a comparison of expenditures in schools with low and high performing students in 2005. This letter prompted responses from the NC Department of Public Instruction and the Governor's Office. As a result, Governor Easley commissioned an evaluation of student performance in high schools in relation to school expenditures, accounting for characteristics of the students and teachers in those schools.

A.4.3. Subjects. *You should describe the subject population even if your study does not involve direct interaction (e.g., existing records).* Specify number, gender, ethnicity, race, and age. Specify whether subjects are healthy volunteers or patients. If patients, specify any relevant disease or condition and indicate how potential subjects will be identified.

For the quantitative analyses, extant data on student achievement and school expenditures in 359 schools will be used. There were approximately 400,000 students attending traditional public high schools in North Carolina during 2005.

For the qualitative analyses, principals and teachers – approximately ten teachers who teach courses assessed by NC End of Course tests in each school - from 48 schools will be interviewed. The 48 schools in our qualitative sample represent three groups: 1) 37 high schools from Manning’s list of 44 that continued to have low-performing status in 2006; 2) two high schools from Manning’s list that improved their performance in 2006; and 3) nine schools that were high performing in 2005 yet served student populations similar to the low performing schools.

A.4.4. Inclusion/exclusion criteria. List required characteristics of potential subjects, and those that preclude enrollment or involvement of subjects or their data. Justify exclusion of any group, especially by criteria based on gender, ethnicity, race, or age. If pregnant women are excluded, or if women who become pregnant are withdrawn, specific justification must be provided.

Data from students attending charter schools will not be included.

A.4.5. Full description of the study design, methods and procedures. Describe the research study. Discuss the study design; study procedures; sequential description of what subjects will be asked to do; assignment of subjects to various arms of the study if applicable; doses; frequency and route of administration of medication and other medical treatment if applicable; how data are to be collected (questionnaire, interview, focus group or specific procedure such as physical examination, venipuncture, etc.). Include information on who will collect data, who will conduct procedures or measurements. Indicate the number and duration of contacts with each subject; outcome measurements; and follow-up procedures. If the study involves medical treatment, distinguish standard care procedures from those that are research. If the study is a clinical trial involving patients as subjects and use of placebo control is involved, provide justification for the use of placebo controls.

For the quantitative study, analyses will be conducted on extant data obtained from the NC Department of Public Instruction.

For the qualitative study, UNC researchers will send a letter to principals declaring the study purpose and requesting a visit to the schools (this letter is contained in the Appendix). Following the letter, UNC researchers will call the school principal to determine a visit date. While visiting the schools, researchers will conduct a semi-structured interview with principals and a set of teachers. UNC researchers will record the interviews to create summary statements at a later date. Interviews will occur once during Spring, 2007.

A.4.6. Benefits to subjects and/or society. Describe any potential for direct benefit to individual subjects, as well as the benefit to society based on scientific knowledge to be gained; these should be clearly distinguished. Consider the nature, magnitude, and likelihood of any direct benefit to subjects. If there is no direct benefit to the individual subject, say so here and in the consent form (if there is a consent form). Do not list monetary payment or other compensation as a benefit.

No direct benefits to participants are anticipated.

A.4.7. Full description of risks and measures to minimize risks. Include risk of psychosocial harm (e.g., emotional distress, embarrassment, breach of confidentiality), economic harm (e.g., loss of employment or insurability, loss of professional standing or reputation, loss of standing within the community) and legal jeopardy (e.g., disclosure of illegal activity or negligence), as well as known side effects of study medication, if applicable, and risk of pain and physical injury. Describe what will be done to minimize these risks. Describe procedures for follow-up, when necessary, such as when subjects are found to be in need of medical or psychological referral. If there is no direct interaction with subjects, and risk is limited to breach of confidentiality (e.g., for existing data), state this.

No risks to participants are anticipated.

A.4.8. Data analysis. Tell how the qualitative and/or quantitative data will be analyzed. Explain how the sample size is sufficient to achieve the study aims. This might include a formal power calculation or explanation of why a small sample is sufficient (e.g., qualitative research, pilot studies).

For the quantitative study we plan to conduct hierarchical analyses of student achievement on End of Course (EOC) tests. The hierarchical models will parse variation in student performance due to student characteristics from variation due to school characteristics. The unique effects of student and school characteristics will be estimated to evaluate the role of current expenditure patterns and policies. Sample sizes - which range from 30,000 to 112,000 students per specific EOC - are more than adequate to find small effects.

For the qualitative analysis, interviews with principals and teachers will be analyzed to see common patterns that can illuminate and refine the quantitative findings. Rather than using individual quotes (as is the case in some qualitative reports), summary reports of the qualitative findings will be used. These summary reports will complement the quantitative analyses such that maximum policy-relevant information is available for the final report.

A.4.9. Will you collect or receive any of the following identifiers? Does not apply to consent forms.

No Yes *If yes, check all that apply:*

- a. Names
- b. Telephone numbers
- c. Any elements of dates (other than year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death. For ages over 89: all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 and older
- d. Any geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code
- e. Fax numbers
- f. Electronic mail addresses
- g. Social security numbers
- h. Medical record numbers

- i. Health plan beneficiary numbers
- j. Account numbers
- k. Certificate/license numbers
- l. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers (VIN), including license plate numbers
- m. Device identifiers and serial numbers (e.g., implanted medical device)
- n. Web universal resource locators (URLs)
- o. Internet protocol (IP) address numbers
- p. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
- q. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
- r. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic or code, other than dummy identifiers that are not derived from actual identifiers and for which the re-identification key is maintained by the health care provider and not disclosed to the researcher

A.4.10. Confidentiality of the data. Describe procedures for maintaining confidentiality of the data you will collect or will receive. Describe how you will protect the data from access by those not authorized. How will data be transmitted among research personnel? Where relevant, discuss the potential for deductive disclosure (i.e., directly identifying subjects from a combination of indirect IDs).

Quantitative Data

Data from the NC Department of Public Instruction are stored on a secure server at UNC accessed by password on computers in locked offices in the School of Education. Only members of the quantitative team (Gary Henry, Kirsten Kainz, Adrienne Sgammato, Pan Yi) have access to unique passwords. Reports of quantitative data will focus state level analyses and will not provide information on individual participants.

Qualitative Data

The interviews, with participant permission, will be audio taped. Participants may ask that the audio recorder be turned off at any time during the interview. Although the qualitative data team member conducting the interview will know the name(s) of the interviewed participant(s), to maintain confidentiality, participants will not be identified by name on any tapes or in any reports. Audio recordings of interviews will be used only for the creation of summary reports. Audio-tapes will be stored in locked offices. The researcher conducting the interview and the participants will be the only people who will have access to the individual on the audio recordings.

A.4.11. Data sharing. With whom will *identifiable* (contains any of the 18 identifiers listed in question A.4.9 above) data be shared outside the immediate research team? For each, explain confidentiality measures. Include data use agreements, if any.

- No one
- Coordinating Center:
- Statisticians:
- Consultants:
- Other researchers:
- Registries:
- Sponsors:
- External labs for additional testing:
- Journals:

- Publicly available dataset:
- Other:

A.4.12. Data security for storage and transmission. Please check all that apply.

For electronic data:

- Secure network Password access Encryption
 - Other (describe):
 - Portable storage (e.g., laptop computer, flash drive)
- Describe how data will be protected for any portable device:*

For hardcopy data (including human biological specimens, CDs, tapes, etc.):

- Data de-identified by research team (stripped of the 18 identifiers listed in question 7 above)
- Locked suite or office
- Locked cabinet
- Data coded by research team with a master list secured and kept separately
- Other (describe):

A.4.13. Post-study disposition of identifiable data or human biological materials. Describe your plans for disposition of data or human biological specimens that are identifiable in any way (directly or via indirect codes) once the study has ended. Describe your plan to destroy identifiers, if you will do so.

Quantitative Data

Following the creation of final analysis data sets, all data will be de-identified. Previous data with sensitive identifiers will be returned to NC DPI.

Qualitative Data

Audiotapes will remain in a locked office for the duration of the study, after which time they will be destroyed.

Part A.5. The Consent Process and Consent Documentation (including Waivers)

The standard consent process is for all subjects to sign a document containing all the elements of informed consent, as specified in the federal regulations. Some or all of the elements of consent, including signatures, may be altered or waived under certain circumstances.

- If you will obtain consent in any manner, complete **section A.5.1**.
- If you are obtaining consent, but requesting a waiver of the requirement for a signed consent document, complete **section A.5.2**.
- If you are requesting a waiver of any or all of the elements of consent, complete **section A.5.3**.

You may need to complete more than one section. For example, if you are conducting a phone survey with verbal consent, complete sections A.5.1, A.5.2, and possibly A.5.3.

A.5.1. Describe the process of obtaining informed consent from subjects. If children will be enrolled as subjects, describe the provisions for obtaining parental permission and assent of the child. If decisionally impaired adults are to be enrolled, describe the provision for obtaining surrogate consent from a legally authorized representative (LAR). If non-English speaking people will be enrolled, explain how consent in the native language will be obtained. Address both written translation of the consent and the availability of oral interpretation. *After you have completed this part A.5.1, if you are not requesting a waiver of any type, you are done with Part A.5.; proceed to Part B.*

Principals and teachers who participate in interviews will be provided with consent forms prior to the interview. Staff from the nine high-performing and two improved schools will receive Form A of the Consent Form: staff from the 37 low-performing schools will receive Form B (both are contained in the Appendix). All principals and teachers in the study speak English.

Part B. Questions for Studies that Involve Direct Interaction with Human Subjects

→ *If this does not apply to your study, do not submit this section.*

B.1. Methods of recruiting. Describe how and where subjects will be identified and recruited. Indicate who will do the recruiting, and tell how subjects will be contacted. Describe efforts to ensure equal access to participation among women and minorities. Describe how you will protect the privacy of potential subjects during recruitment. *For prospective subjects whose status (e.g., as patient or client), condition, or contact information is not publicly available (e.g., from a phone book or public web site), the initial contact should be made with legitimate knowledge of the subjects' circumstances. Ideally, the individual with such knowledge should seek prospective subjects' permission to release names to the PI for recruitment. Alternatively, the knowledgeable individual could provide information about the study, including contact information for the investigator, so that interested prospective subjects can contact the investigator.* Provide the IRB with a copy of any document or script that will be used to obtain the patients' permission for release of names or to introduce the study. Check with your IRB for further guidance.

Because this is an evaluation of high school performance commissioned by the state, high school principals are aware of the potential for upcoming interviews. UNC researchers will send a letter to clarify the study purposes and help principals prepare for interviews. This letter is attached in the Appendix, as is a script for follow-up contact by telephone.

B.2. Protected Health Information (PHI). If you need to access Protected Health Information (PHI) to identify potential subjects who will then be contacted, you will need a *limited waiver of HIPAA authorization*. If this applies to your study, please provide the following information.

- a. Will the information collected be limited only to that necessary to contact the subjects to ask if they are interested in participating in the study? NA
- b. How will confidentiality/privacy be protected prior to ascertaining desire to participate? NA

- c. When and how will you destroy the contact information if an individual declines participation?
NA

B.3. Duration of entire study and duration of an individual subject's participation, including follow-up evaluation if applicable. Include the number of required contacts and approximate duration of each contact.

School staff will participate in a single interview that will last 60 to 90 minutes.

B.4. Where will the subjects be studied? Describe locations where subjects will be studied, both on and off the UNC-CH campus.

Interviews will be conducted at high schools where staff are employed.

B.5. Privacy. Describe procedures that will ensure privacy of the subjects in this study. Examples include the setting for interviews, phone conversations, or physical examinations; communication methods or mailed materials (e.g., mailings should not indicate disease status or focus of study on the envelope).

Interviews will be conducted in private, quiet settings such as offices, classrooms, or other agreed upon locations of the participants' choosing.

B.6. Inducements for participation. Describe all inducements to participate, monetary or non-monetary. If monetary, specify the amount and schedule for payments and how this will be prorated if the subject withdraws (or is withdrawn) from the study prior to completing it. For compensation in foreign currency, provide a US\$ equivalent. Provide evidence that the amount is not coercive (e.g., describe purchasing power for foreign countries). Include food or refreshments that may be provided.

There is no compensation associated with participation in this evaluation.

B.7. Costs to be borne by subjects. Include child care, travel, parking, clinic fees, diagnostic and laboratory studies, drugs, devices, all professional fees, etc. If there are no costs to subjects other than their time to participate, indicate this.

There is no cost to subjects other than their time.

Part C. Questions for Studies using Data, Records or Human Biological Specimens without Direct Contact with Subjects

→ *If this does not apply to your study, do not submit this section.*

C.1. What records, data or human biological specimens will you be using? (check all that apply):

Data already collected for another research study

- Data already collected for administrative purposes (e.g., Medicare data, hospital discharge data)
- Medical records (custodian may also require form, e.g., HD-974 if UNC-Health Care System)
- Electronic information from clinical database (custodian may also require form)
- Patient specimens (tissues, blood, serum, surgical discards, etc.)
- Other (specify):

C.2. For each of the boxes checked in 1, how were the original data, records, or human biological specimens collected? Describe the process of data collection including consent, if applicable.

Test scores and school expenditures are collected and compiled by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as part of a public reporting mandate. There is no consent process involved.

C.3. For each of the boxes checked in 1, where do these data, records or human biological specimens currently reside?

Data stored at the NC Department of Public Instruction have been released via CD to researchers at UNC and are stored on a secure server.

C.4. For each of the boxes checked in 1, from whom do you have permission to use the data, records or human biological specimens? Include data use agreements, if required by the custodian of data that are not publicly available.

There is no formal agreement for data use other than the attached contract contained in the Appendix.

C.5. If the research involves human biological specimens, has the purpose for which they were collected been met before removal of any excess? For example, has the pathologist in charge or the clinical laboratory director certified that the original clinical purpose has been satisfied? Explain if necessary.

yes no not applicable (explain)

C.6. Do all of these data records or specimens exist at the time of this application? If not, explain how prospective data collection will occur.

yes no If no, explain

REFERENCES

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