“That’s messed up”: A critical race analysis of Tacoma’s school desegregation and connections to youth experiences today

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Abstract

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In 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Brown v. Board* that separate but equal had no place in public education, thereby setting the course to racially desegregate America's public

schools. Whereas many school districts faced mandatory desegregation orders, Tacoma Public Schools in Washington State chose to voluntarily desegregate its schools. Government reports and newspaper articles written around this time predominantly laud the district for its voluntary desegregative efforts. This thesis applies Critical Race Theory and Youth Participatory Action Research to link the local, historical context of desegregation to present-day experiences of five youth of color in the district. This is important because to date there is no known local analysis of desegregation nor one that elevates the voices of young people. This study complicates views on school desegregation as a means towards educational equity and argues that desegregation in Tacoma, mirroring trends nationwide, benefited White people first and foremost.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the young people I have had the honor of working with over the years, and those whom I will work with in the years to come. From my first students in my seventh grade science classroom in Houston to my now-high-school students who I taught their first grade year in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas to the youth of McCarver and the now middle-schoolers in Tacoma, some of whose stories are shared here. Thank you. I do this learning and this work for all of you.

*

I also dedicate this thesis to my grandparents: Morris, in loving memory, Harriet, Saul and Salene. I am so incredibly fortunate to have shared so many years of life with you. Being rooted in where I came from has helped shape me into who I am today. I hope this makes you proud.

PREFACE

Delia, a recently-graduated fifth grader, returns during summer programming to visit staff and help out with the younger students in the expanded learning program I lead at McCarver Elementary. I walk back with her to the staff office to retrieve some supplies. As we turn the corner to the hallway that leads back towards the cafeteria and the hustle-and-bustle of the program, she points towards me, asking: "What's that?" I look around for what she is referring to and notice she is pointing at my feet. My ankles, actually. I'm wearing cropped pants and flats and my ankles are visible. My White skin has pink undertones, whereas some White skin is more olive complexion, and the back of my ankles, around my Achilles tendon, is one area where this can be especially prominent. This stood out to Delia. She had not seen this before and was both concerned and intrigued. I explain that some White people's skin is more pinkish and for me, my skin shows this color more when it is cold, or dry. She made a gesture of acknowledgment, a head nod or an "OK," and seemed satisfied. We walked back out into the main program space.

I start with this story because being White impacts how I move through the world and how I am perceived, especially working in education settings where many students and families are people of color and many teachers and leaders are White. Being a White woman doing research on racial desegregation, it is important to start off by exploring my identity and identity-development, both for readers and for myself.

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) writes that there exists a need to understand the researcher and their motivations as a way of transparency and accountability to subjects. Critical Race Theory recognizes the existence of the researcher and denies the separation of the researcher from the researched. Thus, I write here in a "self-revelatory mode" attempting to speak to

experiences that contributed to my worldview and brought me to this research – these experiences and beliefs that also undeniably influence my approach (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 272).

Perhaps the biggest underlying experience in my awareness of *othering* was being raised Jewish in a largely non-Jewish community. This offered me an awareness that there were other stories and perspectives absent from my day-to-day experience and formal education. The ignorant and hurtful responses I received when peers would learn about my different religion—asking questions such as, "do Jewish people celebrate Fourth of July?" — helped me empathize with those whose distinctions weren't as easily hidden as mine. I felt this otherness in subtle ways from a constant referral to "Christmas break" during my years as a student (including college) to more explicit events like ending up in tears one day in high school after Christian friends physically pulled me down the hall to attend a Bible-study group.

I grew up in a Jewish family that was more culturally observant than religious. This is because I was a couple generations into a process of my Ashkenazi-Jewish family making cultural and religious sacrifices for the benefits of White privilege. See, contrary to common thinking, not all Jews are White, but many of Ashkenazi (Eastern European) heritage are (or pass as) White. (The Whiteness of some Jews is a source of debate within the Jewish community) (Kivel, 2011). No longer keeping kosher, attending synagogue regularly or wearing religiously-identifiable dress were conscious decisions my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents made over time. Many of these choices were rooted in a desire – a need, even – to blend in and gain access to Whiteness and all its benefits – home ownership in their neighborhood of choice, freedom from worry about job discrimination and general feelings of being trusted and safe.

It was this internal identification with feelings of otherness that I now realize helped me empathize with and be curious about those more obviously marginalized by society. I start with this example because my identity as a White woman is bound up with my Jewish identity, because I identify strongly as Jewish *and* also benefit from White privilege every single day. My Jewish identity is something that I can choose to present, not something that people know by looking at me or can infer from my last name and therefore, I'm often not treated differently because of this. I do not presume that my experiences as a White Jew afford me any insight into racism. What I am saying is that my Jewish identity has given me a lens into a feeling of otherness and drawn me to critical theory and understanding other systemic structures of oppression, racism especially.

When I talk about *racism* in this thesis, I'm talking about embedded, systemic structures and practices, and not the overt, individual actions many White people think of when distancing themselves from racism. I'm talking about written-into-policy practices like red-lining which barred Black people from owning homes in more desirable parts of cities as opposed to more overt racist actions like flying a Confederate flag or White people using the n-word. The best definition I have heard of racism is that racism is defined as racial "prejudice plus power" (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, n.d.). While people of different races can have prejudice towards other groups, what is specific about racism is that it is enacted by a racial group that holds institutional power in society. Within the United States and, really, across the globe, that is undeniably White people.

Like many *woke* White people, however, I came to this *critical consciousness* much later in life than people of color who think about their race and ethnicity much earlier in life as they

come in contact with normative whiteness in society (Martin, 2014). *Whiteness*, in fact, relies on this blindness and erasure of identity as a way to maintain its power. (I discuss *critical consciousness* and *Whiteness* in my literature review in Chapter One.) I began teaching after college through Teach For America, an alternative pathway program into teaching that markets an explicit savior mentality to its applicants. Through this program, I began to think more critically about the systemic reasons behind our nation's inequitable education system while also having my White, upper-middle class worldview largely affirmed and unchallenged**.** One example of this is implicitly suggested within an original Teach For America core value: "relentless pursuit of results." This value upheld the notion that intensely hard work and a data-driven approach were essential to reach educational equity – yet hard work alone cannot dismantle systemic oppression and a results-oriented approach applies a White, capitalistic framework to a much more complex, insidious problem.

It was through teaching and the years immediately after, when working under a Black supervisor who infused critical consciousness into our team of teacher-coaches that my critical awareness really began to develop. It is appalling now to think how little awareness I had before**,** though I realize *Whiteness* and *White supremacy* maintain itself through dominant groups not questioning, but accepting, the way things are. I remember going through what were called Diversity and Identity sessions in Teach For America's development programming and feeling ill-equipped to engage. I had not reckoned with a lot of the guilt I held as a White person and the dissonance I felt between my emerging and established values. I remember not knowing how to speak up in those diversity sessions; I felt like I did not have a good *why* behind what led me to teaching, especially compared to my colleagues of color in TFA who were returning to teach in

their communities or in communities where they shared multiple identities with their students. At that point, I did not see how my oppression was tied up in the broader system, I was there to *help* others, as much as our program tried to avoid that language. My lack of reckoning with feelings of guilt and dissonance – and an undeveloped racial identity – were big factors making me not want to speak in those "Diversity and Identity" sessions. I just did not realize this at the time.

I did bring a lot to teaching and have relationships with many students and families today, sustained by ongoing trips back to Texas' Rio Grande Valley. But I'm also struck by how much I did not know about my own identity and about systemic oppression. I know that my own limited critical consciousness negatively impacted students and perpetuated oppression. I think of the learning we could have done together that better affirmed Latinx and Mexican identities and incorporated deeper counter-stories to dominant narratives, beyond the White-washed stories of Cesar Chavez. As first graders, my former students could have developed stronger foundations of a critical orientation towards learning – taking our classroom character traits of being *curious questioners* to a more profound level, rooted in my understanding of the stakes and how the system works to maintain itself.

Since working in education, I have become more conscious of systems and structures of oppression and how racism, first and foremost, is embedded and prevalent in schools and everyday life. My learning came in many forms – through trainings, relationships with people adversely impacted by such systems and my own learning, reflection and experiences. Through this expanded awareness, I have turned the lens inward, to face some ugly things about myself and understand the ways I constantly benefit from and uphold such structures. Constant learning, and the vulnerability and trust-building required to be in relationship across lines of difference,

are part of what drew me to study journalism and to work in education. I am pulled to approach my research in this way, by bringing others in and sharing in learning and knowledge creation.

I have been working in education in Washington the past seven years, the past five in Tacoma. From 2013-2018, I worked as a program director with a local nonprofit community center that runs academic and enrichment programming to support students from second grade through students' college or early-career years. I was in charge of the elementary part of this pathway program, overseeing programming at McCarver Elementary, an elementary school in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood.

This is just a brief glimpse into experiences that influence the way I position myself in my research. I am motivated to bring a critical perspective to Tacoma's school desegregation history based on my own uncritical educational experiences and my work experiences in what could be called re-segregated school settings, where the majority of students are students of color or on free-and-reduced-priced lunch. I am drawn to understand current students' experiences related to race in today's schools and this feels possible because of the relationships I have with students who have come through the program I led at McCarver Elementary.

My research raises important philosophical questions within me: What does it mean to be a White woman researching racial school desegregation? What do I have at stake in this? Am I presumed to take the liberal, desegration-is-the-panacea stance? Who am I to be critical of desegregation as a White woman? What are my own preconceptions in this research and how will these influence me? I will admit, I do not have answers to all these questions. But here are some things I do know: I am impacted by racism and have internalized racial superiority. I believe education can be a practice of freedom, a way to undo our learned oppression. I know a

part of me longs for a world where all people can grow up living in neighborhoods and learning with people with many different backgrounds and identities from them – be it, economic, racial, religious, sexual orientation, etc. I know that I came into this research with that idealistic belief nestled deep within me, even as I recognize the systemic factors that make the possibility of this ideal difficult if not impossible to actualize. If I'm honest with myself, I know this yearning for a multicultural learning environment is still within me as I explore and hold up research that presents such counter-cultural ideas as the merits of a truly separate and equal schooling system. That's the nature of critical scholarship. It goes beyond working *relentlessly* towards an ideal – it is about calling attention to the manifestations of racism and other structural oppressions and how they work, while also pushing for approaches that challenge and dismantle such systems rather than perpetuate them.

I am an insider in my research, having worked in education for the past nine years in schools serving a majority of students of color and as someone who has current relationships with a variety of stakeholders in Tacoma schools. I am an outsider as a White woman who does not share the geographical, racial or economic background of many of the students I work with. I am an outsider in that I was not bussed to schools because of district desegregation plans and did not have students bused to my schools. The high school I attended was close to 80 percent White and was largely affluent (California Department of Education, 2007). I experienced *segregation* in this way, though the word segregated is usually only applied to schools made up of majority students of color (I discuss my use of the word *segregation*, *desegregation* and *integration* in my Literature Review in Chapter One). I begin this thesis at a site pivotal to my experience in Tacoma schools and central to the story of desegregation here – McCarver Elementary School.

CHAPTER ONE: Setting the historical and academic stage for my thesis

It's kind of separating people by race or separating people in general, but especially by race. Um, and maybe sometimes treating the minority as, you know, not human or lesser than human.
- Sanjay, explaining segregation

The front hallway is bustling with excitement as community members file in through the grand, historic doors, finding familiar faces, greeting strangers and walking around, eyes wide and heads tilted backwards to take in a scene that is both familiar and foreign. Voices reminisce about the brightly colored lockers lining the walls, once signifiers of a student's color team and a way that alumni still identify themselves. One alumnus signs off an initial email to me with "Blue and Peach Team" written under her name (J. Wiley, personal communication, April 18, 2017).

It is June 2016 and McCarver Elementary School is open tonight to the community for a farewell event before the school closes its doors for a year to undergo an interior renovation. The school's alumni come from all over the city, some in groups, others individually, to step back inside a school that held meaning for them in some way. There are opportunities for attendees to share their memories of attending McCarver, a school with a rich, interconnected history unlike many others in Tacoma. The neighborhood community center I worked for at the time had a creative activity set-up in the hallway. Attendees could write a memory or message on the back of old CDs which would be hung up in an eye-catching display on the chain-link fence that would soon surround the school once construction began. I remember one elderly White woman who had graduated somewhere around the 1950s. She wrote her graduation year proudly on one of the CDs. I wish I remembered the exact year or more of her story. I kept some of those CDs on my desk years later. Some of the messages included notes of neighborhood pride, the word

"Hilltop" written in a circular pattern around the center of the CD, or inspirational quotes, like the following quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

McCarver Elementary opened in 1925, first as an Intermediate School serving seventh through ninth grades and then deemed a "Junior High School" three years later. In 1938, elementary grades were added (Tacoma-Pierce County Buildings Index, n.d.). At the start of the 1968-1969 school year, as part of the district's desegregation plan, the Junior High closed and the school reopened as an elementary magnet school, the first magnet program in the country. Magnet schools, as used in this thesis, refer to district public schools that offer specialized programs using "innovative instructional methods which incorporate subjects such as the arts, technology, foreign languages or non-traditional subjects" (Tacoma School District, 1992b**,** p. 1). With innovative programming such as team-teaching and non-grading, the magnet school in a few years would accomplish its goal of attracting White families from other parts of the city and in so-doing, desegregate a school that was more than 85% Black just years earlier.

This magnet program lasted for a few decades, through the 1997-1998 school year at least, and because of this, many people today across ages and Tacoma neighborhoods share a connection to McCarver. There is an active alumni Facebook group with more than 560 members with new posts every few months. When I wear a McCarver T-shirt, I'm often stopped by people who have a story about the school, like the White woman at the front desk at the orthodontist's office who was bused across town to attend McCarver. Yet this story is not totally unique to McCarver. In fact, McCarver's desegregation program was part of the Tacoma school district's plan to desegregate district-wide, echoing changing tides at a national level.

This story as you can imagine – as you may have experienced – is far more complex than a feel-good story of cross-racial connection. Efforts to desegregate Tacoma's schools were "voluntarily" launched by the school board, yet followed pointed, ongoing pressure from Black community leaders to reduce de facto segregation in schools. The way desegregation plans were designed and carried out leaves much to question around who the plan truly benefitted. Within just six years, desegregation was reportedly achieved, based solely on student demographic redistribution. And seemingly just as quickly, this demographic balancing began to unravel. Within about three decades, Tacoma was well on its way towards re-segregated schooling, mirroring trends nationwide. White families moved out of the district or left public schools, and race no longer became a factor in open-enrollment. Fast forward to present-day and Tacoma has returned to neighborhood-based school assignments while promoting itself as a district of school choice. Neighborhoods historically home to communities of color are rapidly gentrifying and becoming Whiter and wealthier – most prominently the Hilltop neighborhood where McCarver is located. *De*segregation, in both housing and schools, has been difficult to attain and maintain and has led scholars and thinkers to wonder: should desegregation even be the goal?

Desegregation by and large has been considered a policy failure, yet the dominant belief still holds: desegregation – a school like McCarver in the late 1960s – is still the Holy Grail. In this thesis, I complicate thinking around desegregation as a *good* goal by examining Tacoma's approach to school desegregation and making connections between the district's history and current experiences for youth of color today. To begin, let me situate the history of Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma's school district, within the national backdrop of school desegregation.

School Desegregation: National Historical and Legal Context

In order to explore the school desegregation locally, it is essential to understand some key legal rulings that set the stage on which Tacoma's desegregation history played out. In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) that segregation – "separate but equal" public facilities – was the law of the land. A half-century later, the Supreme Court shifted its position, ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that: "[I]n the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (as cited in Thompson Dorsey, 2013, p. 537). A year later, the Court ruled in *Brown v. Board II* (1955) that desegregation must happen with "all deliberate speed." Yet the high court decisions brought little movement on the ground. Gary Orfield (as cited in Thompson Dorsey, 2013) reported: "In the summer of 1963, before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, only 1% of Black students in the South attended schools with a predominantly White student population" (p. 537). The 1964 Civil Rights Act gave the federal government enforcement oversight that the Supreme Court rulings lacked on their own. The Civil Rights Act allowed, for example, the U.S. Attorney General to investigate school districts and bring forth lawsuits on behalf of individual students (Thompson Dorsey, 2013). Thus began a decade of school districts under pressure to put together desegregation plans and a series of Supreme Court rulings attempting to define the do's and don'ts of district desegregation plans (*Green v. County School Board,* 1968; *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education,* 1971; *Milliken v. Bradley*, 1974). Yet opposition to desegregation, particularly to mandatory busing, fueled ire nationwide. Coupled with a change in Court justice composition and philosophy, the late 1970s saw a more definitive shift in desegregation policy, with the Supreme Court deferring to local school districts for enforcement decisions:

> The Court has adopted the position that past discrimination has been cured, current segregation is caused by personal choices, and control needs to be returned to the local school districts. Because of this retreat by the court, parents and students are not able to use the court system to remedy the increasing resegregation [sic] of schools (Randall, 2003, p. 363).

Specifically, one local court case highlights the aftermath of this shift. In *Parents Involved v. Seattle School District* (2007), the Court ruled against two school districts' voluntary desegregation efforts which classified students by their race as a way to achieve greater racial balance in their schools (Anonymous, 2007). Chief Justice John Roberts wrote, "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race, is to stop discriminating on the basis of race" (as cited in Anonymous, 2007, p. 101). Calling attention to students' race came to be seen as perpetuating racial divides and not as a way to remedy historical injustices. Randall (2003) referenced the shift in enforcement power to local school boards and urged for a return to federal oversight:

> By shifting the burden back to the state and also abandoning the notion that residential segregation is a product of choice, district courts will be able to judge fully the present state of segregation in a community. When the burden is shifted, civil rights plaintiffs will be able to seek redress for school segregation that is a product of government created residential segregation. By expanding the definition of state action to include action by municipalities or states and not just school boards, students and parents will have a legal avenue to remedy school segregation (p. 372).

Randall highlighted structural realities (that segregation occurs through policy, for example) and argued for a landscape of greater federal responsibility to support families taking issue with desegregation in their school or district.

The notion of "unitary status" was a source of much debate in the 1990s. Unitary status, outlined in *Alexander v. Holmes* (1969), was the status given to a school district that was determined to no longer be operating as a segregated system and was thus free of federal oversight (Thompson Dorsey, 2013, p. 538). A later stipulation elaborating on this status required that districts operate "in good faith" in order to be classified as having unitary status.

This vague standard of "in good faith" raised particular question as it lacked guidelines to determine how this criterion could be met (Thompson Dorsey, 2013, p. 539). In the ruling known as *Brown III* (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1992), the Court ruled that school districts needed to be held accountable for actions taken after they are granted unitary status:

> [I]naction in the face of the affirmative duty to desegregate is not lawful conduct. A school system that does not take the required steps cannot be found in good faith and may not be discharged from continued supervision with respect to any facet of its operations (*Brown III*, as cited in Thompson Dorsey, 2013, p. 540).

Yet contradicting court cases (*Board of Educ. of Oklahoma v. Dowell,* 1991*; Freeman v. Pitts,* 1992) resulted in little attention paid to the *Brown III* ruling. In reality, there was little accountability. Districts could be released of oversight, even before full unitary status was achieved (Thompson Dorsey, 2013).

The story of Tacoma's history of desegregation lives within this broader story of desegregation. While my thesis does not make a judgment about the re-segregation of Tacoma's schools (i.e., whether it is *good* or *bad*), it is important to situate the actions and inactions taken by Tacoma Public Schools in the context of nationwide advances and retreats in desegregation policy. The Tacoma school district's school desegregation history does not exist in a vacuum – in fact, Tacoma's history very much mirrors the national landscape.

A Review of the Literature: School Desegregation Research in the U.S.

Scholars have studied school desegregation in the United States from varied perspectives. In general, desegregation research looks to answer such questions as how success can be measured and the impacts of desegregation on students of different races. One set of scholars focused on the impact of legal decisions post-*Brown* and their impact on the implementation of school desegregation across the country (Bell, 1980a; Bell, 1980b; Bell, 2004; Randall, 2003; Thompson Dorsey, 2013). As described in the previous section, Randall (2003) and Thompson

Dorsey (2013) outlined the retreat by the U.S. Supreme Court from ruling in favor of state interference in school desegregation efforts, noting a distinct shift in the government's role in the late 1970s as responsibility for implementation shifted to local school boards. While their approaches vary, both Randall and Thompson Dorsey called for greater responsibility at the state and federal level to enforce what they see as the ideal solution: racial desegregation in public schools. Derrick Bell (1980a; 1980b; 2004), a civil rights lawyer who litigated cases enforcing *Brown v. Board of Educ*. (1954), offered a critical look at desegregation as a worthwhile approach. Looking back on his years pushing for desegregation, he reflected that desegregation in its implementation primarily benefited White people and this was largely due to the existing White supremacist structure in the United States. At a certain point, the focus in implementation became more about the fulfillment of the *Brown* mandate than on creating an equal educational environment for all students. In his book, *Silent Covenants,* Bell (2004) wrote an alternative ruling to *Brown v. Board of Educ*. that imagined a world where *Plessy v. Ferguson's* (1896) "separate but equal" mandate was actually enforced. Desegregation, Bell argued, is not the only – or even, best – solution when working towards an excellent education for all students within our current inequitable system.

Many scholars use the words desegregation and integration interchangeably, though the semantics here are important to note. In the context of this thesis, I refer to desegregation as the process of achieving racial balance within schools starting in the years following the *Brown v. Board of Ed.* (1954) ruling. I almost exclusively refer to desegregation in the context of this thesis, even when scholars may use the terms interchangeably. Desegregation was often achieved by re-assigning students to schools outside of their neighborhood due to entrenched, legalized housing segregation. This is distinct from integration, which involves intentional, inclusive

practices that support historically marginalized groups (in this case, Black students) to have value, representation and ownership in a mixed-race setting. Integration goes beyond surface-level racial balance of demographic numbers and aspires towards an authentic, mutually beneficial interchange, even within structural systems of oppression like racism (Dziuban & Esler, 1983). Thus, integration is far harder to achieve. Tacoma's school Superintendent Angel Giaudrone was quoted in one *Tacoma News Tribune* article describing the difference between these two terms: "Desegregation is a matter of number, integration is a matter of the heart," ("Desegregation achieved, integration next goal," 1973). Also, in both desegregation literature and historical records, the word *segregated* is almost exclusively used to describe schools with high concentrations of students of color and not to describe the majority-White schools that predominated the district. While I acknowledge the one-way usage and negative implications of the word "segregated," I also recognize the restriction of access that students of color in "segregated" schools often had to majority-White schools. White students *could* attend a predominantly Black school, though Black students often could *not* attend a predominantly White school.

Over the years, many researchers have attempted to measure desegregation through a variety of lenses, largely quantitative (Dziuban & Esler, 1983; Kirk & Goon, 1975; Wells, 1995; Trent, 1997; Teele & Mayo, 1969). To start, scholars struggled to measure the level of segregation and desegregation within a school district. Dziuban and Esler (1983) examined different statistical indices that attempt to measure the level of desegregation within school districts. They found that no one index can adequately measure desegregation. They also noted the limits of a quantitative approach where a school district could be ruled desegregated by defined standards, but still have prominent racial isolation at the building level. "Races may be

brought together but not necessarily caused to mix" (Dziuban & Esler, 1983, p. 120). This finding echoes the qualms with unitary status in the previous section. Standards for reaching a desegregated status at the district level are often mis-representative of the reality for students on the ground. Earlier recommendations by Teele and Mayo (1969) proposed more qualitative measures for evaluating desegregated schools, including assessing school climate, testing context and community influence in schools.

A number of scholars sought to understand the effectiveness of desegregation in the short and long term, though the findings were often inconsistent. What researchers mean by effectiveness varies as do their measures of it. Some measured test scores while others measured Black and White students' sense of identity (Kirk & Goon, 1975; Shaw, 1975; Trent, 1977; Wells, 1995). Earlier research into effects of desegregation found contradictory results and a lack of compelling evidence that desegregation was an effective policy to remedy unequal schooling. While the quantity of research at the time was substantial, Kirk and Goon critiqued existing research for its "cultural deficit" undertones and for not exploring other premises impacting unequal schooling, such as a teacher's belief in their students (Kirk and Goon, 1975).

A deficit perspective focuses on what is lacking in Black culture and is defined from the external, White perspective. Kirk and Goon summarized the "cultural deficit" literature of their time:

> The cultural deficit literature is concerned with explaining why it seems that low-income minority groups have not acquired American middle-class attitudes, values, and behaviors. The problem, according to that literature, arises from the lack of contact low-income minority group children have with the American middle-class, especially within the schools during the children's formative years. It is assumed that this contact will alleviate the problem (Kirk & Goon, 1975, p. 600).

In their review of research, these scholars explored how existing research into the effects of desegregation shows evidence of deficit-thinking about Black culture in the implementation of

many desegregation programs and manifests in descriptions such as “disadvantaged” as an adjective describing Black students (Shaw, 1975). This is prevalent in later research through an unspoken premise that desegregation helps to “lift up” Black communities versus being a more mutually-beneficial exchange for all involved. This perspective views desegregation as a charitable approach that seeks to remedy what is perceived as deficient (Black culture) by imposing external values (White, middle-class norms).

In a 1995 review of social science research on desegregation, Amy Stuart Wells found that research overall had improved, focusing more on the process of desegregation and its long-term effects and less on the short-term “input/output” studies that simply compare two factors over the course of a school year, such as a school’s racial balance compared with student test scores. Wells separated existing research into two large groups: one focused on short-term effects largely centered on test scores and “intergroup relations,” and the other group on long-term effects focusing on “educational and occupational aspirations and attainment” for Black students (Wells, 1995, p. 692). She argued for the social benefits of school desegregation for Black students in particular and concluded that research focusing on the long-term effects were more in-line with the original intent of desegregation legislation. On the other hand, she concluded that attempts to measure short-term effects were inadequate in assessing the impact of desegregation. Trent (1997) also studied long-term effects of desegregation and found that desegregated schooling has a statistically significant, positive effect on Black students’ later earnings and careers. Investigating what he called the “non-cognitive” outcomes of desegregation, Trent noted long-term interracial benefits: “Further, students who have experienced desegregated schooling are more likely to continue to choose desegregated contexts, both in school and in other spheres of their lives” (p. 257). This research served the notion at the

time that it was in Black people's best interest to attend a predominantly White school, despite social, emotional, cultural and other impacts.

Another group of researchers studied desegregation by focusing on student self-perceptions and peer effects across race, referring to the academic impact students have on one another (Dagenais & Marascuilo, 1981; Goldsmith, 2011; Martin, 2014; Shaw, 1974). These authors challenged prevailing notions around the impacts of school desegregation. Shaw (1974) studied the self-image of Black and White students in a desegregated school by looking at identified traits such as sociability and hostility. He found differences in each trait across race, gender and grade-level, but noted that broad conclusions were difficult to draw since the strength of self-perception (positive/negative) varied on the trait. For example, Black students rated themselves higher in the quality of independence than White students did**.** Shaw recommended that further study be conducted on the group differences within particular traits rather than making sweeping generalizations about desegregation's impact on overall self-image. Shaw's findings complicate prior research on racial awareness that suggested that Black children have negative self-images (Clark & Clark, as cited in Shaw, 1974). "The data also call into question the hypothesis that the self-concepts of Blacks become less positive when they become pupils in an integrated school" (p. 22).

Similarly, Dagenais and Marascuilo (1981) looked explicitly at social integration within a desegregated school, or how well students were socially connected across race. These scholars focused on student perceptions of the "success" of school integration and students' own level of connectedness within the school and found that impressions of success were correlated with both the race of the student and the degree of integration the student had within the school. Specifically, they found that Black and Asian students (both those socially isolated and socially

integrated) felt school integration was more of a success. White students' perceptions of the program's success correlated with the degree to which they had interracial friendships. Those White students who were more "integrated" saw the school's integration program more favorably than those who were not.

More recently, Goldsmith (2011) explored the concept of "peer effects" by looking at the degree to which peer effects can explain why students from "minority-concentrated" schools (schools with a high percentage of students of color) "attain less education" over time (p. 508). Traditional peer-effects research is rooted in the idea that students in schools with a high number of students of color are a liability for one another, whereas students in a majority-White school are an asset for each other. Goldsmith wrote:

> The peer-effect explanation dates back at least to the seminal work of Coleman and his colleagues (1966), who argued that middle-class students often have beliefs and behaviors that associate with greater achievement and that in schools with many of these students, the students create a normative climate that promotes achievement. This perspective became one of the main intellectual justifications for school desegregation because desegregation would expose many working-class African American and Latino students to these middle-class norms (Goldsmith, 2011, p. 509).

Goldsmith found that peer effects do not explain the relationship between race and student achievement over time. While he noted evidence aligning with Coleman's peer effects findings, he critiqued Coleman's research for not exploring the assets that students of color bring to the learning environment. Martin (2014) studied desegregation at the college-level, looking at how white students and students of color in a class together benefit from a multicultural curriculum that focuses on race and ethnicity. She found that all students' participation in such a curriculum in a "desegregated" setting positively impacted students' development of a cultural identity, cross-racial understanding and democratic thinking developmentally (p. 120). However, she also found that such courses primarily cater to White students' lack of knowledge and even resistance

to such learning, thus White students benefitted more: “These findings confirm that developmentally speaking, White students may be uniquely positioned to reap benefits from exposure to multiculturalism” (p. 120).

Scholars have also examined parental choice and its impact on desegregation efforts. Some scholars focused on the choices made by White parents that had negative impacts on school desegregation. In a book review of Dionne Danns’ *Desegregating Chicago’s Public Schools*, Straus (2015) highlighted Danns’ critical analysis that argued that institutional racism impeded civil rights and that “meaningful desegregation never occurred in Chicago” (p. 504). Danns tied certain manifestations of institutional racism to the choices of White families, including declining White enrollment in public schools and residential segregation, both of which hampered court-mandated desegregation. Similarly, another researcher looked at school choice and found that schools in Durham, N.C., were more segregated by race and class than they would be if all students attended their geographically assigned schools (Bifulco et al., 2008). This was because White families tended to use school choice programs to make “segregated moves” to pursue a more “homogenous” (White) school and avoid schools with a concentration of students from marginalized backgrounds (Black and/or poor). Alternatively, Black and/or poor families were more likely to use school choice to make “integrative moves,” or choose to attend schools with more White and/or wealthy students.

In a distinct shift from the vast research on desegregation, a smaller subset of researchers offers an unapologetically critical lens on school desegregation and often center the experiences of Black community members. Horsford (2010) focused on the perspectives of Black superintendents who grew up in segregated schools. The former Black superintendents interviewed shared how “the culture of their segregated community and teacher and parent

expectations informed their self-concept as Black students and enabled them to succeed despite the forces designed to ensure their failure" (p. 76). This paints a challenging picture for many White liberals, one that offers the merits of a segregated system, including a strong sense of Black community and identity. Decades earlier, Teele and Mayo (1969) focused on a group of Black parents who started a busing program called "Operation Exodus" in Boston to bus their children to predominantly White schools in the city. They found that Black parents were less favorable towards desegregated schools after a year of experience in a White-dominant school setting (p. 144). The scholars noted a resulting effort by Black parents to instead focus on improving the quality of education and access to resources within the Black community, which echoed Horsford's participants' nostalgia for the nurturing Black schooling that showed a strong, collective responsibility for the success of its children.

Siddle-Walker (2000) explored segregated schools from an asset-based lens, analyzing the often-overlooked worth of what she calls "valued segregated schools." She also shed light on the institutional racism within school districts, for example how school boards denied the offering of advanced academic courses at Black schools that would rival the offerings at White schools (p. 267). Teachers and staff at segregated, Black schools brought value by preparing students for the reality of racism.

> Many of the [Black segregated] schools' characteristics appear to have been a direct response to the challenges they faced and intimately connected to the oppressive circumstances in which they operated. In their world, there was a clear "enemy"– racism (Siddle Walker, 2000, p. 276).

This value within Black schools has been lost within desegregated schools where school leadership and teaching staff often do not reflect the racial background or lived experiences of their students.

Morris (2011) critiqued the approach to designing desegregation plans that historically excluded the voices of Black educators in the process. He interviewed Black educators in St. Louis and, based on those interviews, concluded that desegregation plans primarily benefit White communities. Tillman (2004) brought awareness to an often overlooked consequence of desegregation – that the implementation of desegregation programs led to the firing and displacement of many Black educators and school leaders as Black schools were closed and White staff resisted working with Black colleagues or under Black school leaders (Tillman, 2004). These scholars are united by the critical lens they bring to their research; in fact, they all share at least one common theoretical perspective known as critical race theory. I explore critical race theory and expand on this scholarship in the next section.

Research on school desegregation is vast and inconsistent in its conclusions about its impacts. Existing research is largely consistent, however, on a mainstay belief that desegregation is the right approach and what is missing is understanding the most effective way to implement it. While more prevalent in earlier desegregation research, many studies still carry a cultural deficit approach towards Black students and communities that positions desegregation as a charitable act designed to help Black communities (Thompson Dorsey, 2013). The majority of research reviewed seeks to uphold the widely held belief that desegregation is a worthwhile aim in today's diverse world, though for different reasons (e.g., Trent, 1997). Some of this research seems to suggest that desegregation is worthwhile because all students benefit when learning from those different from them, however, those outcomes have not been systematically documented or conducted with a critical lens that looks at how different groups benefit and in what ways. Many studies imply that desegregation helps lift up Black students by teaching them White, middle-class values. For me, I know I was drawn to this research with the idealistic belief

that desegregation benefits everyone. I am aware that this ideal is still within me – a desire for an unoppressive, multicultural community. The reality, the dissonance, I have wrestled with, is that our society is built on a racist, oppressive foundation that requires some radical reckoning with widely held beliefs and a massive overhaul in our approaches to just about everything, before a liberated, multicultural society can be achieved. As a start, White people need to start listening to what people most impacted by racism are saying – within this thesis, that means Black scholars and youth of color, primarily, along with other scholars of color.

Although these critical perspectives are increasingly gaining popularity, research still largely suggests that desegregating schools was and still is the best approach for achieving an equitable education for all students (Siddle Walker, 2000). A lesser known subset of research does challenge this and is largely representative of critical theory. This research seeks to complicate the understanding that desegregation is a cause worthy of society's concerted energy – especially in the current era where schools are increasingly re-segregated. In fact, such critical research, largely penned by scholars of color, is challenging the concept of desegregation as the only option to achieve equal opportunity for students of color. This research also confronts the fact that desegregation programs have historically benefitted White families primarily, and much moreso than its purported beneficiaries (Black families).

I seek to contribute to this critical body of research that challenges progressive, liberal views of desegregation and critiques the very notion of desegregation. While I am wary of further centering White people within research, I do see a need for more explicit study that unapologetically calls out White people's actions and related consequences both historically and in the present day. I also see a need to continue to center the voices of those most impacted by racism within education. My thesis contributes a critical perspective to the local history where I

live and work in Tacoma in a way that complicates the acceptance of desegregation as an end-goal towards equitable schooling**.** I draw on critical race theory and youth participatory action research as theoretical and methodological frameworks that inform my approach to this research.

In this thesis, I aim to understand (1) specific ways racism played out with Tacoma's approach to desegregating its schools, and (2) how the consequences (good and bad) impact the realities of youth of color in today's schools. In the next section, I provide context and examine literature that relates to the theoretical frameworks and research approaches used in this thesis.

Approach to Inquiry

Critical Race Theory.

Critical race theory (CRT) is rooted in the 1970s legal movement called critical legal studies (CLS) that arose out of legal scholars' frustration with the slow implementation of civil rights legal doctrine in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Distinct from critical legal studies, CRT scholars specifically call-out racism when critiquing the common portrayal of the United States as a meritocracy. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) credit W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson for their early theorizing around race as a way of assessing societal inequity. Du Bois (1935) and Woodson (2011), though marginalized by the mainstream academic community of their time, were some of the first scholars to use race as "*the* central construct for understanding inequality [emphasis in original]" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 50). With racism seen as a "permanent fixture of American life," CRT takes the approach of "exposing racism in its various permutations" in society (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). CRT challenges the progressive view that civil rights-influenced policies and programs like desegregation primarily benefit historically marginalized communities. In fact, critical race theory critiques liberalism and its rose-colored view of a long, moral arc that will eventually

bend towards justice. Rather, CRT argues that deconstructing racist structures requires significant overhauls, not incremental shifts. (Ladson-Billings, 1998). While there are many different tenets of critical race theory, CRT scholars are united by two pursuits: understanding how the system of White supremacy is created and maintained and disrupting the links between law and racial power (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Within critical race theory, the distinction between ontology or a "philosophy of reality" and the epistemology or "system of knowing," is blurred (Ladson-Billings, 2000 & Lincoln and Guba, 2000). *What* we know and *how* we come to know it are inextricably linked, bound up in the identities and subjectivities of the researcher. CRT scholars assume a "historical realist" ontology reckoning with the ways social, political, economic, ethnic and other factors influence reality (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Epistemologically, CRT breaks from traditional forms of scholarship in incorporating counter-storytelling (among other methods) as a means of knowledge production and a way to validate lived experience as a form of knowledge. CRT calls attention to the subjectivities of the researcher and denies the separation of the researcher from the researched. There exists a need to understand the researcher and their motivations as a way of transparency and accountability to subjects (Hill Collins, 2000).

CRT also offers a critique of liberalism and its role in policy development that purports to advance civil rights for marginalized groups but inevitably benefits White people first and foremost (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Bell, 2004). One of the early CRT scholars, Derrick Bell, introduced the idea of "interest convergence," which refers to the point at which the majority group (White people, specifically) will agree to civil rights advances:

> The interest of blacks [sic] in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites; however, the fourteenth amendment, standing alone, [guaranteeing equal protection of the laws] will not authorize a judicial remedy

> providing effective racial equality for blacks [sic] where the remedy sought threatens the superior societal status of middle- and upper-class Whites (Bell, 1980b, p. 95).

Critical of the idea that the racist system will change on its own, Bell (2004) instead argued that marginalized communities must recognize these dynamics and use them to their advantage when pushing for change.

Several CRT scholars have specifically addressed the application of critical race theory to the field of education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) highlighted three premises of CRT that they argue can function as analytic tools for understanding inequities. They warned of the limitations of the dominant multicultural paradigm, which they argue offers a watered-down approach to understanding differences. "We unabashedly reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail" (p. 62). In her 1998 article, *Just What is Critical Race Theory and what is it doing in a nice field like education?,* Gloria Ladson-Billings applied a CRT approach to education, exploring implications in such areas as curriculum, assessment and school desegregation. She cautioned, however, against the integration of CRT in education without additional understanding of its roots and the implications for adopting it as a framework for equity in education. Ladson-Billings warned of the superficial application seen with the adoption of educational trends that ultimately rendered powerful concepts inept. If integrated intentionally and with integrity, CRT as a framework for education offers a pathway towards engaged pedagogy and a liberatory education for students and educators (hooks, 2014).

Building on the earlier discussion of critical desegregation research by scholars like Horsford (2010), CRT scholars questioned the very premise of school desegregation as a solution that benefits the education of children. Several scholars asserted the value of segregated schools, a rare claim within much traditional education policy research. In the early 1900s, prominent

Black scholars were debating these questions. W.E.B DuBois wrote that the issue of separate or integrated schools is moot; what Black students need is a quality education. He also warned of the cost of integration on the mindset of students thrust into a setting where they are despised and unwelcome (DuBois, 1935). The "mis-education" of Black people is rooted in a society and education system dominated by White perspectives (Goodwin-Woodson, 2011). Carter Goodwin-Woodson (2011) called for a revolution in education for Black people, led by Black people, that centers self-knowledge and awareness about the specific culture, contributions and needs of the Black community. Segregated schools offered concrete benefit to Black students in such ways as a curriculum that connected to students' culture and experiences, greater parental connection to schools and teachers and principals who wholly believed in their success (Siddle-Walker, 2000; Horsford, 2010). This is not to say that there were not significant challenges in segregated schools. Inequities between White and Black schools in educational resources, advanced courses, class sizes and building conditions were some of the realities that propelled Black leaders to pursue access to White schools as a way towards equal opportunity.

Black scholars also critiqued the impacts of internalized racial inferiority within Black communities, citing the stigma that Black teachers and schools are "inferior," leading to a prominent belief that proximity to *Whiteness* would raise up the Black community (Morris, 2001; DuBois, 1935). Morris (2001) also offered a realistic acknowledgement, that however problematic, ending desegregation in the modern era would be detrimental to Black students and communities due to structural inequities in funding that exist in schools today.

Ladson-Billings (1998) described *Whiteness* as a conceptual category that has been constructed as normal and associated with such words as "beauty" and "school achievement." Since Whiteness has been positioned as "normative," everyone and every action is ordered and

categorized in relation to it (p. 9). Furthermore, she wrote that this constructed Whiteness is more dangerous because of the meaning that White people have given it.

> It is because of the meaning and value imputed to Whiteness that CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 9).

Whiteness is also closely associated with property, as the United States government was established by and large to protect the property of its citizens and, for many years, citizenship was relegated only to White Americans. U.S. history reveals many tensions between property rights and human rights – slavery is a prime example (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

CRT is a not only a theory, it offers a practical framework for challenging and undoing White supremacy, the nefarious system that upholds racism and Whiteness while oppressing Black people and other people of color. CRT has also been applied as a framework when working directly with youth historically marginalized by society, an approach known as Youth Participatory Action Research.

Youth Participatory Action Research.

Similar to the body of school desegregation research, social science research on Black and Latinx youth has been overshadowed by a deficit outlook on youth of color. Such research is often rooted in public policy issues concerning crime and safety in "poor urban communities" (Akom, Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008, p. 1).

> As it stands now, too many urban poverty theorists want to know what's wrong rather than what's really going on in Black and Brown urban communities. In their search for violence, anger, nihilism, and emotional instability, they miss genuine love, humor, academic achievement, nontraditional families, positive relationships towards men, women, and children, and all kinds of social and cultural capital that is alive, well, and thriving in Black and Brown urban communities that is presently flying under the radar (Akom et al., 9-10).

This shift in research intentionally focuses on the assets of youth of color as a different approach to understanding and addressing inequities.

Critical youth studies is a lesser-known field that emerged in the 1960s from community-based approaches to research (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Critical youth studies counters the traditional pathologizing stance of existing youth research and asserts that youth have "the capacity and agency to analyze their social context, to engage critical research collectively, and to challenge and resist the forces impeding their possibilities for liberation" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 4). Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) represents the key step linking this theory of critical youth studies to a praxis of actualizing this aim. YPAR is a participatory methodology that "provides young people with opportunities to study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 2). YPAR is closely linked with CRT in that they share a commitment to advancing social justice and an alternative epistemology that challenges who is considered to hold knowledge and what data is considered "valid" and "reliable." YPAR, like CRT, deconstructs the barriers between the researcher and the researched, involving young people as co-researchers and co-creators of knowledge (Akom et al., 2008). As an example, Knaus (2016) explicitly combined CRT with a YPAR approach in his research that involved four Black men (three high-school students and one teacher) in a conversation about education's impact on limiting youth voice. One student was a co-researcher and conducted interviews and classroom observations.

In their book *Revolutionizing Education,* Cammarota and Fine (2008) further built a case that participatory action research is both "rigorous" and "systematic," yet also distinct from "traditional" research. Participatory action research challenges traditional research in the following five ways:

> (1) by the nature of who the "researcher" is (done in a collective);
> (2) how the research is conducted (also in a collective);
> (3) that "stakeholders" or those with skin-in-the-game are often CRT practitioners;
> (4) the commitment that knowledge should be critical in nature,
> (5) the acknowledgement that PAR is an active and not passive process
>
> (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 5-6)

Youth participatory action further distinguishes itself from other participatory research in that it elevates youth in this process. The researchers include youth and youth engage in research in significant ways from developing research questions to writing up results.

YPAR centers on building youth's critical consciousness, what Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire called conscientização, literally meaning conscientization or critical awareness. "The term conscientização refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 35). He described critical consciousness as something that is "awakened" in people. Along with this awakening, comes the "expression of social discontents precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation" (Weffort, 1967, as quoted in Freire, 1970, p. 35). Critical consciousness is a necessary step towards liberation from oppression and Freire was one of the first to write about education as a way of raising this consciousness, in adults and youth alike.

More recently Watts, Williams and Jagers (2003) explored critical consciousness through the theory of "sociopolitical development." They described sociopolitical development as it relates to social change and activism from their community psychology lens:

> SPD [sociopolitical development] is the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and the capacity for action in political and social systems necessary to interpret and resist oppression. Equally as important is a vision of liberation that is an alternative to oppressive conditions (p. 185).

These scholars expanded the theory of sociopolitical development beyond a linear stage of cognitive development. They showed how this critical consciousness development happens through an aggregate and repeated occurrence of different events and situations that increase an individual's awareness and capacity to act. Diemer and Li (2011) explored precursors to critical consciousness development in historically marginalized youth. They built off prior research that breaks down critical consciousness into capacities for "critical reflection" and "critical action." Diemer and Li (2011) focused on the antecedents to critical action, looking at sociopolitical control (belief in one's capacity to change social and political conditions) and participation in social action (p. 1815). They studied the impact of teacher, parent and peer support on youth's critical action and found that parental and peer sociopolitical support increases youth's critical action and thus overall critical consciousness. These scholars did not find a correlation between teacher support and critical consciousness development and note that a lack of explicit instruction about racism and teachers' own disconnection from the experiences of marginalized youth may speak to this lack of impact (p. 1829).

Critical consciousness, as a practice within YPAR, allows youth to recognize their "mis-education" and unlearn internalized stereotypes and oppressions. It intentionally situates young people alongside adults, as equal partners where both groups "experience the vitality of a multi-generational collective analysis of power" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 2). This centering of youth directly challenges traditional notions of academic authority and researcher expertise.

Akom, et al. (2008) recognized the interconnectedness of YPAR that speaks to its potential for impact: "YPAR is more than a research methodology; rather it is simultaneously: a methodology, pedagogy, and a theory of action for creating social justice and social change" (Akom et al., 2008, p. 6). These scholars merge three critical frameworks – critical race theory

(CRT), YPAR and critical media literacy in order to raise the critical consciousness of youth and explicitly challenge issues of racism and its intersections with other forms of oppression. They present the idea of *Youthtopias* as intentional spaces where this consciousness-raising can take place*:*

> We define Youthtopias as traditional and non-traditional educational spaces...where young people depend on one another's skills, perspectives, and experiential knowledge, to generate original, multi-textual, youth-driven cultural products that embody and critique oppression, a desire for social justice, and ultimately lay the foundation for community empowerment and social change (p. 3).

These "youthopias," spaces where YPAR takes place, embody Freire's notion of "praxis" – that is, fusing critical reflection with action as a way of transforming individual and collective oppression (Freire, 1970).

YPAR has traditionally been conducted with older youth and there is limited YPAR work with younger youth. Research from the *American Journal Of Community Psychology* on working with middle-schoolers on participatory action research notes the particular qualities of this stage in adolescent development. Youth in middle school are particularly motivated by appropriate opportunities to have autonomy and make decisions, at an age marked by higher disengagement from academic success. PAR work with youth of color in particular can be especially relevant for young people to make meaning of social injustices they face and seek action to remediate such inequities. Such research notes some distinct challenges in participatory work with middle-schoolers – namely, lower levels of maturity, particularly amongst boys, as well as youth being more "energetic and unfocused" compared to high-school-aged youth. (Ozer, Ritterman, & Wanis, 2010, p. 157).

As I explore in this next section, I involve middle-school age youth in part of my research, drawing on relationships developed with young people who had participated in the

elementary after-school and summer programming I oversaw in my former role within a neighborhood community center.

My Thesis Situated

Both critical race theory (CRT) and youth participatory action research (YPAR) guided my critical approach to research, shaping the questions I asked and my approach to research. I fused the CRT and YPAR frameworks in order to critically examine Tacoma's desegregation history and connect this history to the present-day realities for students in one Tacoma middle school. Specifically, I sought to understand:

Figure 1. *Research Questions*

1) How does critical race theory reveal racism within Tacoma's approach to desegregation program from the early 1960s through the mid-1990s?

2) How does the history of Tacoma's school desegregation connect to the realities for today's youth of color?

Through these questions, I wanted to highlight the specific ways that racism was present in Tacoma's approach to school desegregation and center the realities of present-day students of color in order to draw clear parallels between the district's desegregation history and modern-day realities. Apart from my current connections to Tacoma, the city was a prime site for such a study as there is no known record of its school desegregation history that extends past the late 1970s**,** nor one that provides a critical look at this process. I was particularly interested in working with middle-school aged youth, both because of the relationships I have with youth at this age and their developmental capacity for critical thinking that begins to emerge in early adolescence (Ozer et al., 2010). YPAR premises explained above underline the necessity for involving youth in such research – the development of critical consciousness is central to undoing learned oppression and cultivating capacity to take action to bring about change.

My theoretical framing led me to conduct research in two parts: (1) a critical analysis of racism within the history of Tacoma's school desegregation and (2) a youth-participatory analysis of the current experiences of youth of color in Tacoma. CRT requires a strong, critical awareness of historical context; thus, grounding my research in the local history of desegregation provided the necessary historical context for my thesis, in-line with the CRT framework. Centering these young people's voices intentionally positioned youth of color as the experts on their own experience and allowed youth to draw upon their experience to engage in group discussions where we analyzed specific themes related to racism. This centering of young people is also a direct challenge to traditional, hegemonic forms of research that undermine and erase the experience of people of color and that do not validate non-empirical ways of knowledge.

To answer these questions, I conducted a review of education literature and applied the critical race theory concept of *interest convergence* and *critique of liberalism* to the desegregation policies and programs that were implemented in Tacoma through the 1990s, when the district made a policy shift to return to neighborhood schools. In this thesis, I provide a comprehensive chronicle of Tacoma's school desegregation process and complicate the largely accepted understanding of this part of local history to better understand desegregation and its aftermath for youth of color in particular. Then, I report on the YPAR project with five middle school students attending a Tacoma middle school to better understand how the history of the district's desegregation program connects to their realities as youth of color today.

My first research question led me to answer: "how did Tacoma desegregate its schools?" This guided me to discover historical secondary sources including state and national reports on desegregation programs here in Tacoma, newspaper articles written about the district during this time period and school board documents detailing decisions made as well as policies created.

Then, I applied a CRT framework to my analysis of these documents in order to understand enactments of racial power and to reveal the linkages between policy and racial power. I used CRT's critical perspective on liberalism and its notion of interest convergence to critique the district's approach to desegregation.

My second question connected historical practices with the realities of youth of color in schools today, looking in particular at their experiences and thinking around race. CRT and YPAR challenge traditional approaches of who is considered to hold knowledge and what data is considered valid and reliable. Both frameworks also aim to advance social justice by transforming traditional structures and understandings. Therefore, such frameworks directed me towards an approach that centered the voices of youth of color and allowed youth to participate in the research in a significant way. I used YPAR methodology, which positions young people to both study social problems and take actions to solve them (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). I worked with five youth in the summer of 2018, former students of mine now attending middle school in Tacoma. Our research together involved shared learning around the history of informed consent and Tacoma's school desegregation, individual interviews about their experiences in schools and shared analysis of themes from these interviews. From these experiences, youth made connections between the history of desegregation in schools and the lack of racial representation in teaching staff. They identified increasing the number of Black teachers at their school as a collective project and we continued to meet into September in support of this effort. My later analysis of youth interviews and our YPAR meetings showed variations across the participants' levels of critical consciousness. I analyzed themes from youth interview and our YPAR meetings, including feelings of discriminatory treatment based on race, notions of equality and their ideas to improve school experiences for youth of color.

In this thesis, I intentionally use the words *youth*, *young people* and *participants* when referring to the youth who participated in the YPAR study. I avoid the word *student* when talking about youth in the YPAR project for two reasons. First, I recognize that the word *student* can carry a deficit view when understood from a banking model of education that positions students as empty buckets, needing to be filled by a teacher who holds all the knowledge (Freire, 1970). Second, the word *student* reinforces a student-teacher, hierarchical dynamic that I explicitly challenged in selecting a YPAR approach to research. Since I engaged with students in a participatory way, outside of a traditional teacher-student dynamic, I wanted to center their identities as *youth* and *young people*, primarily, even as we discussed their experiences as *students* in school.

My intention is for this research to fill a void in local history by offering a multi-decade account of Tacoma's school desegregation process. Moreso, I aim to raise consciousness about the troubling impacts of civil rights advancements such as desegregation and complicate collective thinking around such programs and policies. My hope is that the youth who took part in this study better understand the history of the school system they are part of and use our collective learning to deepen their critical consciousness and capacities for both critical reflection and action.

Chapter Organization

This thesis is organized in four main chapters, with Chapter One as the Introduction and setting the stage for the study. Chapter Two will center on my first research question concerning a critical race lens on Tacoma's school desegregation. There are two main sections within this chapter: the first chronicles the story of Tacoma's desegregation programs and the next applies two critical race theory themes – interest convergence and critique of liberalism – to the

district's history. Chapter Two closes with an overview of Tacoma Public Schools today with a high-level look at the district's student, staff and school composition in order to lay the foundation to connect the school district's history to present-day experiences for today's students. Chapter Three centers on my second research question and the participatory action research project with youth. After detailing my methodology and introducing youth participants, I explore five themes from my analysis of the YPAR study. Chapter Four is the concluding chapter and explores connections between Chapter Two and Three of my study. In this chapter, I summarize my answers to my research questions and discuss future considerations and opportunities for additional research. I also expound on additional action research that some youth elected to do after our YPAR study.

Defining Key Terms

Throughout this thesis, I am intentional about the words I use. While I elected to define these words in context when I first use them, I want to offer an easy reference to the pages where readers can review these explanations.

Table 1. *Key Terms reference table*

Key term/phrase	Chapter where explained
Colorblind	Chapter Three, pages 98
Critical Consciousness	Chapter One, page 23
Critique of Liberalism	Chapter Two, page 63
Cultural Deficit Thinking	Chapter One, page 9-10
School Choice	Chapter Two, page 56
Desegregation vs. Integration	Chapter One, page 7-8
Equity versus Equality	Chapter Three, page 98
Interest Convergence	Chapter One, page 18-19; Chapter Two, page

Innovative Schools	Chapter Two, page 55-56
Magnet Schools	Chapter One, page 2
Minority, Students of Color	Chapter Two, page 37
Racist, racism	Preface, page v
Segregated, Segregation	Chapter One, page 8
Tacoma School District, Tacoma Public Schools	Chapter Two, page 35
Whiteness	Preface, page vi
Youth, Student, Young People	Chapter One, page 29

CHAPTER TWO: A Critical Race Lens on Tacoma's School Desegregation History

"That's messed up. That they closed the schools"
-D.J. after learning about the history of Tacoma's school desegregation

My first research question applies a critical race theory lens to the history of Tacoma's racial school desegregation, asking: "How does critical race theory reveal racism within Tacoma's approach to desegregation program from the early 1960s through the mid-1990s?" A CRT lens acknowledges racism within U.S. society and I wanted to identify more concretely how this played out in Tacoma's schools. As a community partner working in Tacoma schools, I was interested to understand the roots of Tacoma's present-day *choice* policy and then critically examine it. Tacoma notes its "choice enrollment" offerings, which means families can opt to send their children to any school in the district, provided there is capacity and so long as families provide their own transportation (enrollment is guaranteed and transportation is free to one's neighborhood school) (Tacoma Public Schools, n.d., f). Yet, initial research revealed that these choice stipulations were not always the case. Racial caps for the enrollment of students of color

and free bussing were once realities in Tacoma schools. This section of my thesis connects the dots regarding how this change happened and critiques such choice programming. Employing a CRT lens, this chapter argues that Tacoma's approach to desegregation was designed to primarily benefit White families and that impacts on Black communities – whether positive or negative – were of secondary concern. In fact, there is little evidence that broad impacts beyond changes in test scores were assessed despite concerns and legal action from Black community leaders.

In order to apply this CRT lens to Tacoma's school history, I first chronicle the story of Tacoma's school desegregation. This is important because, to date, I have found no thorough history that tells the story of Tacoma's school desegregation past the 1970s. This analysis comes after what seems to be a nearly 40-year gap since the last account of Tacoma's approach to school desegregation. Whereas research on other cities' desegregation efforts have been ongoing (including in nearby Seattle), this gap suggests an overlooking of the complexity of such processes in mid-sized cities and certainly suggests a lack of a critical lens that challenges the positive, albeit limited, account of Tacoma's school desegregation. Furthermore, a review of existing accounts of the district's desegregation efforts shows that they are all overwhelmingly positive and from the perspectives of people in power or from journalists. Perspectives of parents of color, of teachers and of students of color are notably missing. I explore some examples of this in the following paragraphs.

The only report of Tacoma's desegregation that I found was a published report from the United States Commission on Civil Rights published in 1979. While the impetus for this report is unclear, the report is undeniably laudatory of the district and over-simplifying in many of its claims. One example, is the following sentence under the section titled, "Receptive Environment

for Full Desegregation": "Throughout Tacoma's 6-year desegregation process, there was an absence of open hostility and debilitating conflict" (School Desegregation in Tacoma, 1979, p. 12). Also, the reports concluding pages mentioned, "capable school officials" and noted that "each new policy or program was well planned and well explained" (p. 16). Overall, the report synthesized Tacoma's school desegregation efforts, drawing bold claims of impact:

> Desegregation of the schools has contributed to greater interdependence and increased communication between citizens of Tacoma. The successful desegregation program certainly contributed to the passage of the city's 1970 open housing ordinance. Since the ordinance was passed, minority families have been able to move into different neighborhoods, dispersing minority students throughout the school district. In this way, the city of Tacoma has been the beneficiary of the schools [sic] successful desegregation effort (School Desegregation in Tacoma, 1979, p. 14).

While the report cited a variety of sources including newspaper articles, school board policies and resolutions**,** it also noted vaguely that much of the information included was obtained through interviews with "school board members, school officials, principals, parents, teachers, students and community leaders" (p. 17). However, more specific demographic information related to people interviewed was not provided, raising questions about the validity of many of this report's assertions.

Also in a district publication, *For the Record***,** which offered a history of Tacoma Public Schools from 1869 through 1984**,** there is a momentary mention of desegregation under the "District a leader" subsection of district history. In this sole paragraph mentioning desegregation, the publication featured a noble tone:

> The District can take pride in its early voluntary efforts to desegregate and integrate its schools. Under the determined leadership of Superintendent Giaudrone and with the full commitment of the Board, Tacoma worked closely with community groups in the 1960s and 1970s to avoid the confrontations and court mandates experienced later by many large city schools. A wide, range of programs, such as Triad, magnet, and Elementary and Secondary Education Act entitlements, helped change the racial mix of students within the individual schools and were instrumental in developing new teaching strategies, multicultural curricula and activities that encouraged the entire community to

> become more aware and appreciative of minority contributions and concern (Olsen, 1985, p. 37-38).

This paragraph suggests a victorious school district that proactively "overcame" racial segregation under heroic leadership. Pictured next to this paragraph is a photo of Superintendent Angelo Giaudrone with two unnamed Black people and a few unnamed White men off to the side. The caption reads: "National Carter G. Woodson Award for Negro History Week in 1968" (Olsen, 1985, p. 38). There is little context for this picture, but the caption and placement next to the section on desegregation adds to the self-congratulatory messaging that implies: We were leaders in desegregation, we have been recognized for our efforts; we are only getting better.

Methodology

To detail the history of Tacoma's school desegregation, I selected the date ranges of 1960 through 1999 following initial research into existing articles and reports. In historical records and school board documents, the district is referred to as "Tacoma School District No. 10" though today, the district uses the name, Tacoma Public Schools (TPS for short). Documents in the early 2000s refer to Tacoma as "Tacoma School District," so I use that name when talking historically about the district and use "Tacoma Public Schools" when talking about the district today.

Although the district's first desegregation policies went into effect at the start of the 1966 school year, the first newspaper articles discussing desegregation were in 1960 and concerned the debate about construction of an additional primary-age building for what was McCarver Junior High-Elementary school at the time. As I began research, I realized a need to answer a key question: "How did the district's desegregation policies connect to Tacoma's "choice" programming today?" While I was not able to answer this question fully, I did find information that explains the shift away from race-based enrollment in a 1998 grant for expanded magnet school programming, thus providing a clear book-end to a decades-long window of research.

The methodology for this first part of my research involved archival research and deductive thematic analysis. I compiled and read through more than 120 newspaper articles, largely from the *Tacoma News Tribune,* Tacoma's daily newspaper. I accessed newspaper articles stored in the Tacoma Public Library's special collections and local history site, the Northwest Room, as well as online through US West Newsstream, an online database that allows users to access U.S. news content beginning in the 1980s. See Appendix A for pictures of selected articles from this time period.

I share how I found articles in the Northwest room to give further insight into my methodological process and share context for limitations I discuss at the end of this chapter. A librarian in this space described the process of selection to me: library staff scan local newspapers and clips newsworthy items to file into designated file folders by subject and geographic location (Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington State, for example). Each article is stamped with a category and the date of the article and then filed into a long file folder. Recent articles are being logged online due to building space limitations. There's a binder with listed categories – for the purpose of this research, I reviewed files for "Tacoma Schools" within varied decades within and just beyond my specified time frame. I also reviewed such files as "McCarver Elementary," "Stanley Elementary," "Racial Discrimination" and "Tacoma Administration." Newspaper articles appeared to be placed in the folder in no particular order and larger file folders were split into date ranges such as "Tacoma Public Schools 1993-2006." I logged articles and other documents into a spreadsheet where I could later sort by date and by theme.

I also reviewed school board meeting agendas, school board resolutions and district committee reports found in library archives and others received via a public records request

through Tacoma Public Schools. Additional data was found through online federal reports, including the report by the United States Commission on Civil Rights mentioned above and a report, "Exemplary Magnet Program," issued by the Tacoma school district. I also referenced the historical book, *On The Record*, detailing the history of Tacoma Public Schools (Olsen, 1985).

I want to offer some context behind my use of the terms "Black" and "people of color." There is historical record of a focus on a Black versus White binary in local newspaper articles and reports, and this Black versus White binary is critiqued in CRT literature for its erasure of other groups of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). While I recognize that there were wider communities of color than what is represented, my analysis focuses on the mainstream framing in order to critique it, and therefore discusses the history of Tacoma's school desegregation as it related to Black and White communities. District documents and local articles often lumped people of color together and referred to them as "minorities," however, since this term carries implications of inferiority, I use the term "people of color" in my writing or keep "minority" (in either singular or plural form) in quotation marks.

It is not my intent to evaluate the effectiveness or viability of desegregation to advance racial justice, though I do call these premises into question. My intent is to offer 1) a more complete picture of how Tacoma approached school desegregation and 2) a critical lens that reveals racist practices within Tacoma's approach to desegregating its schools and makes connections to the present-day experiences of youth of color. These efforts serve to complicate the largely laudatory narrative that exists and, in the concluding discussion, consider negative ramifications that linger today as a result of Tacoma's school desegregation. It is my hope that this more current and complete account of Tacoma's approach to school desegregation may serve as a springboard for additional research and knowledge creation and that further research

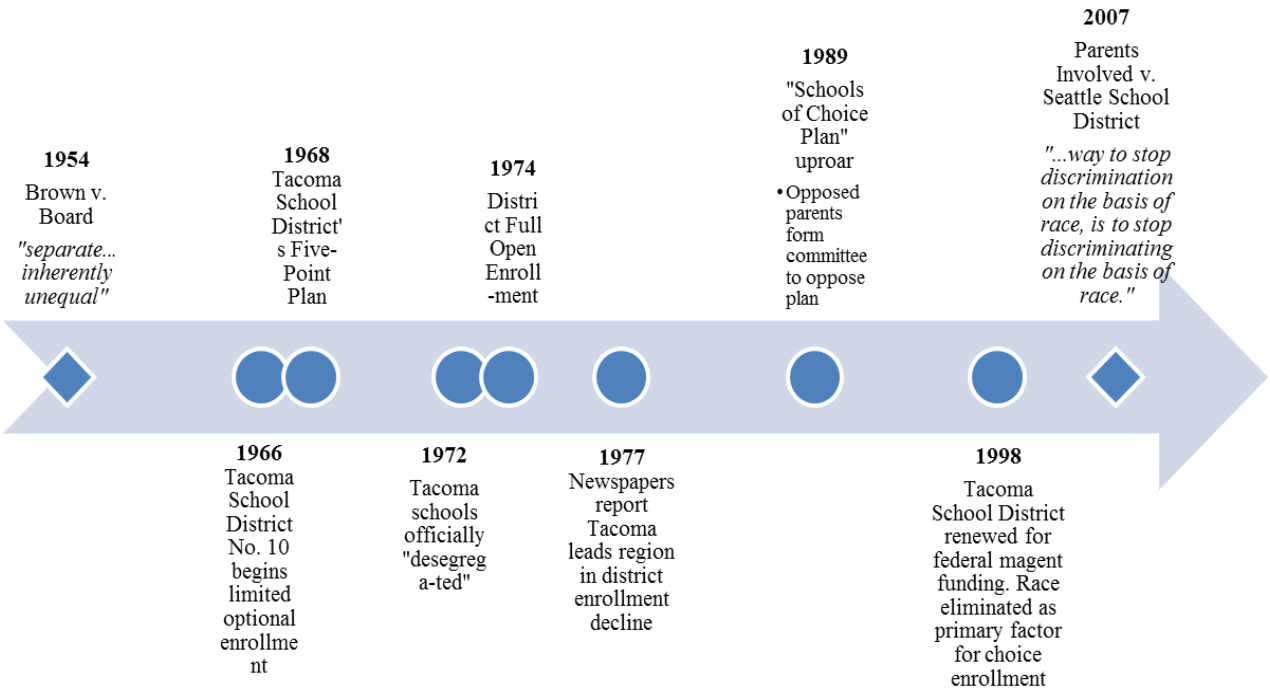
continues to employ a critical lens that questions intent and acknowledges racism and the way it is bound up with policy.

The Story of Tacoma's School Desegregation

This chapter offers another rendering of the story of desegregation in Tacoma and one that goes through the 1990s when there was a shift back to neighborhood, race-neutral school assignments. I set the stage with a national milestone: 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that 'separate but equal' (the validation for segregation under 1898 *Plessy v. Ferguson*) had no place in public education, thereby setting the course to racially desegregate America's public schools. Tacoma schools were indeed separate and the quality of education was far from equal.

The prevailing notion at the time was that the way towards a quality education for Black students was to gain access or share space with White students. Ten years later, with little progress made in school desegregation, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which gave courts greater backing to enforce desegregation and other civil rights legislation in light of feet-dragging and defiance from school districts across the nation.

Figure 2. *Timeline of key local and national dates related to Tacoma's school desegregation*



1960s: Boiling point to policy; from limited to open enrollment.

We will start in Tacoma in the year 1960 with the anticipated construction of a primary-school building at McCarver Junior High-Elementary, a school in what was then known as Tacoma's Central Area, a neighborhood made up primarily of Black people at this time. McCarver, a neighborhood school, was made up of 84% Black students around this time (School Desegregation, 1979, p. 5). Local NAACP leaders led the opposition of the new construction on the school, which they felt would further racial isolation and called on the district to restructure school assignments to off-set de facto segregation in the district. Their concern was rooted in the reality that with de facto racial segregation came disproportionate allocation of resources that negatively impacted schools in Black communities. The school board approved construction, despite Black leaders' concerns, and in 1961 this decision was upheld by the state in lieu of the NAACP's appeal. Jack Tanner, a lawyer and president of the Northwest NAACP chapter, filed to take the case to federal district court. Another legal front – in 1965, Tacoma's chapter of the NAACP asks the New York legal division of the NAACP to investigate Tacoma for its violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and for evading action to eliminate de facto segregation ("NAACP Asks City School Investigation," 1965).

Around 1960, former Tacoma Mayor Ben Hanson promised the formation of a committee to study racial segregation in housing and schools but it never materialized ("Court to Get City Race Problem," 1963). In 1963, The Tacoma Teachers Association and the Association of School Administrators, with the support of the school district, formed an ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations to alleviate de facto segregation but the committee did not produce "tangible results." (School Desegregation, 1979, p. 5). The lack of movement to alleviate desegregation led to more vocal push-back from Jack Tanner and the NAACP. In 1963,

the school board had started a School Development Council to study issues related to education and a subcommittee formed to study de facto segregation. It is unclear whether this council was the same one formed by teachers and school leaders (Tacoma School District No. 10, 1965, p. 4). The subcommittee, which included two "minority" members out of seven, called for a school board policy on equal educational opportunity, multi-ethnic curriculum and "interchange of students" among its recommendations. Further recommendations submitted by three members of this committee involved more explicit plans about desegregation and called for the closing of two predominantly Black Central Area schools. (School Desegregation, 1979, p. 5-6).

In the fall of 1965, the school district adopted the "Equal Educational Opportunity" policy with language pronouncing: "It is the paramount duty of the State to make ample provisions for the education of all children...without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex" ("Equal Educational Opportunity" policy as cited in School Desegregation, 1979, p. 6). Shortly after, Tacoma's NAACP requested that its national legal division investigate Tacoma for violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("NAACP Asks City School," 1965). The request criticized the district for evading action to alleviate de facto segregation and for not following all recommendations by the district subcommittee. The letter, signed by Tacoma's NAACP education chairman James Patterson, read: "To date, only suggestions for aiding the disadvantaged child in his own locale have been adopted. All suggestions involving any 'mixing' by race for special citywide programs or for rezoning or closing of racially unbalanced schools have been ignored" ("NAACP Asks City School," 1965).

The next school year (1966-1967), the Tacoma School District began a "limited optional enrollment" plan allowing sixth and ninth graders in Central Area schools the option of attending any junior or senior high school in the city (Metcalf, 1967). In the spring of 1967, the State Anti-

Discrimination Board critiqued the impact of the program's first year. Only 65 students took part, and more than 40% of those were White students opting to go to schools out of the segregated Central Area (Lizberg, 1967).

The Board slightly expanded its limited optional enrollment plan for students leaving or coming in to the Central Area for the 67-68 school year. It allowed all students in Central Area elementary schools and McCarver Junior High School to attend schools anywhere in the district. Students from elsewhere in the district could also attend school in the Central Area, provided they decrease the percentage of Black students at the school (Johnson, 1967b). At the time, McCarver Elementary had a Black student enrollment of 86%, down from 90.2% (Metcalf, 1967; Metcalf, 1968). The Board opted not to launch a full open-enrollment citing increased enrollment as a reason. This decision was criticized by Frank Russell, president of the local chapter of the NAACP, in a seven-point rationale that chastised the district for its pace and overall approach. Some of his points included 1) naming that the district's decision was a pacification for "racially isolated" (White) schools; 2) pointing out that this decision put the burden on parents for a problem that is not theirs; 3) urging the district to eliminate de-facto segregation so students could receive the benefits of a multicultural education (Johnson, 1967b). By that fall, Jack Tanner was pushing for the removal of long-time Superintendent Giaudrone for not doing enough to end segregation ("School Board Ouster Sought," 1967).

In early 1968, the legislative Interim Committee on Metropolitan Education put heat on Tacoma schools for being apathetic in ending de facto segregation. The committee asked the Washington State Board Against Discrimination[1] to take action. The State Board revised the

[1] In 1949, the Washington State Legislature created the Washington State Board Against Discrimination to encourage compliance with the Fair Employment Practices Act. It was reported to be ineffective due to

state-wide definition of racial imbalance to say that having 40% or more of a school's population from one minority group would qualify as a "segregated" school. ("City School Integration Plan Studied," 1968). Later that spring, the school board approved new plans to support desegregation efforts. There was not a name to this enrollment change so I refer to it as the "five-point program," referencing how these changes were described in a newspaper article reporting on the plan (Metcalf, 1968). The "five-point program," in effect for the 1968-1969 school year, took bolder action towards desegregation including closing McCarver Junior High and Central Elementary schools in the Central Area and re-opening McCarver as a "exemplary" magnet school, the first magnet school in the nation (Rossell, 2005; TSD No. 10, 1968, p. 2-4). While decisive action was certainly taken, this plan was still critiqued by civil rights groups lamenting the reach of the plan and noting that elementary schools in the area would still be overwhelmingly made up of Black students (Metcalf, 1968).

Table 2. *Overview of Tacoma's enrollment plans, between 1966-1974*

1966-67 Limited Optional Enrollment	1967-1968 Expanded Limited Optional Enrollment	1968-1969 "Five-Point Program"*	1974 Full Open Enrollment
Choice of any junior high school for 6th graders in Central Area Choice of any high school for 9th graders in Central Area Encouraging White students outside Central Area to attend	Expanded to all students in Central Area, including elementary	1. Closing McCarver Junior High 2. Re-opening McCarver as an elementary magnet school 3. Closing Central Elementary School and using building for school district instructional improvement	Students can attend any school in the district provided their enrollment contributes to "racial balance" (statewide cap was that student of color enrollment was not to exceed 40% at the time)

underfunding. http://www.historylink.org/File/1044 http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/washington-state-board-against-discrimination

McCarver Junior High		4. Transferring 6th graders at Stanley Elementary to reduce overcrowding 5. School board taking stance to ensure no high school becomes de facto segregated	Busing free for those more than 2 miles away

*Source: Tacoma School District No. 10, April 1968 Board Minutes.

After this plan's first year, Black student makeup at McCarver was just over 50%. The District instituted a new attendance policy the summer after, which capped Black enrollment at 40%. Though there is no explicit mention as to why this percentage was chosen, board documents are clear that this was to "gradually and systematically establish a 60/40 white/black [sic] student population" (TSD No. 10, 1969, p. 6-7). "The new attendance policy stipulated that after August 1, 1969, only 300 McCarver Area students would be accepted at McCarver and that the remaining student body of 725 would be composed of students outside of the McCarver area" (School Desegregation, 1979, p. 11). Thus nearly 60% of spots at this *exemplary* school would be reserved for White students, most of whom would be coming from out of the neighborhood.

The five-point program in 1968 first used the word "exemplary" in its plan that McCarver "be developed as a center for an elementary education program of an *exemplary* [emphasis added] nature," yet the word exemplary soon became linked with Tacoma's magnet programs (School Board Minutes, April 1968). In its second year (1969-1970), the magnet program at McCarver expanded to a Triad Program at Jefferson and Wainwright elementary schools. A 1972 report evaluated Tacoma's "Exemplary Magnet Program", referring to the magnet programs at these three schools (Krigsman & Winchell, 1972). The new programs at Jefferson and Wainwright brought in specialty programs such as a science and math focus at Wainwright and a language arts and individualized learning focus at McCarver – with the driving purpose to

desegregate neighborhood schools. Jefferson and Wainwright, both in predominantly White neighborhoods, presumably allowed strong curricular offerings to displaced McCarver students who needed to leave their neighborhood school to meet desegregation caps on "minority" enrollment.

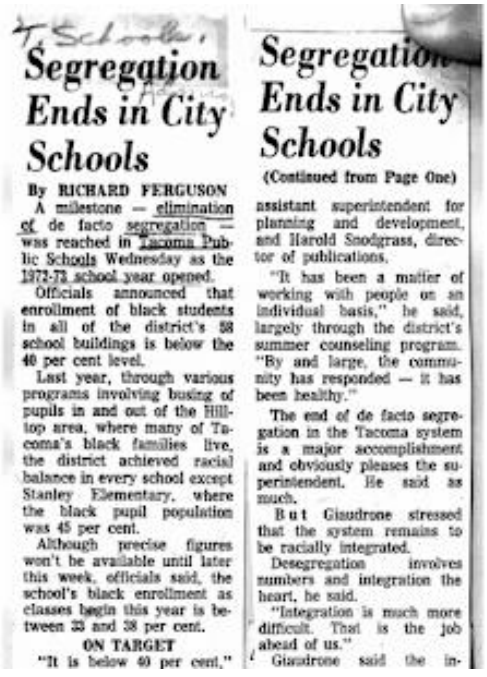
The summer counseling program was overseen by Willie Stewart, who went on to become Tacoma's first Black principal. The program, which began during the summer of 1966, involved sending school counselors into the homes of families whose children were impacted by the optional enrollment program to help them determine their best options. Families desiring a transfer were connected with counselors at the receiving schools to talk about the impact of such a move. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report attributed the summer counseling program as the program "that contributed the most to the successful desegregation of the public schools" (Segregation in Tacoma, 1979, p. 8-11).

1970s: Expansion of "choice;" desegregation "achieved."

In the spring of 1970, the State Board of Education and the State Board Against Discrimination issued a joint statement calling for the eradication of racial segregation in Washington's public schools. This statement also offered a definition of racial segregation – schools whose "minority" (or non-White) enrollment exceeded 40% were considered segregated. About a month later, the Tacoma school board moved to desegregate its one remaining segregated school at Stanley Elementary noting in its plan that this shift would "increase the opportunities of all children for multi-racial educational experiences." (TSD No. 10, 1970, p. 4). Stanley Elementary was converted to a technology-focused magnet school for the upcoming 1970-1971 school year, following state guidelines to cap the enrollment of students of color at 40%.

The 1970s saw an expansion of Tacoma's magnet programs and federal funding ("$125,000 U.S. Grant aids Tacoma schools," 1971). By the 1972-1973 school year, six years after the district began a formal desegregation program, it met its goal. Desegregation was achieved, based on student demographic redistribution. Every school in the district had an enrollment of students of color under 40%. ("Segregation ends in city schools," 1972.*)* At the end of that school year, Superintendent Giaudrone noted the distinction between desegregation and integration of students across race and vowed to work towards integration ("Desegregation achieved: integration next goal," 1973). His promise came after the school board adopted a resolution that was sponsored by an association of teachers and another of administrators. This resolution established board policy to achieve integration and authorized the district to pursue funding for additional training and programs to support schools in this next task. However, there was no further evidence of follow-through on this policy or programming.

Figure 3. *"Segregation Ends in City Schools," September 6, 1972*



Segregation Ends in City Schools

By RICHARD FERGUSON

A milestone — elimination of de facto segregation — was reached in Tacoma Public Schools Wednesday as the 1972-73 school year opened.

Officials announced that enrollment of black students in all of the district's 58 school buildings is below the 40 per cent level.

Last year, through various programs involving busing of pupils in and out of the Hilltop area, where many of Tacoma's black families live, the district achieved racial balance in every school except Stanley Elementary, where the black pupil population was 45 per cent.

Although precise figures won't be available until later this week, officials said, the school's black enrollment as classes begin this year is between 33 and 38 per cent.

ON TARGET

"It is below 40 per cent,"

Segregation Ends in City Schools

(Continued from Page One)

assistant superintendent for planning and development, and Harold Snodgrass, director of publications.

"It has been a matter of working with people on an individual basis," he said, largely through the district's summer counseling program. "By and large, the community has responded — it has been healthy."

The end of de facto segregation in the Tacoma system is a major accomplishment and obviously pleases the superintendent. He said as much.

But Giaudrone stressed that the system remains to be racially integrated.

Desegregation involves numbers and integration the heart, he said.

"Integration is much more difficult. That is the job ahead of us."

Giaudrone said the in-

Source: Ferguson (1972). For full article see Appendix A.1.c.

In 1974, Tacoma became the first in the Northwest to start full, open enrollment, allowing all students option of attending school of their choice. Busing was free at this time for all students living more than two miles away from their school of choice. Choices were only limited by each school's enrollment capacity and the district's guidelines to stay under the 40% enrollment of students of color, and a 25% cap at the high-school level (Seago, 1974a; Seago, 1974b). Tacoma had a different issue with busing and it was not explicitly tied to desegregation efforts. A number of parents (their racial makeup is unstated) actually pushed for more busing and free busing, whereas earlier rules restricted free busing to those living beyond certain distances. This distance-stipulation supported desegregation efforts, providing free busing to families needing or opting to attend school outside of their neighborhood due to racial caps on the enrollment of student of color. Parents successfully pushed for other factors to be considered in free busing, including reducing the distance requirement for younger students and taking into account students' safety and health needs when issuing free bus passes. (Thiel, 1975; "Board adopts state's most liberal transportation policy," 1975).

The decade closed out with a controversial initiative stemming from rising tensions from Seattle's mandatory busing as part of its desegregation efforts. A statewide ballot initiative, Washington Prohibition on Unnecessary Busing of Students Initiative, also known as Initiative 350, would go to voters in the fall of 1978 that would prohibit mandatory busing as means for school desegregation (Washington Prohibition on Unnecessary Busing, n.d.). With Board Resolution 809, the Tacoma school board publicly voiced its opposition to this initiative. Initiative 350 passed but was later ruled unconstitutional in a Supreme Court ruling, *Washington v. Seattle School Dist.* (1982).

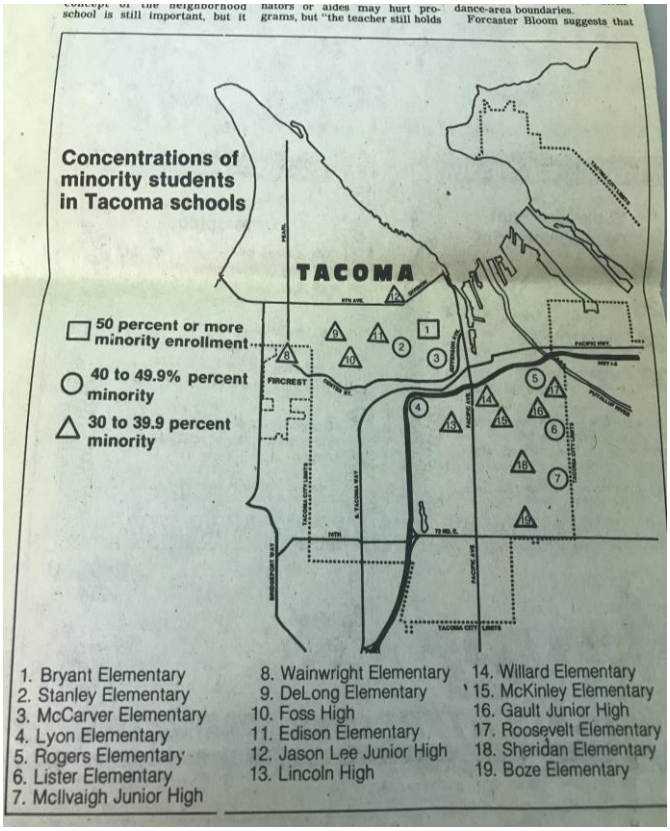
By 1977 and into the next decade, Tacoma led the area in its enrollment decline. While attributed to declining birth rates, a nearby school district also experiencing enrollment drops cited an increase in private school enrollment. Other suburban districts also reported an enrollment increase, a trend known as “White flight” during the era of increasing desegregation efforts. (Ripple, 1977).

1980s: White flight and re-segregation; rising tensions and appeasement.

The 1980s centered on appeasement of White interest amidst rising tensions. One headline read, “It's a good year for Tacoma Schools,” and focused on the fact that Tacoma schools did not have mandatory busing due to magnet schools and open enrollment. The motto for the school district that year was, “Tacoma schools are good – AND getting better.” (“It’s a good year for Tacoma Schools,” 1980). Newspaper articles paint Tacoma’s process in contrast with the more contentious political struggle around desegregation in nearby Seattle. A district administrator is quoted in one article attributing the district’s choice options and open-enrollment as main factors for Tacoma’s successful program: "We have a much happier student body and supportive parents because of it" (Roberts, 1981). Yet during this decade of continued White flight, the enrollment of students of color continued to increase. Somewhere between 1977 when Tacoma officially “desegregated” and 1982, the statewide enrollment cap changed. School board documents mention that these revised guidelines had been established by the state Board of Education and the state Human Rights Commission (TSD No. 10, 1992b). A 1982 newspaper reported that statewide guidelines at the time limited “minority” enrollment to not exceed 20 percentage points from a district’s overall “minority” enrollment. At no point should “minority” enrollment exceed 50% enrollment at any school. In 1982, the district’s enrollment of students of color was at 26.5%, slightly increasing each year as more White students left the district. Thus

with this new cap, a Tacoma school's enrollment of students of color could now be greater than the former 40% cap (since 20 percentage points higher would be 46.5%), though the school could still not exceed the 50% cap. By 1982, two schools exceeded the statewide racial cap of 50% "minority" (Gildenhar, 1982a).

Figure 4. *"Neighborhood Schoolhouse Threatened by Desegregation," July 4, 1982*



Source: Gildenhar (1982b). For full article see Appendix A.1.d.

In this decade, there was an increasing focus on academic disparities and inequitable teacher practices. In 1986 Black community leaders requested a district report on achievement data disaggregated across race and other factors such as gender, GPA, enrollment in SPED and gifted programs, etc. Results showed that Hispanic, Native American and Black students performed lower in standardized test scores than their White and Asian peers. (Butterfield, 1986). Towards the end of the decade, in 1988, the district launched another task force on racial

desegregation, this time in response to continued rising "minority" enrollment. Lack of teacher diversity and tracking – placing students on accelerated or remedial tracts based on perceived ability – were some practices the task force was set to examine (Nelson, 1988*).*

The 1980s ended with an uproar as a result of the district's 1989 strategic planning process that included a several-hundred-citizen task force. This task force produced 15 recommendations for the district's next five years. One recommendation drew special fire: The Schools of Choice plan (Seago, 1989*).* In a span of one year, this one recommendation had more than 25 articles written about it. The Schools of Choice plan proposed to shift the district's open-enrollment policy from "open enrollment" to one of "controlled choice." It would do away with neighborhood school assignments and give families a cluster of specialty schools to choose from (Nelson, 1989c). This plan aimed to racially diversify all of Tacoma's schools by having the student body at each school reflect the racial makeup of the district. Just three months later in July, a parent committee formed made-up primarily of White families to oppose this Schools of Choice proposal. That fall, the board appointed a task force with members for and against the proposal to make recommendations in response to the Schools of Choice plan. They were given until the following spring (1990) to work on this task.

Figure 5. "*Parents demand evidence 'choice' will help schools," July 7, 1989*

Peter Haley/The News Tribune

Parents listen to Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Lillian Barna field questions about the 'Schools of Choice' plan.

Schools

Continued from A1

federal) policies have been upheld with the force of law."

Two Tacoma schools — McIlvaigh and Jason Lee middle schools — are now considered racially isolated and many more wavier close to the line established by the state Board of Education, according to information supplied by the district.

The state considers a school racially isolated when its minority enrollment exceeds the community's minority makeup by 20 percent. At both Jason Lee and McIlvaigh, minority enrollment exceeded 50 percent of the student body by the end of this past school year.

Minorities comprise about 30 percent of the the district's overall student population, which accounts for the proposed 70-30 ratio suggested for each school.

Administrators and creators of the plan said they hoped "Schools of Choice" would encourage parents in predominantly white neighborhoods to look beyond their neighborhood school and would not lead to forced busing.

Yet one parent said many minority children can't attend their neighborhood schools under the current system.

"Minority kids have borne the brunt of our desegregation efforts," said David Droge, who sits on the planning team that is considering "Schools of Choice" along with 14 other long-term strategies for educational improvement.

Droge was referring to minority children who are barred from magnet schools in their own neighborhoods in favor of white children. The whites are bused in as part of the district's 20-year-old voluntary desegregation program.

"The sacrifice for our current efforts has been made by minority kids," Droge said.

The School Board may approve parts of the "Schools of Choice" plan at the end of this month, Barna said, but only the mission statement, objectives and strategies are planned for next year.

The superintendent promised to make a list of those specific proposals available before the next public hearing at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Source: Nelson (1989b). For full article see Appendix A.1.f.

1990s: Continued re-segregation, magnet expansion and color-blind policy.

The 1990s was a decade of further magnet expansion and simultaneous re-segregation as the district moved towards "color-blind" magnet enrollment. In the spring of 1990, the Schools of Choice task force released its alternative proposal which removed the clustered schools model and recommended "that parents instead be free to choose from traditional schools, specialty schools and magnet schools." (Nelson, 1990b). Specialty schools would "encourage the design of new schools" that would have distinct focuses, though it is unclear the distinction between specialty and magnet schools (Tacoma Public Schools, 1990b). Magnet schools seemed more explicitly intended to promote desegregation, whereas specialty schools seemed to promote ideas of differentiated learning. Ahead of its written proposal, the Task force held numerous community forums to discuss ideas including a "model ethnic academy." (Tacoma Public Schools, 1990a). Such ethnic schools would be open to students of all races but the curriculum and instructional practices would reflect the "culture, history and values of a particular racial or ethnic group" (Nelson, 1990a). An article written about this proposal connects the idea of an "ethnic theme school" to the very type of "specialty" schools the district was considering: "An elementary school that highlights the experiences of Black Americans is the type of specialty 'school of choice' the Tacoma School District could create to boost student achievement" (Nelson, 1990a). Unsurprisingly, not all community members supported this idea, feeling that they might encourage racial segregation counter to the district's goal of achieving desegregation. A member of Tacoma's Black Collective, Mike Reed, said he would only support such a school if the district agreed to fund it equally.

> Some Black [sic] students feel invisible in mainstream public schools because the curriculum focuses primarily on the achievements of White [sic] Americans, Reed said. Those students might excel in an environment that celebrates their history and culture White [sic] promoting self-esteem and academic achievement, he said (Nelson, 1990a).

Then Superintendent Lillian Barn was quoted expressing doubt that ethnic-theme schools would attract the racial balance needed to be in-line with the district's goals around desegregation. (Nelson, 1990a). Ultimately, this proposal was not included in the task force's recommendations to the district. The task force's report on its decisions noted that another proposal that would ensure a certain level of academic achievement by students of color was "tabled by the task force" and there's no later evidence that suggests this proposal was re-considered by the task force, let alone adopted by the district.

The year 1991 was the start of greater expansion of magnet programs across the decade that extended magnet offerings to 13 schools. A newspaper article noted that this was the first federal money for the district's 20-year magnet program; prior funds were allocated through the district and state ("Tacoma gets $1.8 million for schools," 1991).

In 1992, the district adopted an updated desegregation policy and guidelines for racial balance. The guidelines echo the state's updated racial balance cap explained above. A copy of the school board's policy showed that the policy was originally approved in 1986 and it is unclear what parts were updated for the re-adoption. A bolded "policy statement" section suggests this section was added. An excerpt from this "policy statement" reads:

> The Tacoma School District affirms the inherent dignity and the equal rights of every student. The Tacoma School District will develop programs to ensure that all students experience an educational environment in which they are free to learn and are encouraged to achieve to the best of their abilities…The Board of Directors directs the Superintendent to monitor the student and staff population and report annually situations that segregate by race, creed, sex or ethnicity. The superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that the District establishes multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environment and program(s) for all students (TSD No. 10, 1992a, p. 1).

There were no records of newspaper articles written about this updated policy nor of the named "multi-cultural and multi-ethnic" programming for all students in the years and months following this updated policy.

In 1993, the school district hired its first Black Superintendent, Rudy Crew, a rising school leader most recently leading the Sacramento school district. That same year, Crew sought to explore alternatives to the district's busing program which he said, "doesn't give a big bang for the buck" and moved students across town but did not impact students' achievement, especially across racial lines. He also pointed out the one-sidedness of Tacoma's magnet programs that buses students out of the poorest neighborhoods but without regard for whether such moves positively impact students' achievements (Gordon, 1993b).

Also this year, the district explored tentative plans to further "stir the melting pot a little harder" as one article read, in order to qualify for a $5.1 million federal grant. Stipulations for the grant limited the percentage of students of color at magnet schools to 50% and at non-magnet schools to not exceed the district-wide "minority" enrollment rate, which was 36% that year. The tentative plans involved busing students of color to the Northeast neighborhood of Tacoma, which had been largely "untouched" by desegregation efforts (Gordon, 1993a).

It is unclear whether these plans were approved, though in 1998, the district was renewed for a second year in a row for federal magnet funds, suggesting that the district made adjustments to qualify for such funding. This renewal of funding brought in programs that added French and Japanese to one school and a Montessori program to another – both schools with a high percentage of students of color. One article explicitly stated the purpose of such funds: "Federal magnet funds allow school districts to voluntarily desegregate individual schools by creating innovative programs to attract White students, while improving student achievement." (Abe,

1998a; Abe, 1998b). It was in this grant renewal where race was explicitly discouraged as an *initial* factor in determining student entry. The reasoning was that the federal government wanted to prevent schools from barring magnet-school entry to students of color due to the goal of enrolling more White students and thus reaching a "desegregated" school status. This stipulation, however, seemed to be the turning point leading to the re-segregation of schools across the district – and one that clearly connects to race no longer being a factor in the district's current open-enrollment policy. Once race was discouraged from being a primary factor for magnet-school enrollment, it was as if the district had permission to de-prioritize its focus on "racial balance" and instead focus on innovative programming that magnet funding financed. It was unclear from available data if this funding held the district to a certain "minority" cap and if so, what this was.

The 1990s ended with another district task force on desegregation proposing to adjust the district's "minority" cap for enrollment to be lower than the state's guidelines. In 1998, the district's enrollment of students of color was 41%. Task force proposals intended to curb rising percentages of student-of-color-enrollment in schools, some of which had risen back up to 50 to 55% students of color (Abe, 1998c). District guidelines had since increased to permit a school's student-of-color-population to be within 25 percentage points of the district average (in 1992 this limit was 20% points) and 16 out of the district's 52 schools were out of compliance. The committee recommended lowering the cap so that schools had to be within 10 percentage points – a move that would put 28 schools out of compliance. Board members praised the task-force for its thorough recommendations, but did not indicate whether they supported the proposals, citing budget implications. There was no further evidence of what came of these recommendations.

I end the historical context here in the late '90s with the district's move to scale back its emphasis on race in school enrollment at a time where the district was seeing rising enrollment of students of color. Tacoma's magnet programs continued through the 1990s, with significant support from federal funding that incentivized schools to create innovative magnet programming as a way to attract White students and, thus, comply with desegregation quotas. The scope of this research leaves it unknown when the federal magnet funding ended, though the three-year grant received in 1998 takes funding through the early 2000s. Today, Tacoma still touts its "choice" options. The next section situates Tacoma's schools today and offers a critical lens on the district's current choice offerings

Tacoma Public Schools Today.

Portfolio of schools.

In present-day, Tacoma Public Schools serves students in preschool through 12th grade. At the start of the 2017-2018 school year, the district has 34 elementary schools, two intermediate schools (some combination of elementary and middle school), nine middle schools and 10 high schools (Tacoma Public Schools, n.d., d). In 2012**,** then State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn designated Tacoma Public Schools as the state's first "Innovation Zone." Whereas schools statewide could apply for and receive this "Innovative School" designation, Tacoma was the first district to receive a district-wide recognition as an "Innovative Zone" for its groups of schools that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) as well as its support of improving student achievement across multiple school years (Butts, 2015). The district's website defines innovative schools as schools that "infus[e] a unique learning environment into the total school experience" (TPS, n.d., e). Innovative schools echo the language around the district's magnet schools in prior decades

which offered "innovative" programming, except this time, they are not marketed *explicitly* to White families. However, the district's current school choice system, explored in the next subsection, shows how White, wealthy families are still the primary beneficiaries of such programming.

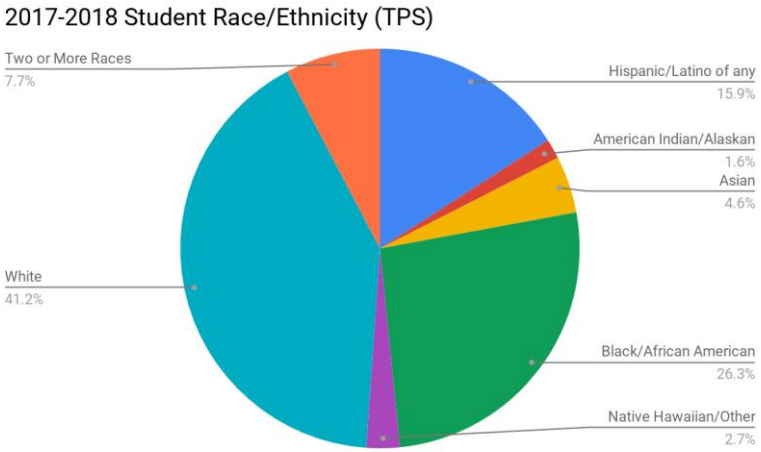
In the first two years of this Innovation Zone distinction, Tacoma housed 11 of the 33 innovative schools statewide (TPS, n.d., e). Tacoma Public Schools designates its own Innovative Schools and a list of 19 can be found on its website that include Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) and arts-focused curriculum, Montessori education programs, International Baccalaureate programs from elementary through high school, health and fitness focus and industrial design (TPS, n.d., e). These innovative schools are located in schools throughout the city and offered at a variety of age-levels. However, the offerings at these schools vary greatly with some programs and high schools requiring special admission. For example, Meeker Middle school in Tacoma's more wealthy Northeast neighborhood is labeled as "innovative" due to its school-wide STEM focus, whereas the fitness-based-learning Thrive program at Jason Lee Middle School in the less affluent, Hilltop neighborhood is only open to a small number of students who must apply and gain acceptance. "Choice" is appealing but not as readily available as it may seem.

Enrollment and student demographics.

Today, Tacoma School District No. 10, calling itself Tacoma Public Schools, is the third largest school district in the state of Washington, serving just under 30,000 students (TPS, n.d., a). In the 2017-2018 school year, Tacoma had a Fall student enrollment of 29,124 students. Most recent district statistics show that 39.3% of the students are White and 60.7% are categorized in other racial categories. According to district racial and ethnic categories, 20.3% are Hispanic or

Latino, 14.9% are Black, 9.4% are Asian, 11.9% identify as belonging to two or more races, 3.0% are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and 1.2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native. State data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction does not break down these racial and ethnic categorizes further to clarify, for example, the number of multiracial students or the number of Vietnamese vs. Korean students (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2017-2018a).

Figure 6. *Student Race and Ethnicity in Tacoma Public Schools, 2017-2018*



Source: Office of Superindent of Public Instruction (2017-2018a)

Choice in Tacoma schools today.

"Explore your Tacoma school choices," Tacoma's website reads under its "Enrollment & Choice Services" page (TPS, n.d., c). Tacoma still touts its choice-enrollment offerings, providing families a decision in enrollment (TPS, n.d., f). Today, the district frames choice around individualization rather than racial desegregation:

> Every child is an individual with a unique learning style, personality and talent. That's why we offer a variety of learning environments to fit every child's need and why we offer ***choice enrollment*** [emphasis in original]- meaning parents can apply to the school that is the right fit for their child (TPS, n.d., f).

But Tacoma's choice model is inherently problematic. Building capacity is the only stated reason that a family may not be able to attend the school of their choice (TPS, n.d., b). However, other barriers inherently exist. First, further exploration also reveals that families are responsible for providing their own transportation to schools out of their neighborhood, making it an inaccessible option for families without reliable access to a vehicle. Second, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the district changed its choice enrollment process to be strictly online, eliminating the paper-transfer forms parents could pick up at their schools and making it less accessible to families with limited computer literacy or English language proficiency**.** The response I received when asking about these barriers during my call to the district enrollment office was that parents could come to the schools and fill out the forms online. A translator could be requested to help a family fill out the choice enrollment form. As of December 2018, there were no options to fill out the form online in a language other than English.

Third, transfer requests are listed online as being due in the winter, which requires families to not only make decisions about the next school year just a few months into the school year; it also necessitates they navigate a bureaucratic process that is now mainly computer-based. The district website lists that transfer requests for the following school year are due in January for secondary schools and in March for elementary schools (TPS, n.d., b). In September 2018, just before the start of the 2018-2019 school year, 20 schools, elementary and middle schools, were listed as closed for open-enrollment: "due to building capacity they need to maintain space for students residing in their attendance areas" (TPS, n.d., c).

The concept of choice thus appears promising and equitable semantically, but it is a remnant of Tacoma's desegregation process more than 50 years ago, a present-day exhibit of interest convergence that suits the interests and access of White, wealthy families principally.

Critical Race Perspective on Tacoma's Desegregation Program & Trends in Analysis

There is a planned program to keep the Negro in his place and it starts in the public schools.
- Jack Tanner, first president of the Northwest Chapter of the NAACP (Pyle, 1966)

Government reports and newspaper articles written around the time the district began its desegregation programs have predominantly lauded Tacoma Public Schools for its voluntary desegregation efforts and community buy-in to its processes (Ferguson, 1972; Olsen, 1985; School desegregation, 1979). In the decades since 1990, Tacoma has ended its magnet programs that specifically seek to achieve "racial balance," and relied primarily on neighborhood-based school assignments, which have effectively re-segregated schools in-line with neighborhood housing patterns. The discussion in Chapter Four further situates Tacoma Public Schools in the present day.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' report on Tacoma ends in the 1970s. There is no streamlined narrative that chronicles Tacoma's desegregation process from its inception through a contemporary period, nor one that does so with a critical perspective specifically analyzing racism within Tacoma's school history. This section applies two CRT themes to the history above to reveal how racism systematically worked to ensure that White people benefitted first and foremost from desegregation.

While there is not a list of agreed-upon tenets by critical race theorists, Gloria Ladson-Billings synthesized CRT scholarship as organized around two pursuits: (1) to understand how the system of White supremacy is created and maintained and (2) to disrupt the links between law and racial power (Ladson-Billings, 2000). In their book, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, CRT scholars Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2012) outline four "hallmark" CRT themes. For the purpose of this thesis, I will expand upon two of these CRT themes most

prevalent in my analysis and salient to my research question – *interest convergence* and a *critique of liberalism*. A deductive analysis of the above history highlighted examples of each of these themes within Tacoma's school desegregation process (see Appendix A.2).

Interest convergence.

Ladson-Billings (1998) wrote: "…The dominant logic is that a model desegregation program is one that insures the Whites are happy (and do not leave the system altogether)" (p. 21). In this subsection, I argue that Tacoma's approach to desegregation centered on the appeasement of White interests more than the benefit of Black community members.

Let me be clear: desegregation was not in White people's interest. The premise of desegregation was to provide equal opportunity to all students, to "level the playing field" and to allow historically marginalized communities the same high-quality education as that of their more affluent, mostly-White peers. Desegregation in this purest form, never was in White people's interest (and still is not, today) as it necessitates a society where no racial group is privileged over another, a reality that is difficult to realize within the racist structures our society was built upon, as desegregative efforts have proven. Derrick Bell (2004) introduced the notion of *interest convergence,* to describe the point at which the interests of White people intersect with the interest of people of color. Only at this point, will "advances" be made because a change meant to promote equity will then also benefit White people, arguably more so than others.

I highlight two examples of interest convergence within Tacoma's school desegregation: first, in how the district went about enacting policy, and, second, in its actions to maintain desegregation programs. To begin, I look at the factors influencing the district's decision to make definitive moves towards policy that would effectively desegregate Tacoma schools and reduce existing de facto segregation. Recall that the early 1960s was marked by heavy criticism from

Black community leaders over the anticipated construction of the McCarver primary building addition and the district's slow pace of change – from Jack Tanner's request for a national NAACP investigation in 1965 to Frank Russell's 1967 seven-point critique of the school board.

Not until the 1968-1969 school year did the district acquiesce to pressure for open-enrollment across the district. This was in contrast to the limited optional enrollment it had implemented in years prior, which had restricted movement of students to those that alleviated de facto segregation in the district's Central Area schools. One of the five points of the district's 1968 desegregation plan was for McCarver Junior High to be converted into a magnet school, though it was not called that at the time by the school board. It was ordered that McCarver "be developed as a center for an elementary education program of an exemplary nature" (Tacoma School District, 1968). What was the reason behind the district's decision to implement such a plan? The concept of interest convergence offers that, at this point in time, the district's interest (representing the dominant, White interest) converged with Black community members' calls for desegregation. Taking more substantive action towards desegregation before criticism escalated or the federal government intervened made the decision to desegregate not only more appealing, but in the district's best interest.

The district also knew that its approach to desegregation needed to please White, wealthy families and keep them in the district. White families, broadly speaking, desired *choice* and freedom in educational offerings. This included not being *required* to move schools but having the option to, if desired. The district understood it had to align desegregation incentives to White interests, for this was in the district's interest too. The district's five-point plan involved investing in an "exemplary" school that would serve as a magnet for White families wanting to take advantage of the innovative programming. Within two years, McCarver's attendance would

flip from being more than 85% Black pre-1968 to having 53% students of color due to district and state guidelines instituting a 40% cap of students of color to make a school "desegregated" (Board minutes, May 28, 1970). The impact of desegregation was significantly reduced numbers of people of color attending formerly segregated schools just as high-quality innovative programs were brought in. White families, primarily, reaped the benefit of the district's desegregation efforts and this is a manifestation of racism.

In a 1982 *Tacoma News Tribune* article, "Neighborhood Schoolhouse Threatened by Desegregation," School Board President David Tuell is quoted as making the following proclamation: "We're committed to an integrated system, and we will do whatever we have to do to maintain it" (Gildenhar, 1982b). Applying a CRT lens, I ask, "was it in the district's interest to maintain a desegregated system at all costs?" One answer is that significant federal funding accompanied Tacoma's magnet schools from the late 1960s through the early 2000s. Magnet schools – and the name does not hide it – were meant to attract White families to attend schools in neighborhoods concentrated with students of color. These schools relied on the innovative education programs not offered in White, neighborhood schools to draw in White families. "The chief way the district desegregates schools is through its magnet schools, which offer unique instructional programs designed to attract White students to schools with higher concentrations of ethnic minority students" (Abe, 1998c). Another article explicitly states that these magnet programs will first be marketed to neighborhoods in the Northeast neighborhood (a wealthy part of town), private and homeschooled students, making no denial that the primary benefactor of these programs are White families (Abe, 1998b).

Converting some schools to magnet schools helped White families buy-in to the district's process of desegregation. In fact, White families benefited greatly as their students could attend

schools with specialized programming while the district met its goal of racially redistributing its students. While innovative schooling options may have also benefited Black families – the Exemplary Magnet program from the 1970s created magnet programs at two predominantly White schools so Black families whose children were bused out of their neighborhood could also attend magnet schools. However, my argument is that changes catered to White families and that consequences for Black families – whether positive or negative – were not of concern or were not explored based on historical records. The contentment of White families was an incentive to the district to maintain its desegregated system as increasing funding allowed for expanded magnet programming, a perk for its dominant, White community. Magnet schools (by design and through impact) blocked desegregation efforts, even as they were framed as desegregation efforts. The rationale behind *Brown's* desegregation ruling was that Black students deserved equal access to opportunity. Magnet schools barred this access since they opened primarily in communities of color and had low racial caps for students of color causing many neighborhood students to be denied entry. This is further evident in the 1998 magnet funding shift that discouraged funded schools from using race as an initial factor in determining student enrollment. While this was meant in part to offset the fact that students of color were often barred from enrolling in magnet schools due to racial caps, the consequence of this color-blind stipulation was the undoing of "desegregated" schools. Under the pretense of "racelessness," the district laid the foundation for disregarding the systemic inequities (racism, namely) that continue to privilege White, wealthy people over people of color. And this trend was not distinct to Tacoma but echoed the landscape nationwide.

If interest convergence means that White people are the primary beneficiaries of civil rights policies, the other side of this concept is that Black people often bear the burden of

responsibility for carrying out such change. Additionally, such a change may do little to benefit Black people and often causes harm. Derrick Bell (2004) uses the term 'incidental beneficiaries' to describe the fact that Black families often *happen* to benefit from a proposed change even though their interest was not a main priority in policy-making. Frank Russell named this explicitly in his 1967 multi-point critique of the school board's proposed expansion of its limited, optional-enrollment plan. He criticized the district for placing the responsibility of desegregation on "those marginalized by society" and called the plan "an appeasement intended to pacify the racially isolated (White) schools." (Johnson, 1967b). Echoing the national shift when the Supreme Court routinely deflected responsibility for enforcing *Brown v. Board* by putting the onus on school districts, the Tacoma school board placed the onus on communities of color to "choice out" of their schools (in one view) or, in another light, to be pressured to attend school out of their neighborhood so the district would be in compliance with district and state racial caps.

Thus, the CRT concept of interest convergence complicates the existing narrative of the Tacoma school district voluntarily desegregating its schools to improve the educational outcomes for its Black students. Rather, it reveals that there were other motivations that both propelled the district to step more fully into a desegregation program and, later, to maintain it.

Critique of liberalism and the racism of liberal White people.

The second CRT theme I analyze within Tacoma's school desegregation history is the critique of liberalism, in which CRT scholars have pointedly critiqued the perhaps well-meaning but often pernicious practices of "liberal" White people. I put "liberal" in quotes here because I refer specifically to White people who consider themselves politically progressive and thus seemingly in support of policies and practices advancing racial, social and economic equity.

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) define liberalism[2] as a political philosophy that sees government (or the law in the case of civil rights) as the vehicle to "maximize liberty" by enforcing equality in treatment (p. 166). Liberals, by extension are those who ascribe to this main framework for thinking.

Delgado and Stefancic provide context to this critique of liberalism:

> ...Critical race scholars are discontent with liberalism as a framework for addressing America's racial problems. Many liberals believe in color blindness and neutral principles of constitutional law. They believe in equality, especially equal treatment for all persons, regardless of their different histories or current situations (2012, p. 27).

This liberal ideology is based on a belief in naïve harmony, an aspiration (at least in the abstract) for an integrated community where White and *non-White* communities interact peacefully and without issue. I use the term non-White intentionally as blindness to *color* other than White is a common lens through which White people see the world. Such an ideal of integration is held-up without recognition of power dynamics and systemic structures (racism, namely) that liberal people themselves are tied up in – the very structures that make the reality of a harmonious integration challenging if not implausible. This liberal ideology, however impassionedly held, is fragile, and tends to crumble when an individual or group is charged with taking steps to bring about an anti-racist reality. This is because a mainstay of liberal thinking is rooted in individualism and the idea that individuals can be abstracted from structures of power, and thus not be implicated in them.

I focus here on one facet of this critique of liberalism, the idea of White fragility, which manifests, often at the individual level, when such a liberal worldview is challenged. Robin

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[2] Critical race theory critiques classic liberalism and more contemporary uses of the term in U.S. politics, not always distinguishing between *liberalism* and *neoliberalism.*

DiAngelo, who coined the term White fragility, but was far from the first to understand it, described her use of this term:

> White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate White racial equilibrium. (2011, p. 54).

I extend this fragility concept to the *re*-action that White people – especially White liberals – often have when their comfort or worldview is challenged, particularly in the name of racial equity. As DiAngelo's definition implies, White fragility is rooted in the desire of Whiteness to uphold and protect its privileges and the ensuing *actions* of White people when challenged are often unconscious reactions to deep-seated notions of privilege and superiority. My analysis of Tacoma's approach to racial school desegregation reveals notable instances of White fragility in response to events around desegregation that challenged the liberal status quo.

One example is school board director Frank Gillihan's reaction to NAACP President Frank Morris' assertion in 1967 that the students at three Central Area schools were not getting the same education as schools on the more affluent North End of the city. The newspaper article wrote that Gillihan delivered a "heated" reply:

> "We've been criticized unjustly by many groups. The opportunity is there [referencing optional enrollment]. It isn't up to us to force people to take advantage of it." Gillihan said he took exception to the NAACP contention that education at McCarver and Stanley was inferior. He said he personally talked to students during a tour of the schools and "found them happy." (Hannula, 1965).

This quote reveals the liberal mindset that the governing body and policy is a vehicle for equality *and* centers the individual apart from systemic forces (indirectly blaming Black families for not taking advantage of optional enrollment without regard to the racism inherent in the implementation of this policy.) Important to note as well is that "happiness" was not relevant to

the district's desegregation efforts nor something that a White board member could reasonably assess through a school visit. This is one example of a common practice of White fragility: White leaders denying and deflecting concerns raised by Black leaders and, instead, centering their own feelings and beliefs in a way that upholds them as valid and true while rendering others as invalid and untrue.

Further evidence of this White fragility is found in the subsequent "White flight" from Tacoma schools first reported in newspaper articles in the late 1970s as merely a decrease in district enrollment. In a 1977 article titled "Tacoma leads district in enrollment decline," the author offers no linkage between declining enrollment and the district's continued implementation of its desegregation program. Around this time, district-wide open-enrollment resulted in an increased numbers of students of color (though still nominal) in formerly all-White schools. Nationwide, schools saw a retreat of wealthy, White families from public, city schools to more isolated options – public schools in the suburbs, private schools, even homeschooling. White, often liberal-minded families, in support of desegregation theoretically, had different reactions when the ripples of this policy touched their lives. While there were presumably White families not in support of desegregation, I want to draw attention to the families presumably in support of desegregation for "other people" but were not comfortable having this play out in their own neighborhood or school. This mindset rationalizes away any implication in the consequences of such a choice – one that not only manifests racism but furthers systemic inequity in funding and education quality as federal funding formulas allot districts money based on enrollment. Historical evidence shows the decline in White students' enrollment in Tacoma paired with the increase in enrollment elsewhere. The 1977 article attributed the enrollment decline in Tacoma to declining birth rates based on a lower kindergarten enrollment. It also noted

the enrollment increase in suburban districts, but lacked a critical analysis of the linkage between the district's desegregation program, the decline in Tacoma schools and the reported enrollment rise in nearby, suburban districts (Ripple, 1977). The timing of this shift that coincides with the first decade of Tacoma's desegregation efforts, makes the correlation hard to ignore.

Lastly and perhaps most notable was the reaction to one piece of a 15-part proposal submitted in 1989 as part of a district task-force to improve the school district's performance. The Schools of Choice plan received wide coverage in the *News Tribune.* Recall from the history section of this chapter that this plan would shift the district's open-enrollment policy to one of "controlled choice" that would do away with neighborhood school assignments and give families a cluster of five or six specialty schools from which they would decide to send their child, somewhat like district-wide magnet schools (Nelson, 1989c). A goal of this plan was to racially diversify all district schools, having each school mirror the racial makeup of the district. To accomplish this, the plan also proposed a racial quota for White students – limiting them to 70% of a school's enrollment. One reason behind this proposal was to better share the onus of desegregation with the White community, recognizing that Black families had borne the brunt of the responsibility during the district's desegregation history. However, this was immediately challenged by the formation of a parents group opposed to the implementation of the proposal.

This shift – or even suggestion – was kindling to the flame of rising White opposition to the district's desegregation. The decade prior had already seen the decline of White student enrollment in the district. Several months after the plan's release, a group formed to challenge the Schools of Choice proposal. The group called itself the Citizens Committee to Preserve Choice and Neighborhood Schools and vowed to "protest proposals that would change the options parents now have regarding which schools their children will attend" (Nelson, 1989a).

The committee advocated for an expansion of the district's magnet program as a way to improve racial balance across the district, but was not in favor of removing neighborhood schools or limiting choice. An article after the district's open forum to discuss this plan described the events:

> Several parents – most of them members of the newly formed Citizens Committee to Preserve Choice and Neighborhood Schools and all of them White – grilled Tacoma administrators for nearly three hours, demanding proof that such schools would improve student achievement and demanding assurance that any shuffling of neighborhood boundaries would not result in mandatory busing for their children (Nelson, 1989b).

Parents were determined to preserve the neo-liberal idea of a market-based system of education, where parents are consumers in selecting the best school for their child. Liberal ideology defends equality, yet, ironically, the committee was against this proposal that could have brought an "equal" approach to desegregation since all families would have to choose from a cluster of schools. There is also a clear distinction in what is acceptable – other children (Black children) can have a racial cap at their neighborhood schools, but "their" children must not be subject to a quota; mandatory busing (as suggested in the quote above) can be permissible but not for "their" children.

This collective, White response reflects classic White fragility, though contrary to the term, the response is not tearful or weak but quite the opposite. Liberal ideology and the dominant interests, when challenged, can organize an intentional flex of power to preserve these interests and White people's dominant position. The "fragility" is being faced with the possibility of actual interactions with students of color and with policies that would equalize funding and resources. These involved White parents knew their power and thus "demanded" proof, evidence and promises as the quote above shows. The district, seeing declining White enrollment, needed to keep White families from leaving the district altogether. Choice (open-

enrollment and not the limited choice of the cluster-schools model) was seen nationally at the time as a big factor in “woo[ing] hundreds of parents back from private schools" (Nelson, 1989c). The uproar that this Schools of Choice plan provoked revealed the fragility of the White community’s investment in creating a more equitable system. When asked to have some skin in the game, to give up some choice for greater choice for all students, White supremacy manifests through individual (and in this case, committee) actions that seek to preserve the system as is**.** Such a reaction reveals what White people are willing to give up for a more equitable society – namely, very little.

The two critical race theory themes of interest convergence and critique of liberalism point to definitive instances of racism within Tacoma’s history of school desegregation. Regardless of its viability as an approach, desegregation in Tacoma was implemented in a way that catered to White families first and foremost and this in itself is an act of racism. Liberal ideology is professed through the White people who define, enable, benefit from and maintain it.

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that race could not be a factor in school assignments, effectively dealing a blow to plaintiff cities Seattle, WA, and Louisville, KY, and other cities across the nation trying to racially balance their schools (Anonymous, 2007). This decision mirrored Tacoma’s move to steer away from prioritizing race as a factor for enrollment in the district’s open-enrollment system. The next part of my thesis brings us to present-day Tacoma with the YPAR project I conducted with current students, examining school district history and collective racialized experiences.

CHAPTER THREE: Youth Participatory Action Research with Youth Today

When people say person of color, I'm pretty sure they're referring to African Americans but I'm pretty sure, Asian, Mexican or any non-Caucasian person deserves their own category. POC is a polite way to not say Black people.

-Alexandra, in group meeting

My second research question asks: "How does the history of Tacoma's school desegregation connect to the realities for today's youth of color?" This chapter details the participatory research I did with youth and offers a link between the district's desegregation history and its present-day impacts. Critical youth studies advances the belief that youth have the capacity to analyze their situations and promote change. Engaging in youth participatory action research (YPAR) is a means to engage the naturally critical and resistant nature of adolescents in a way that rejects the patronizing approach to youth voice and moves instead towards "transformational resistance" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Transformational resistance necessitates the development of a critical consciousness that propels youth to actively, consciously address systemic injustice. Thus**,** one of my aims in this chapter is to center the voices of youth of color in my research. Additionally, it seemed essential that any investigation into experiences of desegregation in Tacoma Public Schools focus on understanding the voices of youth who are most significantly impacted by this historical process and its aftermath in today's schools. Moreover, their voices and experiences are notably absent from the historical record of desegregation in Tacoma. Accordingly, this YPAR project aimed to center the experiences of youth of color and involve them in the process of critical learning and analysis. For this second part of my study, I used both YPAR and thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) as methodologies. YPAR guided the process of data collection and the shared analysis I

did with youth participants. An inductive, thematic analysis served as an analytic method throughout the phases of data analysis.

I secured a community mini-grant from the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) which primarily funded gift card stipends for youth participants as well as nourishment for our group meetings. This grant also covered registration at the Race and Pedagogy National Conference where I co-presented with two youth participants in September 2018. This study followed guidelines by the institutional review board (IRB) and utilized youth assent and parental consent forms in confirming participation for youth participants (See Appendix B.1 and B.2 for forms used). Throughout this chapter and thesis, I anonymized any identifying details that youth shared including youth names, their school, course names as well as the names of teachers and staff to respect the privacy of those mentioned and that of the young people taking part. I do name McCarver Elementary because it is a focal point throughout this thesis – as a prominent site in Tacoma's desegregation history and as the point of connection in my relationship with the youth who participated in this research.

Youth Participants

Five youth participated in this research project. They were all rising seventh graders at one Tacoma middle school and had been enrolled in the after-school program I directed at McCarver Elementary and had been involved for varying numbers of years. Three of the young people are females, two are males. All were twelve years old at the time of signing up. All are youth of color representing different racial identities: One identifies as Pacific Islander, another as African American, two as "mixed" referring to their mixed racial identities and one as "Blasian," alluding to her Black and Asian racial makeup.

Table 3 represents a snapshot of engagement points with youth. The number of meetings represents the number of times I met with youth after they signed their assent forms (but does not include initial meetings discussing the study). The meetings included both their one-on-one interview and the group meetings we had in July through September.

Table 3. *YPAR Youth Engagement*

Participant*	Age	Number of Meetings (includes 1:1 interview)
Mariah	12	3
Sanjay	12	4
Marcus	12	5
D.J.	12	5
Alexandra	12	5
**Note:*names included are pseudonyms selected by youth to respect their privacy		

In order to center youth's voices throughout this chapter, I make a point to introduce each of the young people first, just as I started this thesis with a preface about my positionality. In the following paragraphs, I offer context about each participant and how I came to know them. I use ways they self-described in our interview and, in some cases, anecdotes from my experience with them. All youth reviewed and approved the paragraphs pertaining to them.

Mariah first joined the after-school program at McCarver in fourth grade. Her older sister was part of the middle-school phase of our community-center program and when Mariah transferred back to McCarver in 4th grade, her mom sought out our after-school program. Mariah was involved with a program at her middle school aimed at closing gaps in opportunities to youth through an equity-focused and inquiry-based learning environment. This program was offered through an elective course and this was by far her favorite class and teacher, Ms. Starr.

Mariah appreciates teachers who are strict and challenging and puts emphasis on this when talking about this class or Ms. Starr:

> My favorite class would *always* be [this elective]. Because we went on a lot of field trips. And we have like competitions, guest speakers, handshake contest. We have to check our grades every week and like we would line up in a group. Like we would line up in a group, see who has the highest.

And about Ms. Starr she says, "I have the best [elective] teacher *ever*, Ms. Starr. Um, like Ms. Starr, she is very challenging, like, she's *very* challenging. Like she doesn't like sixth graders but she will get to love you like seventh and eighth grade." Mariah says she can most be herself around her best friends which means, "being weird or goofy or [my friends] telling me, [changes voice to imitate friends] 'Stop! Stop! Just stop!' and we're all just judging each other in a funny way or stuff."

I first met Sanjay when she was in third grade and asked to join the after-school program. Sanjay was on our program's first student council as a third-grade representative. Sanjay is mature for her age and highly independent. She makes and sells slime, a tactile fad among young people, on an online site and reported to me that she was communicating with an agent on her own to try to get a book of poems published. She is most excited for advanced drumline – she's one, if not the only, incoming 7th grader in this advanced class. She talks about getting in trouble for tapping on tables in class: "I tap a lot because, you know, drumline cadences get stuck in my head and drumline is a favorite of mine." Sanjay self-describes as an activist, a goofball and someone who likes to talk about serious issues.

> Um, I'm a very, I would say, kind of ambiverted kid [a mix of intro - and extro-version]. But mostly introvert. I don't try to talk to anyone that seems like they'll cause me drama or give me a hard time in middle school...I just want this to be a good time in my life.

Marcus became part of the after-school program as an incoming fifth grader after a recommendation from his fourth-grade teacher. I remember his surprise performance at a talent

show when he amazed students and staff alike with his ability to rap ad-lib. These days, he's trying out for the basketball team again and has an admirable growth mindset. He got cut last year and does not seem to mind people telling him he is too short.

> I know imma get taller, I've gotten taller...And like everyone's sayin', "You're too small, stop playing basketball and that." But, like, the greatest basketball players are small too...And honestly I wasn't mad that I didn't make the team. 'Cause I'm like, "Michael Jordan didn't make the varsity team when he was in high school and he was still a good player."

He is also excited to be a Mentor to 6th graders at school this year and was selected for this leadership opportunity after being recommended by many of his teachers in 6th grade. He talks openly about his GPA and what GPA it will take to get into some of his universities of choice. "If you want to go to Harvard, you have to get all As. But I could go to like Seattle Pacific University, U-Dub [University of Washington], Duke. 'Cause I want to go to a school where you can also play sports…" He is also in a program at the school that infuses movement with learning to maximize student engagement in learning. He attends one to two fitness classes – from swimming at a nearby community pool to martial arts – interspersed with his classes.

D.J. also joined the after-school program at the start of his fifth grade year. Being on the basketball team was his favorite part of sixth grade. He shares a highlight from the past season, his first game when they beat another team on that team's home turf. "We blew the-the team that we played out. We blew them out… I played good, 'cause I had good points and I had- and we was doing- we was passing the ball well. Running the plays right." He talks about playing for Duke or UCLA in the future and wants to play in the NBA. He has a first language other than English and while he's very social around friends, he is much more quiet when around me and in our group meetings. I got to drive D.J. around during the summer to and from our meetings and had a chance to talk with him more, one-on-one. Since he did not share as much context about

himself in his interview, I will share an anecdote about him here. My favorite memory of D.J. this summer was when I was spending time at the school's summer program during a fitness period. We were playing a game of speedball where a soft, palm-sized ball was thrown swiftly between team members, each team trying to get the ball down their side of the field and into the end-zone without being dropped or intercepted. D.J. was trying to stop a high-flying pass from being caught by the opposing team. He did not have a way of jumping to block it so, ingeniously, he threw up his water bottle which hit the ball mid-air and threw it off its course, rendering the pass incomplete. Coaches, youth, everyone laughed at his wit. There was not a rule against this, of course, so the game continued.

Alexandra joined the after-school program in third grade when she started at McCarver and was referred to the program through a partner organization. She tells me she was elected as the 7th grade representative for the coming year and has a plan to run as co-president at the end of this year. She is also in the equity-focused elective class and says it was one of her favorite classes along with her favorite teacher, Ms. Starr. In fact, it was this elective class that encouraged her to run for 7th grade representative after she had to give a speech about all the reasons why she did not want to run and her classmates gave her reasons why she should run. She describes herself as "a kinda funny person" and often leans into the recording device during our interview to speak directly to it like reporting, "having some technical difficulties, please stand by" when my recorder battery dies. When I have to step out to take a call from her mom, she proceeds to tell an off-the-cuff fictional story that mixes horror and humor which lasts about ten minutes. Here's how it starts:

> To keep you two entertained, I would like to tell you a story. There was this one time I was walking down the street, and do you know what happened? I was walking [laughs] [I step out of the room to talk on the phone – Alexandra still talking into recorder] I was walking down the street and I saw this man and he looked at me and I looked at him. And

> then, he put a bag over my head [Gasps]. He grabbed my arms [Inhales] and he slammed my head fifteen times onto his car window until it broke. [gasps for breath] I don't know why [the window] takes so long to break. But anyway…

She's still talking as I come back to the room. She laughs when I tell her it was a ten-minute story and tells me later, "yeah, put it on an audiobook or whatever."

Participant recruitment.

In the late spring of 2018, I approached former students who had engaged in the after-school program I led at McCarver Elementary and who were then then sixth and seventh graders at one Tacoma middle school. I visited the school several times during lunch to connect with youth and gauge interest in this project. I used a written assent form as a guide to talk through project objectives and time commitments. I also reached out to the families of interested youth and met in person with the parents or guardians to receive consent for participation. Participating youth came together for a 90-minute group meeting in early July (Group Meeting 1) to build community, learn about the importance of informed consent and define what they wanted to learn or understand relating to my initial research question (See Table 4 for a timeline of group meetings).

Data Collection

I describe my data collection process in three phrases to clarify the different parts of my approach to research. Phase One involved one-on-one interviews with youth participants. Phase Two centered on group meetings with youth where we did shared analysis of themes from interview data and learned about Tacoma's school desegregation history. Phase Three involved my later, meta-analysis of the full dataset. I detail the three phases in the following sub-sections. Table 4 highlights the three phases within my timeline for data collection.

Participant interviews – phase one.

In order to understand how the history of Tacoma's school desegregation connects to the experiences of youth of color today, I first wanted to understand the perspectives of youth of color in today's schools, specifically around racism, including experiences of discrimination, sense of belonging, connection with teachers, and perceptions of the racial makeup of their school. These interviews also laid the groundwork for the YPAR work we did by producing data that we would later co-analyze and build off of in discussion. Interviews also afforded youth participants the opportunity to vocalize their thinking about the topics in advance of the group meetings where we dove deeper into some themes from the interviews.

Youth participated in a one-on-one, semi-structured interview about their educational experiences and, in particular, their experiences of racism as youth of color**.** Each youth participant took part in one semi-structured interview with me that was between 60 and 90 minutes long. The interview questions were divided into four sections: General Warm Up, School Experiences, Race-Specific and Looking Forward. The semi-structured interview guide included open-ended main questions as well as follow-up and probing questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). A full list of interview questions used can be found in Appendix B.3. All youth interviews were conducted within the first three weeks of July, between our initial group meeting and our second group meeting. Each participant was interviewed at a preferred and convenient location including a private meeting room in a coffee shop, a break room at a parent's workplace and in private rooms at a neighborhood community center.

YPAR meetings – phase two.

Group meetings with youth made up what I refer to as Phase Two of this study. Participating youth took part in the YPAR study over the course of two months and four group

meetings. Meetings took place at a local community center and in the UW Tacoma library. These meetings involved two main focus areas – shared analysis of prioritized data from youth interviews and historical learning about the history of Tacoma's desegregation. In Group Meeting 4, youth attending (Alexandra, D.J. and Marcus) elected to continue meeting to work towards a goal they identified. I explain this more in Chapter Four in the Youth's PAR Project section. These later meetings continued into mid-September and, although a continuation of YPAR, are not referenced or analyzed in this thesis due to the time restraints of this study.

Table 4. *Timeline of Data Collection and YPAR Focus*

Date	Data Collection	YPAR Focus
May/June	Youth recruitment	Youth assent and parental consent forms reviewed
July	Group Meeting 1	Team-building. What is informed consent?
	1:1 Interviews	Youth pre-thinking about topics, data-gathering for YPAR meetings
	My preliminary analysis of interviews	
August *Meta-analysis throughout month*	Group Meeting 2	*Shared analysis* of preliminary & added themes from interviews
	Group Meeting 3	Continued *shared analysis* + Learning about history of desegregation in Tacoma
	Group Meeting 4	What have we learned? What do we still want to know? How do we want to do that?
September	*Meta-analysis*	(Support of youth continuing to meet.) How do we increase the number of black teachers at our school? What is the importance of teachers of color for youth of color?*
October-December	*Meta-analysis*	November: Findings from meta-analysis shared with youth
Note	Points of analysis marked in italics. *For explanation of youth-identified YPAR project, see section in Chapter Four	

Phase One

Phase Two

Phase Three

Meta-analysis – phase three.

My meta-analysis refers to the integrated analysis I did of the full dataset, including data from youth interviews and group meetings, specifically analyzing experiences that youth voiced and our shared analysis of data. I also analyzed my role and influences as a co-researcher. This phase is primarily one of data analysis since the data had been collected through prior phases. Thus, I explore my rationale and process in greater detail under the Data Analysis section of meta-analysis below.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that Braun and Clark (2006) cite as a "rarely-acknowledged yet widely-used qualitative analytic method within and beyond [their discipline of] psychology" (p. 4). As a method to name, analyze and present patterns within data, thematic analysis involves six phases: 1) familiarize yourself with your data 2) generate initial codes 3) search for themes 4) review themes 5) define and name themes and 6) produce the report (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 35). I applied this iterative process throughout the three phases of this study, each involving a data-set that built upon prior data. I moved in and out of these phases throughout my research, sometimes flowing from a later step back to re-familiarizing myself with data, especially as new data was generated from youth analysis in the data-analysis process.

I developed rigor in my analysis through engaging in reflexivity throughout my data collection including ongoing consultations with my thesis committee who provided guidance and alternative interpretations. Additionally, adequacy in evidence through purposeful design of data collection and involving youth to interpret parts of the dataset strengthened the quality of this research (Morrow, 2005).

Participant interview analysis – phase one.

I recorded and later transcribed youth interviews for coding and further analysis (see Appendix B.4 for full transcripts). Interview transcripts were loaded into Express Scribe for transcription purposes. I used inductive thematic coding procedures to create 18 initial codes and identify preliminary themes. I created a thematic concept map that visually represented the ways codes related to one another. This map produced four overarching themes and related sub-themes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Later, I grouped coded-text together by theme and sub-theme (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011).

Table 5. *Data Collection and Analysis*

Phase	Data Collection	Analysis
1	One-on-one semi-structured youth interviews	Preliminary thematic analysis of interviews
2	YPAR Group meetings	Focused on shared analysis of prioritized themes and themes students added
3	My meta-analysis	My analysis of full data set

YPAR meetings and shared analysis – phase two.

Phase Two involved young people co-analyzing data from Phase One and learning about the history of Tacoma's school desegregation. This took place within Group Meetings 2 and 3. Group meetings were audio-recorded for analysis and I transcribed key sections of these meetings that were relevant to my research question (primarily from Group Meetings 2 and 3).

I used my preliminary analysis from Phase One to prioritize select themes to bring to youth for further analysis. Due to limited youth experience with this process and the scope of this study, this initial step of my prioritizing of themes provided scaffolding for the shared data analysis process. I identified eight themes and sub-themes that were most salient to my research

question (Buetow, 2010) and had the greatest discrepancy amongst youth responses (such as their thinking about equality and whether or not White students were treated differently). I created a one-page overview for each of these eight themes which included anonymous quotes from youth that had been coded under each theme (See Appendix B.5.2 for the data packet from this meeting). Themes I brought to students included "words used to describe race" and "White students treated differently, or not." (See Table 6 for list of themes). This was the data that youth participants reviewed and referenced during our shared analysis.

Table 6. *Prioritized Themes for Phase Two Shared Analysis*

Themes Identified for Shared Analysis in Group Meetings	
Themes that I identified	**1. Words used to describe race** **2. One racist teacher?** 3. Racial make-up of school 4. How you define segregation 5. Initial thinking of integration 6. Ideas of equality 7. White students treated differently, or not 8. Ideas for change
Themes/topics youth added	**9. Mixed kids/Race assumption** 10. LGBTQ+/homosexuality 11. Talking Black/code-switching 12. Cultural appropriation

Note: Themes selected by youth to discuss for shared analysis are in boldface.

Our first meeting focusing on data analysis took place in early August (Group Meeting 2). All five youth were present. After reviewing with youth the eight themes I had prioritized, I gave them the opportunity to add their own topics for analysis that may have been left off the list, but that came up in their interviews. Sanjay initially voiced two themes to add ("mixed kids/race assumption" and LGBTQ+ youth). Alexandra helped her clarify what she meant by "mixed kids" offering the term "race assumption," referring to when others assume your race. Throughout the course of our analysis, Sanjay suggested we add two more themes (code-

switching and cultural appropriation). Not all themes suggested were themes that came up in youth interviews; rather, they included themes that came up in our group discussion that Sanjay synthesized into a phrase to add to our list for future learning and discussion. With the eight themes I prioritized and the two initially added, youth voted for their top three choices and reported out their votes. The top three themes with the most votes included two themes I had identified and one of the youth-voiced themes. The selected themes are noted in boldface in Table 5. Due to timing and youth interest, we only analyzed three themes together. I gave youth the opportunity to continue analyzing data from their interviews, but all youth preferred to learn about the district history. We analyzed two of the selected themes in Group Meeting 2 and the third theme in Group Meeting 3.

Our team met again in early August to do a shared analysis of the third selected theme and also to engage in group learning around the local history of racial desegregation in Tacoma schools (Group Meeting 3). For this historical learning, youth selected from a pile of photocopied newspaper articles spanning the early 1960s through the late 1990s. They read one to two articles, took notes and reported out on key points of the article. From there, I shared an overview of my historical findings in the form of a PowerPoint, reviewing key trends across the decades from the 1960s through the 1990s. We paused after each decade to answer questions and hear comments.

After this meeting, I gave youth the option to step away or continue meeting. We had completed the first part of the YPAR work involving the interview, shared analysis and historical learning and were shifting into the youth-driven action part of the research. All but Mariah were in attendance and, at this time, D.J. and Marcus expressed interest in stepping away to prepare for the school year ahead. However, upon following up with their families about the end of the

original study, both parents seemed intent on the youth continuing to participate and, as a result, both D.J. and Marcus continued to attend future meetings. I explore group engagement dynamics in greater depth in my Limitations section in Chapter Four.

During the second half of August and into September, our group met about once a week to focus on a youth-identified goal. For the scope of this thesis, Phase Two of my analysis ended with Group Meeting 4 in late August where youth identified this project. However, I continued to meet with youth two more times to support their learning and action towards their project, which I explain in the Discussion in Chapter Four.

Meta-analysis – phase three.

Phase Three of my analysis involved examination of my full data set in order to refine themes for analysis. The full dataset was made up of data from youth interviews, the four YPAR meetings, and, particularly, data from the shared analysis of the three selected themes. My meta-analysis of group discourse and youth participants' expressed thinking about race and racism helped me refine themes from my preliminary analysis. This meta-analysis that I did after my YPAR meetings with youth allowed me to speak back to the first part of my study and make connections between the history of Tacoma's school desegregation and the experiences of youth today.

In this meta-analysis phase, I used coded-interview transcriptions, select-transcriptions from group meetings and my notes and reflections to re-familiarize myself with my full dataset, returning to an early stage of thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). From there, I refined my initial concept map of four themes to one that had five larger themes and related sub-themes (This refined concept map can be found in the table in Appendix B.6). I further refined these five large themes using saliency analysis to highlight five key sub-themes that I present and analyze

in the following section (see Table 7 for a list of the 5 sub-themes of focus). I selected these themes to expand upon because of their saliency to my research question and for their interest to youth. Saliency analysis enhances thematic analysis by revealing data that is not necessarily recurrent but that advances understanding due to its importance and relevancy (Buetow, 2010). I shared these sub-themes (my findings) with youth in November 2018.

In the next section, I analyze in detail selected sub-themes that emerged from the full data set (which I will hereon refer to as, simply, themes). I further explain how I prioritized the selected themes and proceed to expand upon them by centering – and, in some cases, critiquing – the perspectives of young people.

Findings: Analyzing the Racial Experiences of Youth of Color

And like, um, I remember J. and A. [two youth of color], they were like talking in class. And she told them like to stop talking. And they're like, "How come all the kids in the back are White and they're talking and they don't ever get in trouble?" And she's like, "can you stop make [sic] your theories or you can go the office." And so they just went to the office because, like, you know…. *-Alexandra*

My second research question asks: "How does the history of Tacoma's desegregation connect to the reality for today's youth of color?" In order to draw these connections (which I do in Chapter Four) I needed to first answer: "What are the realities for youth of color today with regards to race?" My meta-analysis of the full data set revealed five main themes and more than 25 sub-themes. A full list of these themes and sub-themes can be found in Appendix B.6**.** While the parameters of this thesis do not allow me to go into detail on all the identified themes, I focused on themes that were most relevant to my research question. I also selected themes that youth had much to say about, thus I selected the theme of "race assumption" for meta-analysis – the youth-identified theme from our shared analysis that youth voted as one of three to analyze as a group. In fact, youth insight from all three themes that youth selected for shared analysis are

explored in this section (For reference to the three themes youth selected in an earlier-stage of analysis, see the boldface themes in Table 6). Notes from the theme "words used to describe race" are discussed under the theme "race assumption" as there was much overlap between the two themes in our shared analysis.

I focus on the following five themes: youth's concerns about a teacher widely perceived as racist, "race assumption," favoritism towards White students, notions of equality and youth's ideas for change (See Table 7 for a list of the five themes). The themes I detail in this chapter stood out for their connection to youth's experience around race or for their interest to youth in our group meetings. There are not always definitive lines between these themes and I make connections between the themes in my analysis. I anonymized all teachers, other named adults and specific courses mentioned.

Table 7. *Five Salient Themes for Analysis*

Five Themes for Analysis
1. **One racist teacher?** 2. **"Race assumption"*** 3. Favoritism towards White students 4. Ideals of equality 5. Ideas for change
Note: Boldface themes represent themes that youth co-analyzed in Phase Two. *The theme "race assumption" includes overlapping data from the "words used to describe race" theme that youth co-analyzed in Phase Two.

While youth played a role in the earlier analysis of the data, they were also a part of the data. I share my findings in this section and also my meta-analysis, reflecting on youth quotes and dialogue, not as a way to discredit their voices but to offer a critical lens on the ways

systemic racism impacts youth today. This analysis helped me to draw connections between the experiences shared by youth and the district's desegregation history, which is outlined in Chapter Four.

My findings indicate that the experiences of youth of color today are unsurprisingly varied and seem to fall along a spectrum of critical consciousness development. This ranged from youth being notably un-critical and positive about their experiences to speaking unprompted about systemic concepts including White fragility, racism and code-switching. All youth in this study revealed contradictions in some aspect of their thinking or reasoning, revealing the nascency of some of the more critical lines of thinking for youth. Some beliefs and mindsets expressed may also have been manifestations of internalized oppression as a result of consciously or unconsciously experiencing racism in everyday life.

One racist teacher?

All five young people mentioned explicitly or implicitly that one teacher at their school was especially racist. Whereas D.J., Mariah and Sanjay had direct experiences with this racist behavior; others brought it up as something they heard about. Alexandra, D.J. and Marcus did not talk about other examples of negative experiences related to race outside of this teacher. The theme is posed as a question because there was discrepancy in participants' thinking about racism. Some youth seemed to think the problem at their school was this one racist teacher, where Sanjay in particular considered the fact that it might be rooted in a larger problem at the school and in society.

The young people's fixation on one racist teacher, Ms. Steven, was one of the initial themes from one-on-one interviews that I brought to discuss with youth in our shared analysis meeting. This was also one of the three themes selected by youth for our earlier, shared analysis.

In interviews, all five youth mentioned Ms. Steven, unprompted, when talking about their experience the past year. Some of the youth mentioned this at the start of our interview as a response to my opening question: "Tell me how this year has been for you. What classes did you take?" This was before we began explicit questions about race. Youth mentioned negative experiences with this teacher, including being sent out of class or seeing someone sent out for the same actions White youth were doing such as tapping on the desk, talking about race or being perceived to not be doing their work.

Sanjay mentioned having "hardcore evidence" to these instances of racism and proceeded to share details from a Trump poster hung in this teacher's classroom to specific interactions where she felt she was treated differently because of her race. Three out of the five youth did not talk about other examples of negative experiences related to race, even when prompted, suggesting that their negative racial experiences were bound up in this one classroom and with this one teacher.

Mariah was one of the young people who talked about Ms. Steven in response to my first interview question asking, in general, about her sixth-grade year. She shared her experience in Ms. Steven's class:

> And, with my [history] class, we had a White teacher and, like, with one of my experience, like let's say, a White boy or a White girl was talking and like we were – us people of color – were sitting by them. We would be the ones getting yelled at. And, like, if we tried to tell her that we weren't talking, she would like send us out of the classroom. And [pause] like that happens very often in that class. And I've gotten in trouble in that class for like no reason but – that's one of my experiences and, yeah.

Mariah's language showed the climate that existed in this classroom, one that revealed the dynamic of "us people of color" vs. "her." Mariah named race when describing the teacher and other students. For Mariah, race is present in all these interactions. Mariah went on to share how once she had called this teacher racist and was sent to the office for it. Her parents made her

write a letter of apology, which she felt conflicted about. She felt she should have apologized but also felt Ms. Steven deserved it. The fact that she felt she "should" have apologized speaks to one-way expectations about respect often upheld in schools – youth must show unwavering respect to educators because they are adults, even when such respect is not shown to them. D.J. also described a regular occurrence in Ms. Steven's class and how he felt about it:

> Like Ms. Steven, my history teacher, like she'll pick on all the Black people in the class and I didn't really like that 'cause like she picked on me too. And my friends. And she will - she will always mess with our class, just to go to the office or ISS [in-school suspension] and that was the reason why it was – because it was – kind of bad.

D.J. did not mention the race of his teacher, but he did note the race of students he felt were being targeted. He ascribed affect to the impact of Ms. Steven's actions – "I didn't really like that." Yet as D.J. shared, Ms. Steven was the only reason behind his negative experiences of race at school.

Since we had the opportunity to talk about this theme as a group, youth reviewed anonymized data with quotes from their interviews where they had talked about experiences with this teacher. Youth knew that Ms. Steven was not going to return the coming school year. I posed the starting question: "She's leaving, so are problems tied around race going to go away?"

Responses varied from "probably, yeah" to "maybe" (Marcus) to "it could get worse" (Sanjay). Not all youth answered the question directly, even when I asked it at least three different points: "Is the problem rooted in her [Ms. Steven]?" "Is there just one [racist teacher] or is this part of a bigger thing going on?" Sanjay focused on the fact that there were other "unknown" entities, new incoming sixth graders who could be "racist" and other teachers who might step in to the fill the void of overt racist behavior with Ms. Steven's departure. Marcus brought up examples to suggest that the problems might not disappear, but could surface in a different form, as if the torch of racism might be passed from Ms. Steven to someone new.

Sanjay mentioned another teacher or new students "taking on that kind of role" and "bringing back all her spirit [referring to Ms. Steven]." All youth were mixed in their responses and they built off one another's answers in responding to one another. "Yes," they felt, Ms. Steven was the problem, but the concluding sentiment was uncertainty about whether the negative experiences would go away with her not returning.

Sanjay:	'Cause next year a new wave of students are coming in, so maybe some of them are racist or something and they're going to carry on the racism Ms. Steven could have taken away.... But, like, racism is always going to be a thing in the school, I feel. There's always going to be the low-key bias staff –
Marcus:	Or students –
S:	Yeah, or students. That are like, yeah. Students are also problems, but it's really not just staff. It's your peers too. Another thing is that, Ms. Hall. I've heard a lot of stories about her.

Sanjay offered a more systemic understanding that "racism is always going to be a thing in the school," suggesting a recognition of the prevalence of racism not only in school but in society. Yet her comment did not gain much traction and other youth didn't build off of it.

The shared analysis of this theme included a few examples of other racist instances such as Marcus mentioning how an unknown young person whispered "White power" at a Black Lives Matter rally last year. These other examples of racism suggest that the problem would not diminish with Ms. Steven's departure, though there seemed to be a reluctance among youth participants to make this assertion. This could be because being an authoritative voice on race (or such a voice in this group) still felt risky. While youth all knew each other, our dynamic as a group was still very new (this was only the second time we met altogether). Also, youth did not seem as comfortable disagreeing with one another – and this was evident, for example, as D.J. remained quiet when Sanjay, a stronger voice, stated something that may have contradicted with what I knew D.J. had shared in his interview. When only a few voices engaged in a particular

thread of conversation, it was unclear whether youth were uncomfortable disagreeing with one another or whether they were considering new points of view – likely a mix of these factors and other reasons beyond my awareness.

"Race assumption…that's a microaggression."

Alexandra offered the statement, "Race assumption…that's a microaggression" while helping to name a common theme that Sanjay was trying to explain in our second group meeting. I had asked for additional themes to add before we voted on which three themes we would focus on for our shared analysis. Sanjay brought up the idea of multiracial youth and their experiences around racial identity. "Mixed kids. You know, actual mixed kids, but no one believes them?" Sanjay voiced the challenge that multiracial youth face in feeling they have to justify their identity. When we analyzed the theme of "race assumption" in Group Meeting 3, only four of the five youth were present – Mariah was not there. Our discussion about "race assumption" revealed contradictions within young people's thinking when it came to assuming someone's race. Alexandra, Sanjay and Marcus were frustrated by negative stereotypes but also talked about relying on them to categorize people. These three youth talked about their frustrations being labeled without regard to how they identify, yet all youth present spent much time debating the specific percentage "Black" that a young person had to be to count as a person of color.

When I asked how you find out someone's race, both Alexandra and Sanjay responded simultaneously that you find out by asking the person. When probed on whether you can tell someone's race by looking at them, the answers were more varied. Marcus replied that he does not assume people's race. Sanjay talked about a game she and her mom play when they are by themselves where they guess the race(s) of people they see. Alexandra and Marcus felt that this was "okay" as long as the people being talked about don't hear you.

Alexandra, Marcus and Sanjay shared examples of people assuming their race. Sanjay said she did not mind people assuming her race; what bothered her was people ascribing negative qualities to that race. “I’ve had several people think I’m Mexican. There’s nothing wrong with being Mexican, but it’s more irritating when they put like a, something like ‘ghetto’ or put like a slur behind it or something.” Marcus said he felt confused when an adult came up to him in a store and asked if he was Egyptian and then walked away when Marcus said ‘no.’ Sanjay gets irritated when people question her race and then follow up by asking, “are you sure?” “Yes I’m sure!” she said, mocking the indignation she feels when questioned about her identity. “They make me feel attacked.”

I asked youth to think about what leads people to think they can speculate someone’s race, and this led to a discussion of stereotypes. Sanjay talked about how you can generalize how people look in an interaction with Marcus:

Sanjay:	I want to expand on the stereotype thing.
Me:	Yeah.
Marcus:	I want to too.
S:	It’s not really a stereotype but, like, generalized how people look. Um, so, kind of like, for instance I could say, “hey Marcus. Marcus’ Indian,” you know.
M:	Whassup!
S:	And it’s kind of like, it’s like an assumption thing. ‘Cause like, he does- he *does* look Indian. You know, I’m just going to say that. Like, slightly, as if he had some type-some like that inside of him. But, um-
Me:	What do you mean by that?
S:	‘Cause, like, for instance, people just judge on appearance most of the time, like just quick judgement. Um, so, if I said, “Indian. Marcus’ Indian,” you know. Cause he looks a little Indian. So I’m going to say that. Well, I’m not *going* to but I’m going to, for instance. But, yeah. Um, and then, so I feel like that’s kind of where it comes from and they can kind assume stuff like that. ‘Cause, like, you look like the nationality they’re guessing. Or you *might* look like the nationality you’re guessing. So they’re going to say that it’s that.
Me:	But when you- when you- say that you *look* like, where are you guys drawing that from? Is it ‘cause you’ve been to India or like—
S:	like, that’s what I’m saying like I don’t, I don’t know.

Me:	But where do you think people grab these assumptions?
S:	TV shows and stuff
Me:	Yeah
S:	Or like, people in the real world
Alexandra:	Or like most -
Me:	Magazines. Or, I mean, like, media, right?
A:	No like most-most Mexican people like just have this – okay, now I sound like a horrible person. But you just have a feeling.

All youth present were largely unsure of where the root of stereotypes lied, reflected in Sanjay being the only one to respond. She suggested stereotypes came from TV and people in the "real world." Alexandra added, "you just have a feeling," suggesting that stereotypes are an internal or gut understanding. Sanjay initially seemed confident making bold statements, using Marcus as an example and talking about the game she plays with her mom, though, when questioned about her beliefs, she began qualifying her statements: "Or, you *might* look like –." Later, when trying to explain herself, she said: "I wish you can go into my head. I don't know how to put it into words without sounding evil." Sanjay's willingness to place stereotypes on others suggests a form of internalized racism, where those oppressed by society may enact oppressive behavior or perpetuate racist thinking as a result of being immersed in racism. Even with critical thinking skills at various stages of development amongst this group of youth, Alexandra, Marcus and Sanjay embody oppressive and liberated ways of thinking by both critiquing and taking part in stereotyping. D.J. was notably quiet during the shared-analysis, even after multiple invitations to join the conversation. The reason behind this remains unclear – as with earlier, this may be because he disagreed, had not thought about the issues being discussed, group dynamics I was unaware of or something altogether different.

The theme of "race assumption" also opened up conversation to the meaning of the term, *people of color*. Three youth affirmed that people of color was a code-word for talking about Black people.

Sanjay: When people say people of color, I'm pretty sure they're referring to African Americans, but I also feel like Asians, Mexicans or any non-Caucasian person deserves their own category. 'Cause, like, people of color is just a polite way not to say, like, Black people…

Marcus: That's what I think too

DJ: Mhm.

M: But I think, when I think of colored, I think they only meant African American or mixed people, but they didn't mean like other types of people like Mexican. But like they had signs that said White people but they also had signs that said White, colored but there wasn't any Mexican, Asian and all that. It was just, colored.

Marcus used the word "colored" and that did not raise alarm with other youth. In one-on-one interviews, Alexandra used this word too, but in a way that seemed more like another form of the phrase people of color by saying "colored people." In our shared analysis, youth looked at anonymized phrases of the words they had used to describe race, words like "caramel" as well as "colored," and the consensus was that the words they had all used were okay because they did not have negative undertones, like the word *minority*, which is often equated with inferiority.

Alexandra chimed in when asked her thoughts about the meaning of person of color: "I mostly know they mean Black person. I don't know how." Alexandra brings up this gut feeling that she mentioned in her individual interview. She often voiced a feeling that something was right or wrong but did not feel she had the words to explain why. This came up when talking about her desire to have more Black teachers at her school. She could not vocalize why, she just said it did not feel right. I explore this more in the "ideas for change" theme.

As the dialogue above highlights, youth present did not feel like "people of color" was an inclusive phrase, or that it was often not used that way. It surprised me that the group was in agreement in their critique of the word person of color. When I say people of color and hear it used (mostly by adults), I understand it to be a commonly preferred term for talking about a non-White individual or group such as, "there was a large number of *people of color* at the meeting."

Distinct from the youth's critique, I have heard this term criticized when it is used as a way of masking the specific racial identities, especially when trying to get away with something by mis-representing a diverse audience with such a blanket phrase as people of color. An example would be an imagined article that interviewed a number of women of color about experiences around race where it was later revealed to have only interviewed Asian and Latina women. The term people of color can be a misrepresentative way to imply greater racial representation than exists. Youth's skepticism about the term shows their critical attentiveness and how they often listen for what is being implied or not said as much as what is being said. It also underscores the need to seek out the input of youth, since youth are often on the vanguard of cultural shifts. Perhaps the phrase, person of color, will not linger in the common vernacular if it is not one that youth identify with.

Youth wrapped up the conversation of race assumption by talking about what qualifies someone as a person of color. They tossed around percentage that made someone Black or a person of color. The group settled on a 30% minimum of someone's person-of-color makeup, deemed by Sanjay to be: "a good amount." She went on: "The majority of you doesn't need to be Black. But if you're like 0.2% Black, you don't, I feel, like personally … you don't count as a person of color." D.J. brought up examples of specific youth who were mixed-race (mostly Black and White) and whether they appeared Black or not. When I probed into the rigidity of their percentage, Marcus and Sanjay shifted to the reasoning that it is difficult to prove one's race and that you should not have to prove.

Sanjay:	Like, some people are like, "you're Black? Prove it." You know? So, I feel like with those physical appearances, I feel like, you know, kinky curls and all that. It would be more believable...
Marcus:	Like you were saying when I came in [from the bathroom]. Like, tight curls and stuff. You said, uh, like, "If you're Black, prove it." Like how would you prove it?

S: That's the thing with those kind of people. They're like, "prove it" and you're like, "I don't know how. How do you want me to prove it.?" And they're like, "I don't know."
M: How you're going to prove?
S: And like, why does it even matter?

Here, there seemed to be a different dynamic for those on the inside (or members of a certain racial group) and those on the outside. On the inside, in this case amongst youth of color, it seemed to be a sensible discussion for youth to debate what percentage of their racial makeup qualified someone as a person of color. This discussion echoed that of historical, racist laws such as the "one-drop" rule which designated any person with so much as "one-drop" of non-White heritage would count as a person of color and therefore barred from such rights as citizenship and the right to vote (Davis, n.d.). On the other hand, Marcus and Sanjay seemed to have a different reaction to having to prove one's identity to those on the outside, or as Sanjay deemed, "those type of people," likely referring to those who would assume your race and not take your word on your identity. Interestingly, in this discussion, Alexandra, D.J., Marcus and Sanjay enacted the same sort of exclusionary, oppressive thinking they critiqued, not making the connection to the broader forms of oppression they are feeling from the outside.

Favoritism towards White students.

That White youth are treated differently – and more favorably – than youth of color, was a sentiment shared by Alexandra, Mariah and Sanjay in interviews. Mariah and Sanjay, had recent examples to support their claim and experiences in school that solidified this belief for them and even hardened feelings for Mariah of never being good enough. Both these young people seemed to accept this favoritism towards White students as the norm and spoke about it with conviction to this belief. For example, Mariah shared a memory from elementary school:

Mariah: Um, I went to Jackson also. But at McCarver, I felt equal at McCarver.

> But at Jackson, um, I had this one teacher, Ms. Vasquez, and I felt like, like she would, like, she would love the Black like– not the Black girls – the White girls. They were her class pet and stuff. Or, I don't know. And that was second grade. But yeah.
>
> Me: Did you always have that attitude, like "I'm used to it"? Or have you felt different ways about it different times?
>
> M: So, I went to McCarver [in] Kindergarten, first grade, and then in second grade I went to Jackson. And then in third grade I went to Jackson and then I came back in fourth grade. So since I was used to it at Jackson, when I came back, I had a-I had Ms. Mason and she was a Black teacher so I didn't really experience anything wrong with that. But, fifth grade I had Ms. Ely. She was kind of like, liked the White kids more too so, I just had to get used to it since I experienced it in second grade, in third grade.

Mariah talked about these deeply-seated experiences from years' prior that impact her view of teachers and class environments today. "If it's just like that [that things aren't going to change], I just go on about my day or. Sometimes I feel emotional or I go cry to Ms. Starr or something and she'll try to cheer me up. Stuff like that. That's how I move on. And like not care. Cause, that's just how it is." Sanjay shared a similar experience and the impact it had on her.

> When that teacher, Ms. Steven, kind of put me down, I was like [makes sound of balloon deflating.] And, another thing is, I have [a] really good grade in that class. and, um-uh-she-there's a 100% club and I try so hard to get "exceeding" on all of my things [a way of grading that is higher than "meeting expectations"] just a little bit so I can hold it against her just in case she tries to say I don't have good, and I'd just be like:"Actually…" And so, I work really hard on all of my projects in that class. And I do put a lot of color and a lot work she doesn't have to ask for. I do put it on there. When I see this kid who has an A minus, and it seems like a very minor difference, but if he's White, you know, she's like, 'Oh okay,' you know [White student], you have the best grades in this class, I'm like [purses lips, scrunches face into annoyed look]. It really makes me – it puts me down a little. I don't like feeling inferior.

Sanjay prides herself on her intelligence and noted in her interview that this was something that has been affirmed by past teachers. In this quote, she implicitly noted the lack of affirmation from this teacher, despite Sanjay's "exceeding" of expectations. Sanjay also seemed to temper her words; she started to say, "it really makes me–" but changes to "it puts me down a little." She perhaps felt that in front of an adult – and a White adult at that – she had to regulate her words

and not be too emotional for fear of not being taken seriously. This suggests implicit societal messaging that many people of color – and females of color in particular – learn to shoulder in order to avoid the stereotype of the angry woman of color.

Alexandra offered an explanation as to why White students are treated differently but don't say anything about it, suggesting that it is because of White youth's lack of direct experience with racism. "They may not see the problem in what Ms. Steven is saying," she said, because of the reality that White youth do not really know what racism feels like. Here, Alexandra shows a strong ability for empathy and putting herself in others' position – in this case, the position of White youth who do not have personal experiences with racism and therefore do not recognize the harm caused by a teacher's racist actions. Perhaps her empathy and tendency to rationalize the oppressive and complicit behavior of others may be a way she copes with experiences of racism.

D.J. and Marcus felt that White youth are not treated differently than youth of color. Marcus expressed that all youth are treated equally and said he knows this from having White peers in his class. While D.J. acknowledged that Black youth were treated differently in the history class described in the "one racist teacher" theme, he said that White youth did not have a different experience at school, in general. D.J. ascribed all the racist things that happened to the one history teacher. D.J. and Marcus' limited awareness about the prevalence of racism in this theme may suggest nascent critical thinking skills. Since critical thinking skills are import precursors to critical consciousness development, it's likely linked to D.J. and Marcus' emerging critical consciousness (Watts, 2003).

While we did not discuss this theme explicitly in our shared analysis, discussion of differential treatment did come up in our analysis about the theme, "words used to talk about

race" from Group Meeting 2. I asked youth if they wanted their teachers to acknowledge their race as opposed to being colorblind to youth's racial identities. I asked: "Do you feel like it's important for teachers to recognize your race? And, if so, are there words you want non-POC [people of color] to use to describe you?" I share this thread of conversation here because it connects to the differential treatment that many young people noted and the discussion explored entry-point for solutions.

All five youth expressed that they did not want their teachers to recognize their race. Alexandra shared her fears in her response to my question: "No, because what if they're racist? What if they give all the White kids the attention?" When probed about whether they have had experiences with teachers positively validating their racial identity, Marcus brought up another teacher who he felt did that. Marcus' example was a teacher who he felt "acknowledge[d] every color," though this teacher did not explicitly mention race. His example evoked a colorblind approach to interacting with students where teachers and other adults attempt to treat everyone equally when youth, who have varying experiences in school and in society due to their identities, may actually need differential treatment – equitable treatment. I explore the concepts of *colorblindedness*, *equality*, and *equity* in the next section.

Sanjay's response represented the contradictions in youth's thinking about this differential treatment. "Yes, if you don't talk about color and the obvious differences in our society, physical differences, if we don't talk about it, how is it going to get solved? Just refer to me as human!" Her first sentence speaks to her understanding of the limits of a color-blind approach, yet the juxtaposition of this sentence with her last statement, "just refer to me as human," shows her grappling with how to have a positive validation of her identity and feel like she is treated equally because of her race. I also struggled to word this question and see how my

wording – and its two-part nature – led to the knee-jerk reaction of youth which essentially said: no we don't want our race to be recognized because teachers are inherently racist. If I could reword my question, I would have asked youth if they have had positive experiences of adults recognizing their race and use that as a springboard to explore Sanjay's comment: "If we don't talk about [race], how's [inequity/racism] going to get solved?" Youth seemed to associate having their race noticed with being treated negatively, likely due to many prior experiences where this was the case. I explore the *colorblind* notion expressed in Sanjay's ending exclamation, "Just refer to me as human!" in the next theme.

Ideals of Equality.

"Equality*"* was a theme on my list for youth to choose from in our second group meeting. And Sanjay was quick to comment before we reviewed what was included within this theme: "Should we change this to equity? Because I feel like equity doesn't really…" She did not finish her sentence but in bringing up this question, she showed an understanding of the nuance between these two words.

A clarifying aside before getting to the words of youth -- in this thesis and in this section in particular, I refer to *equality* as the notion that all things are evenly distributed across the board, without regard to an individual or group's specific needs. *Equity* on the other hand, speaks to an approach where an individual's or group's particular needs are taken into account and (ideally) met. Thus, an equitable world is not necessarily an equal world since equity necessitates that people receive what they need rather than a one-sized-fits-all approach. I also link the notion of a *colorblind* approach with equality in this analysis. Colorblind is a way of characterizing actions or viewpoints that do not consider the impacts of race ("color") on a situation or experience. Colorblind approaches are often taken by those with "good" intentions who think

that not acknowledging race is a way to treat everyone equally. This approach discounts the existing inequities in our currently *un*equal society.

I focused on equality as a theme since all youth participants expressed sentiments of equality as an ideal or an aspirational end-game. All young people touched on the idea of equality, either stating it explicitly (Mariah: "but at the same time...equal") or implicitly referring to ideals of equality such as equal treatment under the law. Their ideas of equality ranged on a spectrum of critical consciousness: from uncritical idealism, to colorblindness, to surface-level multiculturalism, to wrestling with how to envision an equitable society. Not all youth fit neatly along this spectrum, showing contradictions within their developing consciousness.

A few youth shared ideas of equality that carried threads of idealism. Marcus did this most often such as in the following example when he talked about a video he saw online about police mistakenly entering a wrong apartment and fatally shooting an innocent person:

Marcus:	And like, I think it was an easy mistake but, like, cops, people are telling me that cops do it to kill all the Black people so it's back to White people, but I don't think it's happening. Some cops probably do it but they get fired on it. 'Cause another Black person's going to call them out on it if they were there.
Me:	Mmm. And what would happen?
M:	The cop would get fired or go to jail.

In this example, Marcus expressed a firm belief in justice and equal treatment under the law. He recognized that some police may be racist, "Some cops probably do it," where the "it" refers to intentionally killing Black people. Yet he immediately countered that admission with an affirmation for justice, "but they get fired on it." Here, he seemed to put his faith in the fact that other people would "call [the cops] out" on their violence and that, as a result, the officers would "get fired or go to jail." Marcus shows some dissonance in his thinking – he admits the negative,

violent treatment that Black people face and, at the same time, believes the system will still protect them.

Other youth expressed colorblind notions when talking about equality. In the following example, D.J. and I discussed the racial makeup of his middle school.

Me:	So, in general, when you shared, it seems a little bit mismatched. Like there's more-more students of color than there are teachers and leaders of color?
D.J.:	Mhm.
A:	Does that feel okay? Does it feel, um, does it feel like it works, or does it feel like it's a problem?
D:	I feel like it works. Cause like except like- like-the- there's good teachers [that] like just don't care about color. Like some of them just treat everyone the same way.

D.J. expressed that the lack of racial representation of adults at the school "works" for him. It seems his ideal is that teachers do not acknowledge race or "care about color." What is most important is that everyone is treated equally. This desire is no-doubt a worthy ideal but does not recognize that systemic racism exists. A world where color is not seen or cared about is not true to the foundations and current state of U.S. society. Even if race is not acknowledged or mentioned, it is often veiled in words and policies meant to benefit White people foremost and keep people of color on the margins, like discriminatory lending practices and hiring processes.

Even when acknowledging race, some youth discussed equality as an environment of feel-good multiculturalism, where different races are represented and everyone gets along. Sanjay talked about the racial diversity of classes at her school. She noted that the classes are diverse, because they have a "good" ratio:

Sanjay:	The rest of [the classes] they're diverse. They have a good ratio.
Me:	What's a good ratio?
S:	Like, preferably, equally. You know, or like equal, if not close, to Black and White people. You know, hopefully there's not just that one White person in class or that one Black person in class and they feel left out and they kind of realize that.

Sanjay first described classes as having a "good" ratio of racial diversity, though when asked about what makes the ratio good, she elaborated on an ideal ratio. Even though her school's student population is majority youth of color, a good ratio to Sanjay is one that is equal. Even if seven out of ten youth school-wide are youth of color, to Sanjay, a good ratio would look like a balance: 50% youth of color, 50% White. Sanjay does not address the feel-good nature of this explicitly, though it can be implied that her ideal – or what she feels like *should* be right – is that races are mixed and no individual feels disenfranchised or left out because of their race.

Sanjay and Mariah showed evidence of contradictory thinking about equality in the different ways they spoke about equality. In one instance, Sanjay expressed an awareness that teachers know about race and racism even if they do not take actions to improve the experiences of youth of color. Yet, in another instance about whether she wanted teachers to acknowledge her race, she responded, "Just refer to me as human," calling for a colorblind approach. While this dissonance was evident in several young people, just a few of them showed evidence of wrestling with this dissonance in the moment, in the same thought. This more nuanced reckoning was evident in Mariah trying to articulate her vision for increasing the number of Black teachers at her school: "I would say, more Black teachers, more Black staff, just more people of color around the school. But at the same time, it all be equal." Here Mariah recognized the imbalance of racial representation between the student population and the teachers, but she continued to hold the belief that equality, rather than equity, is the goal. I also recognize that her final statement, "but at the same time…" may also have been an afterthought, conscious or unconscious, added to make me, a White adult, feel better or perhaps less threatened by the change she was proposing. She seemed to recognize the consequence of her proposed change – that an increase in Black educators means a decrease in White educators, while also having the

adeptness, as many youth of color must do, to be keenly aware of the impacts of her words and actions on those in power – in this case, me. Youth struggled between the ideal of equality and the reality of systemic racism in a world with various structural inequalities that intentionally disadvantage people of color. Some were more aware of this tension than others.

Ideas for change.

Alexandra, Marcus, Mariah and Sanjay offered at least one idea to improve the experience of youth of color at their school. D.J., who did not offer an idea, expressed that aside from the one racist teacher who was not returning this coming year, everything was okay and therefore did not need to be changed. After a pause thinking about an idea for change, D.J said, "Like, nothing, like really bad thing happened [at school] so, I don't know." The other youth's ideas centered around racial diversification at the school. Other ideas expressed included a mechanism for increasing youth voice and a support for suspended youth to stay engaged with school.

Three youth talked explicitly about increasing the number of Black teachers at the school. The fourth young person, Marcus, speculated about a change that would mix up youth racial representation in the classroom in a way that first seemed superficial, but was in fact connected to a desire to decrease implicit biases. Marcus, expanded on his thinking:

> 'Cause I want people to see that there's more capable of others and not just to be like, "Oh, yeah, I already know Black people are doing stuff." I want them to see which ones are goo [paused mid-word]– which ones you know, and which ones you don't know. 'Cause you could see someone who looks mean and tough, but then they could actually be a nice person.

Marcus first talked about his idea to "mix up more of the classrooms" in a way that suggested uncritical awareness. He suggested that someone's race can be known by their name: "just put a couple more Black people in there. Or just like go through the names and see what like race they

are." His suggestion also implied that by putting people of different races together, racial harmony can be achieved. Yet along with his problematic assertions, Marcus expressed a deeper understanding that exposure can decrease implicit bias: "'Cause you could see someone who looks mean and tough…" He also caught himself from using a good/bad binary when describing people and shifted to talk about deepening knowledge of one another when he said, "I want them to see which ones are goo- which ones you know, and which ones you don't know."

Although Alexandra, Sanjay and Mariah talked about increasing the number of Black teachers, each responded differently when asked why they wanted to see this change at their school. Alexandra expressed a desire for more Black educators but said she "didn't know why." However, she went on to talk about feeling uncomfortable with the current status quo: "I just feel, like, uncomfortable. Cause like most – all of them are White; I've never seen a Black teacher at [Tacoma middle school] before." As mentioned earlier, Alexandra showed awareness of her instincts, even connecting to a "feeling" and acknowledged she did not yet know what was underlying these gut feelings.

Sanjay spoke in particular about the skin tone of teacher she would like to see, talking at first about a "dark-skin[ned]" teacher of color and then about Black teachers in particular, emphasizing that a teacher with darker skin will better be able to relate to youth of color versus a lighter-skinned teacher who may not have faced the same discriminatory treatment. This shows a sophisticated understanding of racism pointing to the reality that, even within communities of color, people have different experiences of racism based on the lightness or darkness of their complexion. People with darker skin face more racism than those with lighter shades of skin color. Sanjay also expressed the importance for youth to have teachers who share similar experiences of discrimination. She voiced:

> And so that, you know, the kids feel comfortable talking to someone other than Ms. Starr. You know, someone who Black kids can relate to and they're like the teacher's like, "yeah, I understand, I had to go through that as a kid, too" … I think that would make the experience better and that would change the perspective of a lot of kids at the school.

When asked about why there may be few Black teachers at her school, Mariah was able to connect the lack of Black teachers to the systemic issue of racism, which she named explicitly and then explained. She first spoke to my question – "How does that sit with you?" – as she described the racial makeup of her school at the student, teacher and administrator levels:

> Mariah: Mmm, that's kind of disappointing. 'Cause like it's mostly White teachers with Black students and that to me seems a lot of racism. But at the same time most of the White teachers aren't all racist. But, yeah.
> Me: Why do you think that is? The-the, um, different percentages?
> M: Okay, so with the teachers, when from what I notice in [the elective class] when we're like reading articles, most of the White-most of the White people get like jobs faster, easier, get careers easier. And most of the White people like they're, they have more money than like Black people. And I've noticed that like most schools there's mostly White teachers because like it's easy for them sometimes or they don't have to go through a lot to get a job or career. Or it doesn't take them a lot.

Mariah showed a nuanced understanding of how racism is a system that privileges White people and oppresses people of color. She named some of these privileges explicitly such as the ease with which White people can get jobs compared to Black people. She has an understanding that racism is a system and not tied to an individual, as shown in her assertion that the difference in representation is tied to racism (she names it), but that most White teachers "aren't all racist."

*

The distinguishing lines between these five themes are blurry. Youth's experiences with the teacher they all called "racist" were closely linked to broader feelings that some youth had about White youth being given more privileges or leeway in school. Youth also had different ideas within each of the themes; there was not always agreement and some youth did not participate much in some strands of discussion, suggesting either disagreement, disengagement,

processing of new ideas they were hearing or other dynamics I did not pick up on. I discuss youth engagement more in the limitations section of Chapter Four. Youth also showed evidence of contradictory thinking, such as when Sanjay talked about not wanting her teachers to acknowledge her race ("Just refer to me as a human"), but also talked about how she played a game in the car guessing people's races as they drove past.

In my Discussion in Chapter Four, I will explore the connections between the district's racial desegregation history (Chapter Two) and the realities shared by youth of color today (Chapter Three) as well as implications for action and future research.

CHAPTER FOUR: Discussion

Okay, so with the teachers, when from what I notice in [the elective class], when we're like reading articles, most of the White-most of the White people get like jobs faster, easier, get careers easier. And most of the White people, like, they're-they have more money than, like, Black people. And, I've noticed that, like, most schools there's mostly White teachers because like it's easy for them sometimes or they don't have to go through a lot to get a job or career. Or it doesn't take them a lot.

- Mariah

Making Connections Between Past and Present

A critical race theory perspective necessitates that we must know our history in order to analyze and understand our present (Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995; Woodson, 2011). I say "our" here because I do mean "our" history, and not just the history of the dominant group – a history far beyond what is in classroom history books. Such a history compels critical perspectives that offer counter-stories to the dominant narrative and differing insights into experiences and beliefs around past events. In Chapter Two, I offer a critical perspective on Tacoma's history of desegregation and analyze two CRT themes, *interest convergence* and *critique of liberalism*, within this history. In Chapter Three, my thesis elevates the experiences of youth of color in one

Tacoma middle school in order to position them as authoritative voices of their experience and to draw connections between the district's history and their experience today. In this chapter, I explore five themes related to their experience around race: one racist teacher; favoritism towards White youth; "race assumption;" notions of equality; and their ideas for change. I identified these themes as particularly salient to my research questions because they were both highly relevant to the questions and prominent in the data set (Buetow, 2010).

While I explore the history and youth experiences separately within distinct chapters of this thesis, I make clear connections between the district's desegregation history and the reality for today's youth of color in this concluding chapter. I will do this by connecting the two CRT themes to the present-day reality as well as linking the five themes of youth's experience to the history of desegregation.

Tacoma schools today are largely re-segregated by race and income. Youth in the city's Hilltop, East –and South-side neighborhoods have higher populations of youth of color and of youth on free-and-reduced lunch. Schools on the North End and Northeast Tacoma neighborhoods have majority-White population and a lower percentage of youth qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2017-2018b). While the district is an "open enrollment" district, meaning youths in theory can attend the school of their choice, barriers such as transportation and an application process explained at the end of Chapter Two reveal how this choice primarily caters to White and wealthy families who can navigate the enrollment process and provide transportation to their children.

The impact of the district's desegregation process lives on in today's schools. The consequences of the district's approach to desegregation over the years influences the district's enrollment process today as well as youth's experiences in schools today. This can be noted in a

few tangible ways such as in youth's experiences with teachers and in the curricular offerings available to young people. Yet youth participants today did not discuss much about present-day feelings of segregation or separation by race in their schools, though this manifests in some participants' perceptions of their school's racial diversity. Sanjay figured that her school was comprised of 97% youth of color, when in fact that number is closer to 60% (OSPI, 2017-2018b). This suggests that her day-to-day experiences, from the classes she is in to who she surrounds herself by, may be more separated by race – both by design, such as class-tracking, and by necessity, like friend associations. All five youth were unfamiliar with the word *integration* when asked if they had heard it. With probing, three of the youth were able to use root-word meanings to come up with a more-or-less accurate definition of *integration*, like Alexandra who relied on prefix meaning: "Like instead of 'se-' it would be 'in-' so maybe, like, instead of separating, it would be like, you know, mixing. I guess."

Bringing historical critique to the present.

In Chapter Two, I showed how interest convergence manifested in the district's decision to enact desegregation policy and in its desire to maintain programs like magnet schools, serving the interests of white families first and foremost (Bell, 1980b; Bell, 2004). Interest convergence is still prevalent in today's schools and decision making.

Interest convergence is also evidenced in the existing magnet-like schools in the district – or what the district calls *innovative schools*, schools with a unique learning focus, as explained in Chapter Two. Three of the innovative high schools (School of the Arts, Science and Math Institute and Industrial Design Engineering and Art) and actually have a special application process to determine admittance (Tacoma Public Schools, n.d., d). For example, The School of the Arts (SOTA) features an arts focus and requires a separate application, different from the

open-enrollment application. It is unclear from the district website how admittance is determined. These three high schools also draw youth from outside of the district and have racial and socio-economic demographics that are not representative of the district's overall population. These schools benefit White, wealthy families primarily with White enrollment at least ten percentage points higher and free-and-reduced lunch percentage about twenty percentage points lower than the district average (OSPI, 2017-2018a; OSPI, 2017-2018b). This echoes research from Bifuclo et al. (2008) and Straus (2015) that showed how school choice increased school segregation as White families took advantage of programs to attend majority-White schools or they left the public-school system altogether.

In addition, racial caps or quotas were supposed to "help" people of color by breaking up existing de facto segregation and giving black youth access to white schools they were previously not allowed to attend. However, the initial district- and state-wide-cap deemed a school "racially balanced" when it had no more than 40% students of color. This served to ensure a White majority in all Tacoma schools, yet another manifestation of interest convergence where white families stand to benefit the most from a civil rights advance (Bell, 1998b; Bell, 2004). Even today, with race no longer a factor in school enrollment, inequities persist and are in fact entrenched as schools are largely re-segregated by race and class, most prominently inequitable by the school's access to resources and curricular offerings (Straus, 2015).

Also, in Chapter Two of this thesis, I apply the CRT theme of "critique of liberalism" to the reactions of White people when their actions, world-view and entitlements were challenged. Suffice it to say, this has not changed in present day. Take, for example, a 2016 process when Tacoma Public Schools rezoned its middle school attendance boundaries to account for over-crowding and an upcoming re-opening of one of its middle schools (Tacoma Public Schools,

2016a; TPS, 2016b). Footage from a school board meeting video and community feedback documents reveals a strikingly similar display of entitlement and self-interest at the expense of others that CRT critiques. An impact of the proposed re-zoning was splitting up the middle-school attendance at one predominantly white and wealthy elementary school in the district's North End neighborhood. White parents predominantly turned up in opposition to feedback sessions and school board meetings. In written and oral opposition, parents cited reasons such as test scores, home ownership preferences and walkability as reasons not to re-zone their children. One parent recommended that the re-zoning should move students with similar test scores, recommending that students from "schools with lower test scores" be moved rather than students from a higher-performing school (read: White, wealthy school) Parents cited their currently zoned middle school as a key reason behind purchasing their home where they did and also suggested a decline in property value should the district continue with its proposed re-zoning (Tacoma Public Schools, 2016a; Tacoma Public Schools, 2016b). This reinforces scholars' associations of *Whiteness* and its foundation in property-ownership (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and harkens back to the White parent uproar over the district's proposed Schools of Choice plan in 1989. Still today, White communities continue to flex their power in order to secure or maintain the "best" for their families, often at the expense of its implications for others (Bell, 1980b).

Situating youth's experience in history.

Youth's critical consciousness development.

In Chapter Three, I explored five themes of youth's experiences in one Tacoma school today – one racist teacher, White student favoritism, "race assumption," notions of equality and ideas for change. Each of these themes has seeds in our nation's historical context and even more

specifically in Tacoma's historical school context. Youth were interested to learn about their history and opted to learn about it rather than spend additional meetings doing shared analysis on data from their interviews. They also had a lot to share about their experiences in school and many shared new ideas and thinking in our group meetings. Youth are in fact thinking critically about their social context and have both personal experiences and their own ideas that inform what they see as the issue and how to go about change (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Yet it was also apparent that the youth who participated were at varying levels of critical consciousness development as shown in the preceding section (Watts et al., 2003).

Alexandra and Mariah, who took an equity-focused elective class (with Ms. Starr), demonstrated a stronger critical consciousness. Marcus was also in this elective but had a different teacher. Alexandra and Mariah had a stronger critical awareness and would pick-up on inequities (like lack of teacher representation) though they may still have struggled with understanding why these inequities exist. Sanjay was not in this course but showed a developing critical consciousness similar to Mariah and Alexandra. It is unclear what experiences or people influenced this for her. The potential link between this class and youth's critical awareness complements research that found that teachers did not support youth's critical consciousness development, largely because teachers did not talk explicitly about racism (Diemer & Li, 2011). In this equity-focused elective course where learning focused explicitly on race, youth exhibited stronger critical awareness. All youth participants reported that there were few places within school that they talked about race. For some it was with their friends and for those in that one particular elective class, it was in that space (Watts et al., 2003; Diemer & Li, 2011).

Throughout the process, many youth demonstrated a systemic awareness expressing ideas such as linking the lack of black to teachers to racism (Mariah) or recognizing that police

disproportionately kill black people (Marcus). Youth also showed evidence of contradictory thinking as they explored questions around race and took part in group discussions about themes from their experiences, suggesting they are still growing in their critical thinking capacities, which is not surprising due to their age. In some instances, youth's responses suggested internalized oppression – internalized racism (Morris, 2001; DuBois, 1935; Woodson, 2011) – in their thinking and/or actions, such as the shared analysis where youth debated the exact percentage that qualifies someone as person of color. At times, youth revealed evidence of limited critical consciousness (Diemer & Li, 2011; Freire, 1970; Watts et al., 2003), which varied by young person, but illustrated in one example with D.J. and Marcus expressing in their individual interviews that racism within their school was rooted in an individual teacher's actions**.** Both this internalized racism and low critical consciousness highlights the impact of decades of education that does not take a broad, anti-oppressive framework in its approach as well the result of youth being immersed in racism in various ways day-to-day (Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; hooks, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Connections between youth's experience and history.

In the "one racist teacher" theme, youth varied in their depictions of the prevalence of racism at their school. While all youth agreed about the racism of one teacher who exhibited blatantly racist actions, youth were less consistent in naming systemic examples of racism at their school or community. These were largely invisible to two of the youth, D.J. and Marcus, suggesting a limited critical consciousness. Alexandra, Mariah and Sanjay were more aware of systemic injustices but did not always understand underlying causes (critical awareness), which can prevent the development of an orientation towards critical action, perhaps due to a belief that these inequities are somehow natural or rooted in an individual's innate abilities (Diemer & Li,

2011). Historically, racism as discussed in newspaper articles was mostly refined to isolated, individual acts such as verbal harassment or threats to youth or staff of color (Anderson, 1981). The laudatory tone within existing documents about Tacoma's desegregation approach reflects this tendency to conflate racism with individual, isolated acts. This tone conveys the idea that since Tacoma "voluntarily" desegregated, it had good intentions and therefore could not be racist in its actions.

The theme of favoritism towards White students discussed the varying degrees to which youth felt they were treated differently – and more negatively – than White students at their school. This "feeling" is in fact rooted in reality and verified implicit biases, evident in the deficit-centered research on desegregation (Kirk & Goon, 1975) and the pathologizing language used to describe youth of color that YPAR explicitly challenges (Akon et. Al, 2008). One of the five points of the district's 1968 Five-Point Plan that further desegregated schools called for "sensitivity" training for all district teachers – a course titled "Teaching and the Disadvantaged" (Tacoma School District No. 10, 1968, p. 4). The rationale for this was to improve the relationships between staff and students, since desegregation programs made it so more white teachers were teaching students of color – many likely for the first time. The reality nationwide for youth of color attending majority-White schools was that negative differential treatment was a constant (Horsford, 2010; Siddle-Walker, 2000; Teel & Mayo, 1969). This was part of why Boston-area parents involved with "Operation Exodus," a Black-community-led effort to bus Black students to White schools, opted to have their children return to segregated, neighborhood schools after just one year (Teele & Mayo, 1968). It is important to note that there is not much printed record about the experience of Black students attending predominantly White schools here in Tacoma.

While youth today had much to say around the act of assuming someone's race and who counts as a person of color, their discussion and rationale mimicked in many ways the categorical thinking endemic within White supremacy. Such thinking brought about the **"**one-drop rule" that relied on a belief that race is biological and deemed anyone with so much as one drop of heritage that was not-White be considered non-White. There was not much nuance in history, either. Tacoma's racial-balance quotas categorized students as White or "minority" and neighborhood maps described the population of the city's schools by racial group. There is little historical account for students with multiracial identities and the experience of other non-Black people of color. In fact, the Black/White binary critiqued within CRT highlights how this duality effectively erases the experience of other non-Black groups of color and especially endemic definition people with mixed racial or ethnic identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

In the theme of "equality," I discussed the spectrum of beliefs that youth expressed – from uncritical ideals to more complex reckoning with how equity and equality interact with (and contradict) each other. Equality, in all the ways it was evoked by youth, echoes aspirations from Tacoma's Black community, historically. For instance, Black community leaders wanted an equal education and equal opportunity for their youth, so they pushed for desegregation and an equal distribution of youth across schools. Yet this was misguided, CRT scholars argue in hindsight, noting the myopic thinking that systemic racism could be resolved through judicial rulings. Even so, the district instituted a 60/40 White/Black ratio at schools, which is not exacly what Black community members were calling for. Young people today, echoed the desire for equality, where Sanjay and Marcus expressed a desire for classrooms to be more equally mixed, 50/50. Equality, while a worthy end-goal, cannot be achieved without an equity-informed approach – and one that radically re-imagines our current structures and ways of operating

(DuBois, 1935; Bell, 2004; Bell, 1980b). An equity-informed approach will likely look very *un*equal in its implementation as it seeks to remedy past injustices and dismantle oppressive systems. Equality is related to interest convergence – it may be a well-intended end-goal, but it is still foundationally flawed in its approach that holds up White interest as the primary beneficiary.

Youth also shared ideas that would improve the experience for youth of color in today's schools. There was a confluence of ideas shared by youth that involved increasing racial representation within their school. Three recommendations explicitly mentioned increasing the number of Black teachers at the school. The inequity in teacher representation that youth of color experience today has direct roots in school desegregation nationally. And thus, the young people's proposals for change are in fact a remedy for past injustice. Many people are surprised to learn that *Brown v. Board of Educ.* (1954) resulted in the firing or displacement of tens of thousands of Black teachers and school leaders, the exact numbers of which are unknown (Tillman, 2004). Because this was not tracked nationwide, there is not readily available data for this nationally, and I found no record of this in Tacoma. It can be inferred that, echoing events nationwide, the 1968 closing of Central Elementary School and the conversion of McCarver Junior High to a magnet elementary school, resulted in a local loss of teachers and school leaders of color. In the years preceding the *Brown v. Board* ruling, "separate but equal" segregated schools were often segregated at the staffing levels too – Black schools often had Black teachers and principals. I discuss this topic further in an upcoming subsection, expanding on the youth's interest in taking action around this issue of teacher representation.

Strengths and Limitations of Research.

This thesis offers a more comprehensive telling of the story of Tacoma's school desegregation through the 1990s, whereas prior reports are both limited in detail and in scope.

This thesis also offers an interdisciplinary lens on Tacoma's school desegregation integrating journalism, sociology, psychology and education in such areas as writing style, research and literature reviewed. As mentioned above, I also critique desegregation as an approach that centers the interest of White people primarily and instead, I elevate the voices of other scholars who share this critique and propose alternative methods.

Limitations: history and CRT analysis.

A review of existing accounts of the district's desegregation shows that they are overwhelmingly positive and from the perspectives of people in power or from journalists. Perspectives of parents of color, of teachers and of students of color are notably missing. The historical account provided in Chapter Five relied on the availability of historical data, namely newspaper articles during the specified time period. Articles available in the Tacoma library's Northwest Room are organized by "theme" in large manila folders, with hundreds of articles placed in no order within the file folder. Since articles are placed in the folders based on archivist discretion, there is much room for subjectivity on the part of the archivist – what they deem important – and also a large margin of error as to where articles might be filed. For example, I was looking for articles under a variety of folders including "Racial Discrimination," "Tacoma Public Schools" (across all specified decades and those decades before/after), "Tacoma Schools Administration," etc. yet it is probable that relevant articles were housed elsewhere such as under an individual school mentioned in the article. There were file folders for each school in the district, current and closed.

Additionally, some articles were multiple pages but only one page was archived or it was separated and therefore hard to distinguish in the jumbled organization of the archival folders.

In making public records request or looking into state-level records request, I learned that many school district reports or resolutions were not available during the earlier part of my time frame. While school board notes were saved, referenced policy or resolutions were often not available. This was the same for sub-committee reports and recommendations. Certain requested documentation that was not located in my records request (such as the 1998 desegregation steering committee report) may have helped answer my questions more fully or offered a different explanation in some parts of my analysis.

Additionally, I recognize that the large expanse of decades I sought to cover, while offering a more complete picture of Tacoma's desegregation story, also limited the outcome of my research. With a narrowed scope, I may have been able to focus my energy to go deeper on certain issues or fill in some remaining holes in the district history.

Limitations: Youth participatory action research.

An underlying limitation was that the voices of Black youth and other youth of color have largely been absent from the research on school desegregation, providing limited research to draw from. Also, it is important to note the limitations and challenges of my YPAR approach which I have identified as power-differentials, my positionality, youth engagement and time-constraints. Cammarota and Fine (2008) note the limits of YPAR in ways this approach can mask power differentials of the adult to youth researchers. While my ideal aspirations for this research involved youth sitting deep in the data with me as we analyzed and made meaning together, I soon realized that time-constraints and the age and experience of the youth I worked with necessitated me playing more of a leading role throughout our project. My research was designed to bring youth in to a question I was asking and, through this process, to facilitate their asking and answering of their own questions. And for many reasons including time,

developmental considerations and my capacity, this project was very much adult-led and youth-included. I recognize that from planning our meeting agendas to leading the analysis to writing up this thesis, I exercised significant editorial power. To account for this as best I could, I built-in opportunities for youth to adjust our plans and contribute in significant ways, including youth adding themes to our list for shared-analysis, youth determining they want to continue to meet in August and into the fall and youth getting to review and edit parts of this final write-up before submission.

Along the line of power-differentials, I struggled with how to critique what youth had shared while writing up my analysis. It felt out-of-line with a participatory approach that seeks to position youth as experts on their own experience to then ascribe judgment to youth's expressed reality. YPAR positions youth to develop critical consciousness and it does feel important to understand where youth are at in their development of this critical awareness. However, my positionality as a White woman working with youth of color and the heightened power differential this brings is bound up in my feelings of dissonance. I will admit, it feels unresolved.

My identity as well as my relationship to the youth I worked with undoubtedly impacted our interactions this summer. In fact, all that youth shared with me was impacted by how they see me and what they feel comfortable sharing or revealing. I recognize that events, feelings and interpretations may have been withheld or represented in a certain way by youth due to the very nature of our discussing difficult issues of race and my positionality as a White adult. Additionally, the way I phrased questions, asked follow-up questions – or did not – also impacted the data and later analysis. Some of the youth consider me a teacher even though I knew them in a less-formal, after-school capacity where I was a program leader. Either way, I felt like I was in the same bucket for self-censorship on their part mostly in the form of youth not

cursing or talking about dating around me. In one of our group meetings, one young person made a comment indicating she had a crush on a male staff member and another young person quickly jumped in, "This [conversation] is PG, not PG-13!" In our informal conversations, I remember one young person starting to say a cuss word and self-correcting, saying something like "I was so ...*stinkin'* mad" instead of an explicit curse word. My identity as a White woman may also have led youth to qualify some statements, adding in a note such as "...but not all White teachers are racist" as a way to comfort me perhaps more than an expression of wrestling with emerging critical consciousness as discussed in my analysis of the theme of equality.

Youth engagement was a challenge in different ways throughout the summer – and in some unanticipated ways. While the youth I worked with had all agreed to participate, I anticipated varying levels of attendance and engagement during our work together. All youth attended the first two group meetings. For our third meeting, Mariah had a conflict at the last minute and could not attend. After missing that meeting, momentum seemed to be lost and she did not make any other meetings. One of our shared expectations was a commitment not to "ghost" the other person, meaning to stop responding without explanation. In one of my follow-up phone calls, Mariah did tell me she had a lot to do before the start of school and was not sure if she could continue coming, though she never confirmed this and did not reveal if there were other factors that led to her not coming back, such as group dynamics or a potentially off-putting comment. Again, my position of authority and perhaps her overall comfort with me impacted our ability to communicate as openly about her decision not to return.

Sanjay had an unexpected family crisis come up that resulted in her not being able to join later group meetings. She was an emerging leader of our group and her absence after our third group meeting also negatively impacted our group's momentum. Other youth expressed curiosity

as to why she stopped coming and, due to the confidential nature of the situation, there was not much I could share aside from the fact that she wanted to be with us but could not.

After our third group meeting where we finished the first phase of our YPAR work, youth had the option to continue meeting and work on a youth-selected research and action project or to step away. Marcus and D.J. expressed interest in stepping away and getting ready for the upcoming school year. In following up with their families to let them know, both parents were curious if other youth were still involved and insisted that they would talk with their children about their decision. Despite my assurances that their children had completed what they signed up to do and were not dropping out, the two parents seemed concerned about their children wanting to step away. There were likely a number of motivations for this including wanting their children to do something productive during the summer and feeling like this experience was beneficial for their students. Whatever their motivation, both parents later followed up with me to say their children wanted to keep coming. My sense was that both these young people were least engaged with our group work perhaps due to content, group dynamics and other unknown factors, and even though they continued to attend, it was clear they were not there fully by choice. We even joked about that at a later date.

During our meetings, there were varying levels of engagement from youth. The group was surprisingly focused once we got into our discussions. Though, as expected for middle-schoolers, youth had a lot of energy and could easily get off-topic (Ozer et al, 2010). While we had group norms that encouraged youth to be aware of their voice and make space for others, this played out differently. While there were many instances of one young person taking a step back to let a less frequent voice speak, it was more apparent when listening to recordings that some youth dominated the conversation while others rarely spoke. When Sanjay was there, she was

often the first to respond and D.J. was notably quiet. I was able to facilitate this to some degree, inviting quieter youth to share their thoughts and reminding others to let new voices enter the discussion. Youth would have benefitted from more instruction on how to analyze data as well as learning in how to have critical group discussions. There was a tendency for youth to agree with another, even when this contradicted something someone had shared in their one-on-one interview. Youth seemed to be uncomfortable with disagreeing with each other or speaking up to challenge something someone had shared. This may have impacted students' engagement in different ways, such as Mariah's decision to step away.

Always present were the time-constraints that come with completing a graduate degree in a specified quarter. The timing of the YPAR project was intentionally planned during the summer when youth had the most flexibility and we could avoid navigating the bureaucracy of meeting on school grounds. However, this meant that my direct work with youth took place over two and half months and about seven group meetings. The time limitations specific to completing my thesis meant that deeper, shared analysis where, for instance, youth would have interacted with anonymized interview data and come up with their own themes, was not part of my approach. It was common during our group meetings for a few young people to comment that they wished we had more time or ask if we could meet longer. We did extend the length of time for some of our group meetings and we continued to take up the full extended time with our inquiry and learning. Another time-constraint felt related to my novice status as a researcher. I was very much learning-while-doing and felt that the trajectory of my work with youth and our approach would have been strengthened had I had more time consulting with advisers learning from other practitioners' experiences which could have strengthened our group process and youth engagement along the way.

Other limitations were around logistics – some youth did not have their own cell phones or their phones were broken and communication, often by text, had to go through a parent which sometimes delayed our meeting scheduling or did not allow for as open of communication. One of the young people who had asked to step away but ultimately kept coming did not have a cell phone. I would call his mom and she would pass this young person the phone and I could often hear her talking to him as they were talking to me not really allowing for a private conversation or for him to share a concern like "I really don't want to keep coming but my mom is making me." I also ended up giving rides to and from our meetings since parents without a car or who were working did not feel comfortable having their 12-year-olds take the bus. Driving youth to and from meetings often got in the way of me making time to memo and take notes after each of our group meetings.

Youth's PAR project: Ideas for change.

In Group Meeting 4, youth had the opportunity to define a problem they wanted to learn more about or take action towards changing. While youth individually came up with a list of ideas including learning about black students' experience in predominantly White schools, the consensus was to work together on an issue that all youth saw as worthy of changing: the lack of Black teachers at their school. It is interesting to note that this lack of representation in teachers was notably obvious to youth but was something policymakers did not take into account when designing implementation plans. Maintaining a racial balance of teachers was not something that was an explicit goal within school desegregation.

Alexandra, D.J. and Marcus were regularly attending meetings at this point and all three continued to meet two more times. In these meetings youth spent time reading and watching videos they found on their own about the importance of Black teachers and teachers of color.

Youth took notes and reported back their findings to one another. They expressed an interest in bringing in additional young people once the school year began and at the time of this thesis finalizing, we were coordinating an ongoing meeting time after-school to continue this project. During our late-summer meetings, I played the role of convening our meetings and coordinating access to technology and posed questions to have youth define what they wanted to achieve and how they wanted to get there, offering guidance throughout. Alexandra and Marcus attended the Race and Pedagogy National Conference with me in September 2018 where they presented on their experiences in school, district history they had learned and on themes we analyzed together. They fielded questions from the audience and were able to talk about their learning about the need for more teachers of color in schools today.

Teacher demographics and representation.

As part of making connections between the district's history and present-day experiences, I share a snapshot of Tacoma's teacher demographics today. The racial and ethnic makeup of Tacoma teachers reflects nationwide trends; more than 80% of teachers are White (Tillman, 2004). In a district with 60% students of color, only about 18% of teachers are teachers of color (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2016-2017).

On paper, Tacoma seems to recognize the problem of this imbalance. Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, Tacoma Public Schools updated its Careers in Education Program to start the Teach253 program, a partnership with local Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), with the aim to support "students from diverse backgrounds" from Tacoma schools to become teachers in who return to teach in Tacoma. The program offers Teach253 courses at two Tacoma high schools which includes classroom support experiences in Tacoma elementary schools and a Summer Teaching Academy at PLU. The university provides priority admissions and financial

aid to students coming through the Teach253 program and in turn, the district offers priority hires to Teach253 graduates from the university. There is no data yet to show that this program will result in hiring more teachers of color. A critical race lens surmises that a program with unspecific priorities to advance equity, with ambiguous goals like "supporting students from diverse backgrounds...who want to become teachers," will render itself ineffective, even counterproductive. An online district story featuring this partnership specifically called out students of color and first-generation college students as example target-groups for this program, the fact that the program is not explicit about its aims and target population sets it up to perpetuate past inequities and, in this case, likely hire more White (albeit, local) teachers.

Implications for Action and Future Research.

This thesis does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of Tacoma's desegregation programs or determine the viability of desegregation as an approach to advance racial justice, though I do call these into premises into question. Instead, I offer 1) a more complete picture of how Tacoma approached school desegregation focusing on the time period of 1960 through the 1990s and 2) a critical lens that points to racist practices within how Tacoma desegregated its schools and makes connections between the district's history and the present-day experiences of youth of color today. With this, my thesis complicates the largely laudatory story that exists about desegregation in general and Tacoma's approach to desegregation in particular. I pointedly critique desegregation as a path to achieve racial equity and argue that desegregation was implemented in a way that centered the interest of White communities principally.

While the intent of racial desegregation seemed to be noble, critical race theory shows that *how* such civil rights advances are implemented by policymakers often results in countering the policy's aim. The question around racial equity in education often seems to revolve around

how we can *better* approach desegregating schools to actually reach racial integration. I point to the thinking of many critical race scholars that challenges the notion that perfecting desegregation as an approach is our best option. While there are many scholars making similar arguments, here are a few: Derrick Bell (1980a; 2004**)** re-wrote the *Brown v. Board of Educ*. (1954) ruling and imagined instead a world where *Plessy v. Ferguson's* "separate but equal" doctrine was upheld and actually realized. Vanessa Siddle-Walker (2000) lifted up the often-overlooked value within segregated Black schools that include strong Black leadership, culturally relevant pedagogy and high family involvement. Ladson-Billings (1998) peeled back the layers of the current in-equitable education to reveal ways that curriculum, instruction, assessment and school funding uphold White supremacy - thus helping the reader envision how radical re-workings of these cornerstones of education could offer a path towards true equal opportunity for all.

Members of Tacoma's school district taskforce in the late 1990s also proposed the "ethnic academy" that would teach explicitly about the culture and history of a specific racial or ethnic group. While the idea was not part of their final proposal, it does show yet another example of thinking beyond moving students around to reach a desegregation quota, but rather how to provide an excellent, liberatory learning environment to all students. Sanjay, too, expressed her own thinking about this issue. Sanjay shared her idea to Alexandra and me when it was just the three of us in the room during a part of our group meeting where we learned about the history of desegregation in Tacoma.

> I had this opinion and it sounds so messed up. Like, when I try to explain it to a normal person, they're like: "What the heck? What are you talking about?" Kind of like, segregation would, like, low-key benefit people of color as long as it's equal, because, like, then the racism would stop, 'cause I feel like black people can't be racist to black people.

Sanjay was proposing what Derrick Bell wrote about after years of frustration as a civil rights lawyer fighting for the implementation of *Brown.* Sanjay now knows that her idea isn't "so messed up" and that she echoes the voices of many critical race scholars.

*

Further critical research on school desegregation in Tacoma would benefit from centering the experiences of local groups and people marginalized historically, particularly during these years I've focused on in this thesis. There's a sense of urgency around this work as individuals with direct experience with desegregation are aging. In a 2017 Oral History course, I was part of a group that intended to feature a range of voices integral in the district's initial years of desegregation. While a classmate interviewed Willie Stewart, Tacoma's first Black principal who led the district's summer counseling program mentioned in Chapter Two, our group struggled to identify students, teachers and school leaders who were living and willing to share their stories. I attempted to reach Alex Sergienko, the assistant superintendent in the early years of desegregation and later the district Superintendent, only to find his obituary – he passed away just weeks before my inquiry. Further and more in-depth participatory action research – with youth of color in particular – is recommended as a way to build and deepen the critical consciousness of those most impacted by racism and other systems of oppression.

Just as I gain clarity in some areas, this research prompts more questions for me. Within our inequitable, racist society, can an equitable, multicultural environment exist? Are there examples of this and how are the interests of the dominant group (White, wealthy people) kept in check? I desire to further understand ways to achieve educational equity outside of desegregation and to understand my role as a White person in these alternative approaches. Is racial integration

a viable goal in our racist society and/or what are ways to support critical consciousness-development among White youth without causing harm to people of color?

While I mentioned at the start of this thesis that I hope my research complicates existing understanding about desegregation and raises critical consciousness amongst the youth I worked with, I also hope that my research has broader impacts locally. I hope that my thesis speaks to educators who can be more informed advocates for their students and families through better understanding racism within our education policy and of the importance of raising critical consciousness amongst youth today as a way to support youth to challenge these systems. It is my desire that findings from this thesis can be shared in alternative formats and support parents and community members of historically marginalized communities to better understand the unintended consequences of well-meaning programs that, by design, are meant to uphold existing power structures. I hope that this knowledge can support others to better advocate for practices that challenge the status quo and pursue a critical-consciousness-centered education for all young people.

It was a highlight of this thesis being able to reconnect with and do critical research with former students. It was also frustrating to hear about the few places at school where they discuss and learn about racism and to witness the impact this has on their awareness about structural inequities. This is particularly salient when I think about their developmental stage and how the capacity for critical thinking begins to emerge in youth's adolescent years (Ozer et al., 2010). At one extreme, I see some youth accepting the way things are and internalizing messages about their worth and capabilities. On another, I am grateful some young people have crossed paths with educators and others in their life who have taught them a critical awareness and exposed them to language to make sense of forms of oppression they experience daily.

As an educator seeking to return to the public-school classroom, I think about how I can build upon this foray into YPAR and embed critical-consciousness-raising into my classroom culture and orientation towards learning. My experience through this thesis solidifies my desire to return to the classroom next fall and to continue working with middle-schoolers. I aim to bring a critical theory framework into my pedagogy and support young people to become more critically aware and positioned to take action to effect change. Like bell hooks (2014), I see education as an act of liberation, a practice of freedom and a way of unlearning and undoing our own oppression.

I believe in what NAACP President Frank Russell said in late the 1960s – that a multiracial education benefits all students. I also know that our society, built on white supremacy, necessitates that White people do not learn or think critically about Whiteness and race. Thus, a multiracial education including White people always benefits White people more than people of color, since many White people are being exposed to concepts and experiences for the first time that people of color experience daily (Martin, 2014). I desire a world that honors the dignity of *all* people and one that allows for an *equal* multiracial educational experience. Yet I struggle to imagine how this is possible within the systemic racism and oppression that is entrenched within our society. White people will always stand to benefit the most and this is the antithesis to any equitable solution. I will continue to seek out and listen to the voices and opinions of those most impacted by racism who take a critical lens in thinking about the problem. I recognize that an equal world free of oppression will likely not happen within my lifetime or that of my children and grandchildren. I carry words from the Mishna, a written collection of Jewish oral tradition, close to heart: “You are not compelled to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it” (Pirkei Avot, 2:16).

I end with the last paragraph of Alexandra's story, the one she impromptu began when I stepped out of the room during our interview to take a call from her mom. Her story, in its horror and melodramatic telling, still carries notes of hope, of redemption.

> *...Then, I go and I learn martial arts and then I'm a Kung Fu master and everyone wants to fight me. I knock out everybody. I'm a champion. I'm known for my one-hit knockouts. But then, there comes a person just like me. Looks like just me, sounds just like me, acts just like me. I come to see it's an undercover [whispers] KKK member. [Regular voice] So what do I do? I fight 'em. Or her, don't know what it is. I fight, I fight, until all of their makeup comes off and all of a sudden, it's a White person. And everyone's like, [gasps] "It's a phony." And everyone fights him and kicks him and, all of a sudden, Boom! He's out the door, running for his life, crying. And I run after him and tackle him, and I say "Why? You can come on our side now, you're safe, now. You're safe from those mean, deceiving people. You can be a good person, you can start over, it's fine." But he didn't want to. He didn't. But I know he did. I* knew *he did. So, I picked him up by his feet, dragged him across the floor all the way to my apartment. Told him the fight was over. Brought him to my apartment, asked him: why did he do this? What happened? He never answered, he didn't talk. He was just crying. Mad. Face was red, tears running down his face. And you know what happened?*
> *[Alexandra starts to giggle as I walk back into the room]*

"I was telling a story," she tells me. Later, when transcribing the interview, I realized that my re-entering the room cut her story at such a pivotal point. I followed up with her about what was going to happen. And she did not know. She had not imagined that part of the story yet. That wisdom is there, though. She's fighting white supremacy even in her story-telling. These young people are brilliant and will light the way for us in thinking about and solving problems. We first have to listen to them.

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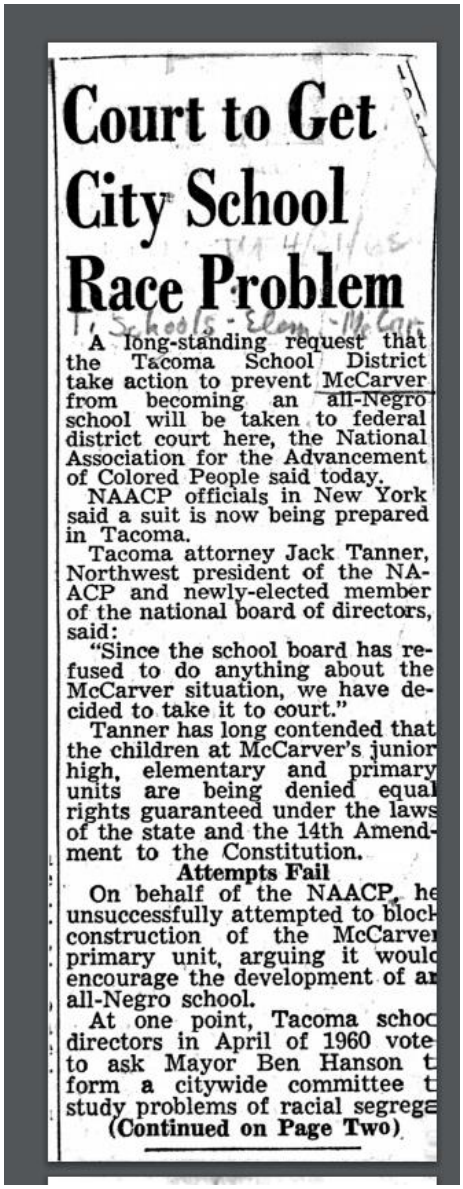
APPENDIX

Appendix A – Tacoma's desegregation history

A.1 Tacoma News Tribune select articles

A.1.a "Court to Get City School Race Problem," April 21, 1963 (2 pages)



Court to Get City School Race Problem

A long-standing request that the Tacoma School District take action to prevent McCarver from becoming an all-Negro school will be taken to federal district court here, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said today.

NAACP officials in New York said a suit is now being prepared in Tacoma.

Tacoma attorney Jack Tanner, Northwest president of the NAACP and newly-elected member of the national board of directors, said:

"Since the school board has refused to do anything about the McCarver situation, we have decided to take it to court."

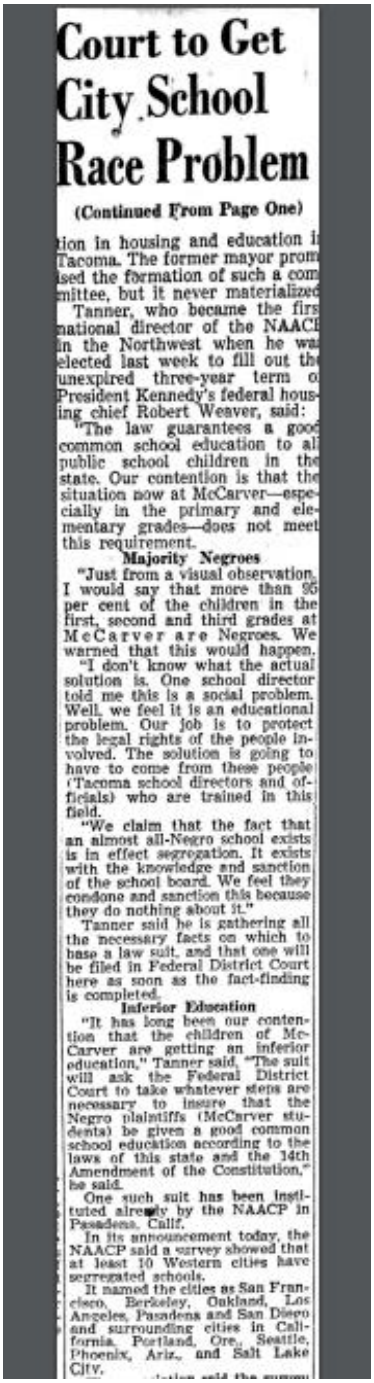
Tanner has long contended that the children at McCarver's junior high, elementary and primary units are being denied equal rights guaranteed under the laws of the state and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Attempts Fail

On behalf of the NAACP, he unsuccessfully attempted to block construction of the McCarver primary unit, arguing it would encourage the development of an all-Negro school.

At one point, Tacoma school directors in April of 1960 voted to ask Mayor Ben Hanson to form a citywide committee to study problems of racial segrega

(Continued on Page Two)



Court to Get City School Race Problem

(Continued From Page One)

tion in housing and education i Tacoma. The former mayor prom ised the formation of such a com mittee, but it never materialized

Tanner, who became the firs national director of the NAACP in the Northwest when he wa elected last week to fill out the unexpired three-year term o President Kennedy's federal housing chief Robert Weaver, said:

"The law guarantees a good common school education to all public school children in the state. Our contention is that the situation now at McCarver—especially in the primary and elementary grades—does not meet this requirement.

Majority Negroes

"Just from a visual observation, I would say that more than 95 per cent of the children in the first, second and third grades at McCarver are Negroes. We warned that this would happen.

"I don't know what the actual solution is. One school director told me this is a social problem. Well, we feel it is an educational problem. Our job is to protect the legal rights of the people involved. The solution is going to have to come from these people (Tacoma school directors and officials) who are trained in this field.

"We claim that the fact that an almost all-Negro school exists is in effect segregation. It exists with the knowledge and sanction of the school board. We feel they condone and sanction this because they do nothing about it."

Tanner said he is gathering all the necessary facts on which to base a law suit, and that one will be filed in Federal District Court here as soon as the fact-finding is completed.

Inferior Education

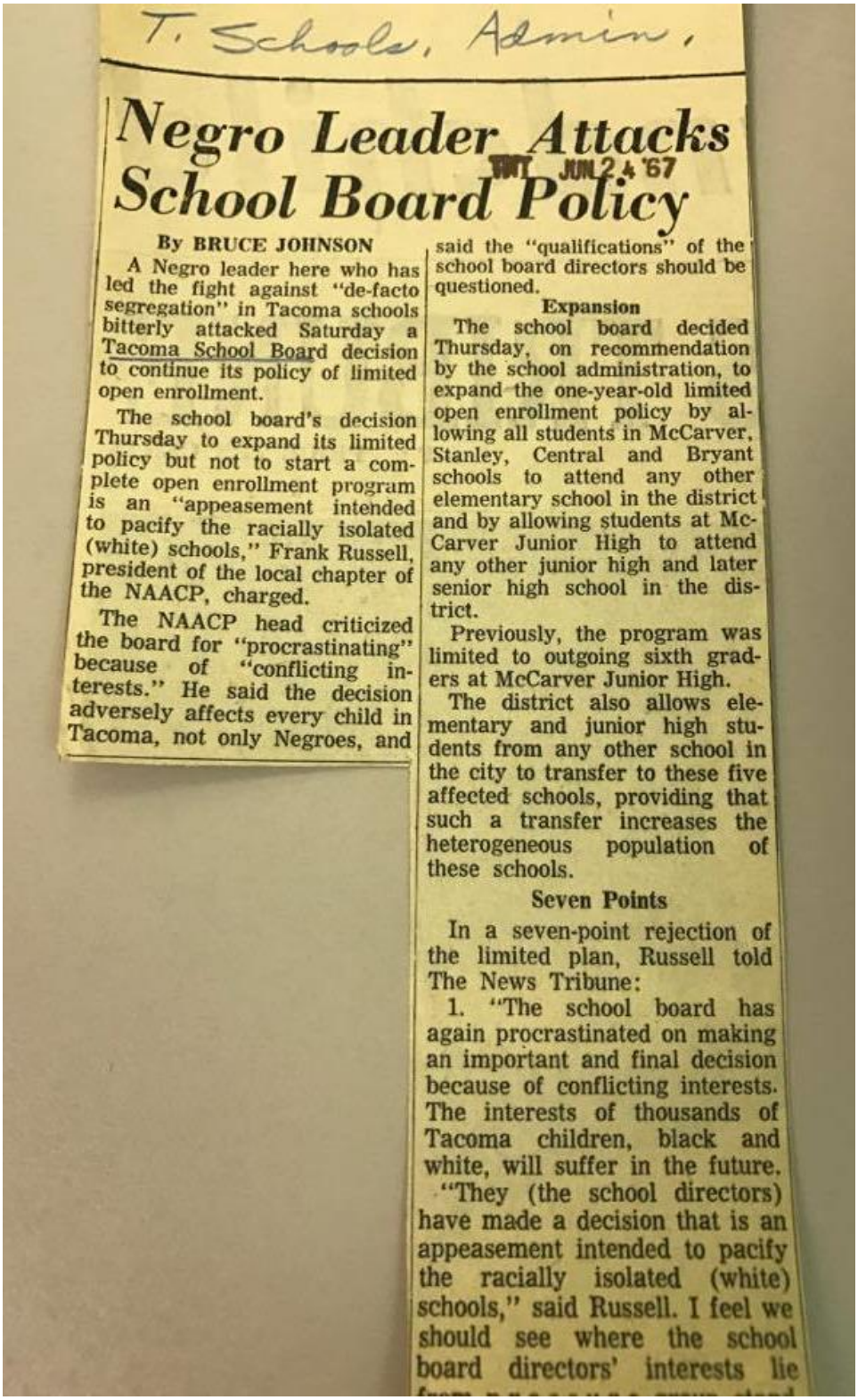
"It has long been our contention that the children of McCarver are getting an inferior education," Tanner said. "The suit will ask the Federal District Court to take whatever steps are necessary to insure that the Negro plaintiffs (McCarver students) be given a good common school education according to the laws of this state and the 14th Amendment of the Constitution," he said.

One such suit has been instituted already by the NAACP in Pasadena, Calif.

In its announcement today, the NAACP said a survey showed that at least 10 Western cities have segregated schools.

It named the cities as San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, Los Angeles, Pasadena and San Diego and surrounding cities in California, Portland, Ore., Seattle, Phoenix, Ariz., and Salt Lake City.

A.1.b Bruce Johnson, "Negro Leader Attacks School Board Policy," June 24, 1967



T. Schools, Admin.

Negro Leader Attacks School Board Policy

TNT JUN 24 '67

By BRUCE JOHNSON

A Negro leader here who has led the fight against "de-facto segregation" in Tacoma schools bitterly attacked Saturday a Tacoma School Board decision to continue its policy of limited open enrollment.

The school board's decision Thursday to expand its limited policy but not to start a complete open enrollment program is an "appeasement intended to pacify the racially isolated (white) schools," Frank Russell, president of the local chapter of the NAACP, charged.

The NAACP head criticized the board for "procrastinating" because of "conflicting interests." He said the decision adversely affects every child in Tacoma, not only Negroes, and said the "qualifications" of the school board directors should be questioned.

Expansion

The school board decided Thursday, on recommendation by the school administration, to expand the one-year-old limited open enrollment policy by allowing all students in McCarver, Stanley, Central and Bryant schools to attend any other elementary school in the district and by allowing students at McCarver Junior High to attend any other junior high and later senior high school in the district.

Previously, the program was limited to outgoing sixth graders at McCarver Junior High.

The district also allows elementary and junior high students from any other school in the city to transfer to these five affected schools, providing that such a transfer increases the heterogeneous population of these schools.

Seven Points

In a seven-point rejection of the limited plan, Russell told The News Tribune:

1. "The school board has again procrastinated on making an important and final decision because of conflicting interests. The interests of thousands of Tacoma children, black and white, will suffer in the future.

"They (the school directors) have made a decision that is an appeasement intended to pacify the racially isolated (white) schools," said Russell. I feel we should see where the school board directors' interests lie

A.1.c Richard Ferguson, "Segregation Ends in City Schools," September 6, 1972

Segregation Ends in City Schools

By RICHARD FERGUSON

A milestone — elimination of de facto segregation — was reached in Tacoma Public Schools Wednesday as the 1972-73 school year opened.

Officials announced that enrollment of black students in all of the district's 58 school buildings is below the 40 per cent level.

Last year, through various programs involving busing of pupils in and out of the Hilltop area, where many of Tacoma's black families live, the district achieved racial balance in every school except Stanley Elementary, where the black pupil population was 45 per cent.

Although precise figures won't be available until later this week, officials said, the school's black enrollment as classes begin this year is between 33 and 38 per cent.

ON TARGET

"It is below 40 per cent," Supt. Angelo Giaudrone said in an afternoon conference with a press representative. The 40 per cent definition was established in the mid-1960s by the State Board of Education.

"We are on target," he added. "We have been counting on the fall of 1972 although we weren't certain it could be accomplished on a voluntary basis."

Desegregation efforts began in 1966 in line with the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision and State Board of Education and Tacoma School Board policies. SEP 6 1972 ENE

The district chose to proceed on a voluntary basis, rather than setting a deadline and taking whatever action was necessary to achieve racial balance.

As a result, it took six years, but it was accomplished without a great deal of turmoil.

'NO COERCION'

"We have operated on a basis of encouragement rather than coercion," Giaudrone said during the session, also attended by Alex Sergienko,

(Continued on Page 14)

Segregation Ends in City Schools

(Continued from Page One)

assistant superintendent for planning and development, and Harold Snodgrass, director of publications.

"It has been a matter of working with people on an individual basis," he said, largely through the district's summer counseling program. "By and large, the community has responded — it has been healthy."

The end of de facto segregation in the Tacoma system is a major accomplishment and obviously pleases the superintendent. He said as much.

But Giaudrone stressed that the system remains to be racially integrated.

Desegregation involves numbers and integration the heart, he said.

"Integration is much more difficult. That is the job ahead of us."

Giaudrone said the integration effort also has been in progress several years. It involves working with staff members and students day after day to improve racial understanding and reduce and-or eliminate racial friction, he said.

His latter concern was expressed in an address earlier Tuesday to teachers and administrators over the district's UHF television station.

MUCH TO BE DONE

Noting that he had been honored by the NAACP earlier this year and that the teaching staff shared that honor, he cautioned that "neither you nor I can afford the luxury of self-congratulation. There is too much yet to be done . . . our responsibility calls for a daily commitment on your part in all the days ahead.

"If any of us still behaves in a manner which is the unconscious habitual residual of the bad learning experiences of our youth, let us vow to stifle the response that wants to leap from our throats.

"If anyone listening still believes that it is somebody else's job, either individuals or agencies, let us take up

A.1.d Jan Gildenhar, "Neighborhood schoolhouse threatened by desegregation," July 4, 1982

Neighborhood schoolhouse threatened by desegregation

Growing minorities may result in more, more students being bused in the '80s

"Our society is becoming more multicultural, and our schools will reflect that."

Concentrations of minority students in Tacoma schools

TACOMA

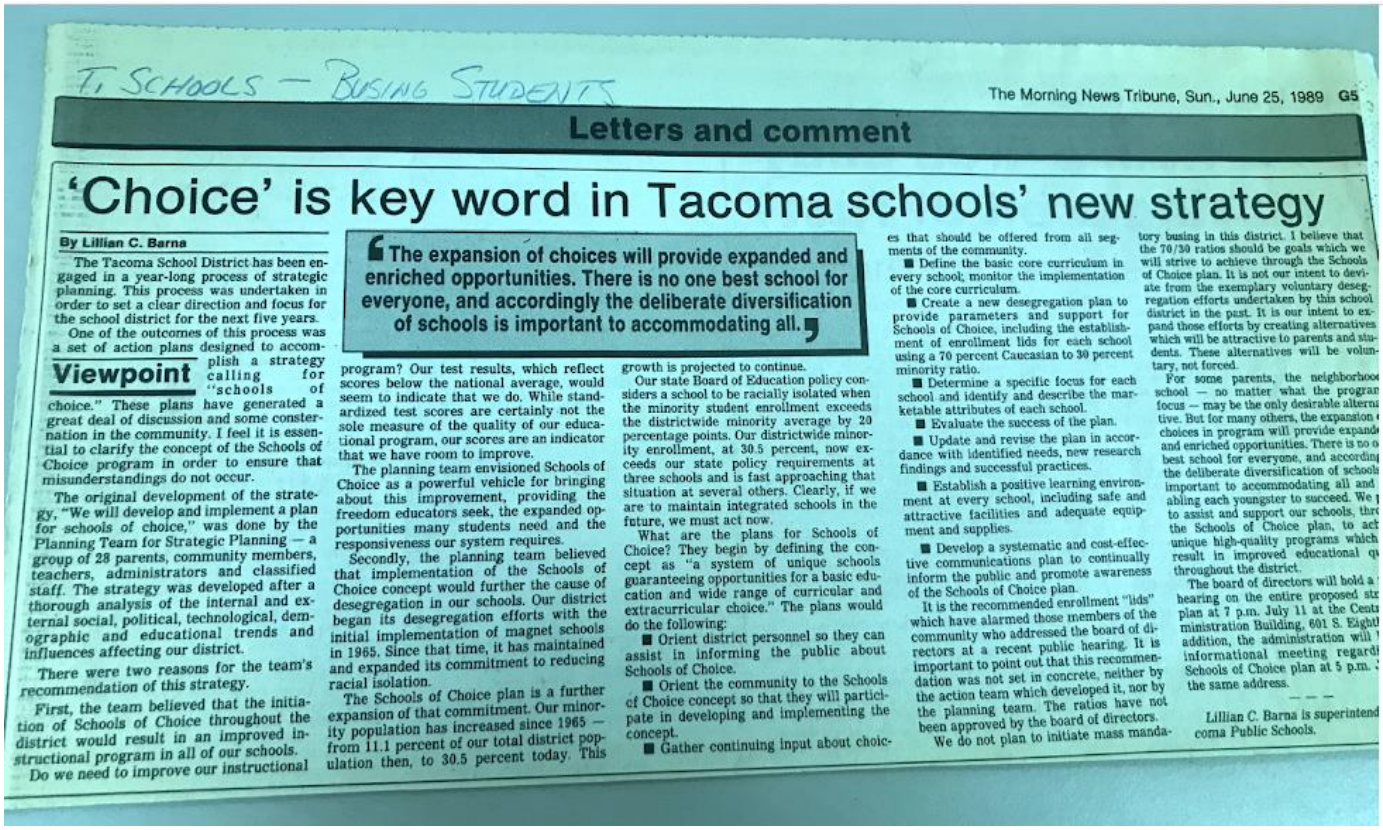
50 percent or more minority enrollment

40 to 49.9% percent minority

30 to 39.9 percent minority

1. Bryant Elementary
2. Stanley Elementary
3. McCarver Elementary
4. Lyon Elementary
5. Rogers Elementary
6. Lister Elementary
7. McIlvaigh Junior High
8. Wainwright Elementary
9. DeLong Elementary
10. Foss High
11. Edison Elementary
12. Jason Lee Junior High
13. Lincoln High
14. Willard Elementary
15. McKinley Elementary
16. Gault Junior High
17. Roosevelt Elementary
18. Sheridan Elementary
19. Boze Elementary

A.1.e Lillian Barna, "'Choice' is key word in Tacoma schools' new strategy," June 25, 1989



T. SCHOOLS — BUSING STUDENTS

The Morning News Tribune, Sun., June 25, 1989 G5

Letters and comment

'Choice' is key word in Tacoma schools' new strategy

By Lillian C. Barna

The Tacoma School District has been engaged in a year-long process of strategic planning. This process was undertaken in order to set a clear direction and focus for the school district for the next five years.

One of the outcomes of this process was a set of action plans designed to accomplish a strategy calling for "schools of choice." These plans have generated a great deal of discussion and some consternation in the community. I feel it is essential to clarify the concept of the Schools of Choice program in order to ensure that misunderstandings do not occur.

Viewpoint

The original development of the strategy, "We will develop and implement a plan for schools of choice," was done by the Planning Team for Strategic Planning — a group of 28 parents, community members, teachers, administrators and classified staff. The strategy was developed after a thorough analysis of the internal and external social, political, technological, demographic and educational trends and influences affecting our district.

There were two reasons for the team's recommendation of this strategy.

First, the team believed that the initiation of Schools of Choice throughout the district would result in an improved instructional program in all of our schools.

Do we need to improve our instructional program? Our test results, which reflect scores below the national average, would seem to indicate that we do. While standardized test scores are certainly not the sole measure of the quality of our educational program, our scores are an indicator that we have room to improve.

> "The expansion of choices will provide expanded and enriched opportunities. There is no one best school for everyone, and accordingly the deliberate diversification of schools is important to accommodating all."

The planning team envisioned Schools of Choice as a powerful vehicle for bringing about this improvement, providing the freedom educators seek, the expanded opportunities many students need and the responsiveness our system requires.

Secondly, the planning team believed that implementation of the Schools of Choice concept would further the cause of desegregation in our schools. Our district began its desegregation efforts with the initial implementation of magnet schools in 1965. Since that time, it has maintained and expanded its commitment to reducing racial isolation.

The Schools of Choice plan is a further expansion of that commitment. Our minority population has increased since 1965 — from 11.1 percent of our total district population then, to 30.5 percent today. This growth is projected to continue.

Our state Board of Education policy considers a school to be racially isolated when the minority student enrollment exceeds the districtwide minority average by 20 percentage points. Our districtwide minority enrollment, at 30.5 percent, now exceeds our state policy requirements at three schools and is fast approaching that situation at several others. Clearly, if we are to maintain integrated schools in the future, we must act now.

What are the plans for Schools of Choice? They begin by defining the concept as "a system of unique schools guaranteeing opportunities for a basic education and wide range of curricular and extracurricular choice." The plans would do the following:

- Orient district personnel so they can assist in informing the public about Schools of Choice.
- Orient the community to the Schools of Choice concept so that they will participate in developing and implementing the concept.
- Gather continuing input about choices that should be offered from all segments of the community.
- Define the basic core curriculum in every school; monitor the implementation of the core curriculum.
- Create a new desegregation plan to provide parameters and support for Schools of Choice, including the establishment of enrollment lids for each school using a 70 percent Caucasian to 30 percent minority ratio.
- Determine a specific focus for each school and identify and describe the marketable attributes of each school.
- Evaluate the success of the plan.
- Update and revise the plan in accordance with identified needs, new research findings and successful practices.
- Establish a positive learning environment at every school, including safe and attractive facilities and adequate equipment and supplies.
- Develop a systematic and cost-effective communications plan to continually inform the public and promote awareness of the Schools of Choice plan.

It is the recommended enrollment "lids" which have alarmed those members of the community who addressed the board of directors at a recent public hearing. It is important to point out that this recommendation was not set in concrete, neither by the action team which developed it, nor by the planning team. The ratios have not been approved by the board of directors.

We do not plan to initiate mass mandatory busing in this district. I believe that the 70/30 ratios should be goals which we will strive to achieve through the Schools of Choice plan. It is not our intent to deviate from the exemplary voluntary desegregation efforts undertaken by this school district in the past. It is our intent to expand those efforts by creating alternatives which will be attractive to parents and students. These alternatives will be voluntary, not forced.

For some parents, the neighborhood school — no matter what the program focus — may be the only desirable alternative. But for many others, the expansion of choices in program will provide expanded and enriched opportunities. There is no one best school for everyone, and according the deliberate diversification of schools important to accommodating all and abling each youngster to succeed. We to assist and support our schools, thr the Schools of Choice plan, to act unique high-quality programs which result in improved educational qu throughout the district.

The board of directors will hold a hearing on the entire proposed str plan at 7 p.m. July 11 at the Centr ministration Building, 601 S. Eight addition, the administration will informational meeting regardi Schools of Choice plan at 5 p.m. the same address.

Lillian C. Barna is superintend coma Public Schools.

A.1.f Sandy Nelson, "Parents demand evidence 'choice' will help schools, July 7, 1989, 2 pages

Parents demand evidence 'choice' will help schools

JUL 7 1989 TNT

By Sandy Nelson
The News Tribune

An open forum to discuss the Tacoma School District's controversial "Schools of Choice" plan did little Thursday evening to ease the suspicions of parents who are hostile to its desegregation components.

Several parents — most of them members of the newly formed Citizens Committee to Preserve Choice and Neighborhood Schools and all of them white — grilled Tacoma administrators for nearly three hours, demanding proof that such schools would improve student achievement and demanding assurance that any shuffling of neighborhood boundaries would not result in mandatory busing for their children.

Other parents were on hand to defend the plan, which envisions that each of Tacoma's 52 schools could develop special programs to supplement their core curricula and become magnets for voluntary desegregation.

Doug Schafer, a member of the group that drafted the "Schools of Choice" plan, conceded he was opposed to any scheme that would remove children from their neighborhood schools when he joined the action team last fall.

After researching what other districts have achieved through "Schools of Choice," Schafer said he grew to believe that children could benefit if their parents could shop among schools that offer diverse programs and teaching styles "as long as parents can choose by default their neighborhood school."

The question of setting specific racial quotas at each school should be considered separately, Schafer said.

Yet the proposal to make each school more reflective of the entire district by capping white enrollment at each school near 70 percent is precisely what infuriates opponents of the plan.

Several members of the citizens committee challenged statements by assistant superintendent Mary Nebgen and state education official Warren Burton that federal and state policies regarding racial balance have the authority of law.

Authors of the plan are operating on the assumption that segregation exists in Tacoma schools, complained Jim Feutz. "There is no mandate (to set racial limits)," he said.

While he agreed that state and federal law haven't defined strict racial quotas for the nation's schools, Burton said "(state and

Please see **Schools,** back page

voluntary desegregation program.

Peter Haley/The News Tribune

Parents listen to Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Lillian Barna field questions about the 'Schools of Choice' plan.

JUL 7 1989 TNT

Schools

Continued from A1

federal) policies have been upheld with the force of law."

Two Tacoma schools — McIlvaigh and Jason Lee middle schools — are now considered racially isolated and many more waver close to the line established by the state Board of Education, according to information supplied by the district.

The state considers a school racially isolated when its minority enrollment exceeds the community's minority makeup by 20 percent. At both Jason Lee and McIlvaigh, minority enrollment exceeded 50 percent of the student body by the end of this past school year.

Minorities comprise about 30 percent of the the district's overall student population, which accounts for the proposed 70-30 ratio suggested for each school.

Administrators and creators of the plan said they hoped "Schools of Choice" would encourage parents in predominantly white neighborhoods to look beyond their neighborhood school and would not lead to forced busing.

Yet one parent said many minority children can't attend their neighborhood schools under the current system.

"Minority kids have borne the brunt of our desegregation efforts," said David Droge, who sits on the planning team that is considering "Schools of Choice" along with 14 other long-term strategies for educational improvement.

Droge was referring to minority children who are barred from magnet schools in their own neighborhoods in favor of white children. The whites are bused in as part of the district's 20-year-old voluntary desegregation program.

"The sacrifice for our current efforts has been made by minority kids," Droge said.

The School Board may approve parts of the "Schools of Choice" plan at the end of this month, Barna said, but only the mission statement, objectives and strategies are planned for next year.

The superintendent promised to make a list of those specific proposals available before the next public hearing at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

A.1.g Sandy Nelson, "Schools, parents face knotty choice," July 26, 1989 (p. 1)

Schools, parents face knotty choice

First of two parts

By Sandy Nelson
The News Tribune

Barb Wolpert's son and daughter played on parallel bars at Washington-Hoyt Elementary School while Wolpert watched from a shady spot nearby.

Living less than a block from the old brick school makes it a convenient place to send her 6-year-old son, Christopher. And Wolpert would like to keep it that way.

"The thing I like about the neighborhood-school concept is that you have a sense of community," said Wolpert, who enjoyed little stability as the child of a nomadic Navy officer.

Wolpert is one of several Tacoma parents who have opposed a recent proposal to amend the Tacoma School District's 17-year-old districtwide open-enrollment policy in favor of "controlled choice."

Thursday, school board members will decide whether to appoint a special task force to study the district's "Schools of Choice" plan or to go ahead and implement it as part of a five-year plan to improve and integrate the city's schools.

Skeletal as it is, the "Schools of Choice" plan crafted by a team of residents and district planners proposes to invigorate the city's more mediocre schools by making each school — beginning with the elementary schools — unique enough to attract students from outside the immediate neighborhood who would benefit from its special program or teaching style.

Under the choice plan, residence no longer would determine which elementary school a child could attend; all children within a geographical area would be transported at no cost to the family to any school in that "cluster."

By shoring up the educational program at each school, the plan could encourage white children to migrate from predominantly white schools to those with greater racial diversity — and vice versa — according to Gail Miller, principal at

Please see **Choice**, back page

Bill Hunter/The News Tribune

Barb Wolpert, with daughter Stephanie, 4, and son Chris, 6, believes children should be able to attend neighborhood schools.

JUL 26 1989 TNT

financially strapped ... would result in ... ems for the students," Horne said. ... updated choice prog ... s way to resolve the ... cation today, whic ... ling," Horne said. ... hools the way the ... school would be ... that every pare ... to have their ki ... National Asso ... School Prin ... within a sch ... ross district ... executive ... on. ... feel it (cr ... cally a fa ... won't s ... make ... ment in ... s — mo ... and te ... pals, b ... e said. ... therm ... en w ... wil ... how ... n p ... nd ... w ... a

minded concepts of the choice plan, Jordan said she doubts the district can afford to develop special academic programs at each school when other, cheaper reforms have been rejected as too expensive.

Unlike Jordan and Wolpert, many parents don't know where they stand on the issue because they don't know how it will affect their chil- ... to the confusion, both

black and Hispanic ... opened three alternative middle schools, East Harlem ranked last of 32 districts in standardized reading and math scores, according to Sy Fliegel, former District No. 4 deputy superintendent and a national consultant on choice programs. Fewer than 16 percent of the district's students read at or above grade level.

Today, East Harlem's students ...

chooses to attend a particular school than it does on his or her family background, income or residence.

"The most fundamental premise of choice is 'different strokes for different folks,'" Raywid said in a telephone interview from Honolulu, where she is a visiting professor at the University of Hawaii.

No single school is appropriate for all students or teachers, according to Raywid. Children perform ... school

children, regardless of district size.

At its national convention July 4, the National Education Association narrowly voted to oppose all cross-district choice programs.

The union's concern is that cross-district open enrollment will force poor school districts to compete with more affluent school districts, according to Leon Horne, a Tacoma teacher and NEA official. This could prompt an exodus of students — and ... follows, them —

Chr ... Comm ... shar ... choi ... tha ... tu ... c

A.1.h Debby Abe, "Schools' racial balance rules could be tightened, November 9, 1998

Schools' racial balance rules could be tightened

Task force recommends that Tacoma's guidelines be stricter than state's

By Debby Abe NOV 9 1998
The News Tribune

A task force studying desegregation efforts in the Tacoma School District recommends the district make major changes in its quest to achieve racially balanced schools.

Key among the recommendations is that the district adopt a more narrow definition of racial balance.

Under the federal and state guidelines the district now uses, 16 of the district's 52 schools had minority enrollments too far above the district's level last school year. Under the proposed definition, 28 would have been out of balance.

"The issue is: Does the district want to make a statement about having a more balanced school system than is required by the state guidelines? That's a decision the board has to deal with," said John Hall, task force chairman and president and CEO of Rainier Pacific credit union. "Our recommendation is what we believe is the ideal circumstance."

The proposal was among 24 recommendations a citizen and district staff committee presented last week to the Tacoma School Board.

Please see **Desegregation, Back page**

T. Schools

A.2 Critical Race Theory Table

Critical Race Theory Tenets within Tacoma School History			
Interest convergence	Revisionist History	Critique of Liberalism	Structural Determinism
• McCarver attendance policies 1969 • Magnet schools explicitly catered to White families •Superintendent's call for integration once desegregation achieved White leaders' commitment to maintaining desegregated system	• Multi-racial training for teachers and resources to teach Black history funded through 1968 grant •McCarver enrichment offerings include African drum and dance •"Ethnic-theme schools" one of the proposals within the 1989 recommendations that included the controversial Schools of Choice Plan	• McCarver attendance policies 1969 (60/40 White/Black) • Magnet schools explicitly catered to White families •Superintendent's call for integration once desegregation achieved • White leaders' commitment to maintaining desegregated system • "Negro leader attacks school board" • Black students described as "emotionally handicapped" - charity model • Tacoma schools "looking good" reported from Black consultant - Black opinions held up when suits the needs of the dominant group	• White students not considered racial; • Ethnic student caps - does not apply to White students who are "racially isolated" • Social-construction of race

Appendix B – Youth Participatory Action Research

B.1 Assent Form

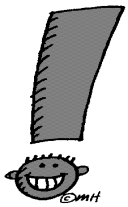
Research Assent Form

What is a research study?

Research studies help us learn new things. We can test new ideas. First, we ask a question. Then we try to find the answer.

This paper talks about our research and the choice that you have to take part in it. We want you to ask us any questions that you have. You can ask questions any time.

Important things to know…



- You get to decide if you want to take part.
- You can say 'No' or you can say 'Yes'.
- No one will be upset if you say 'No'.
- If you say 'Yes', you can always say 'No' later.
- You can say 'No' at any time.

Why are you doing this research?

I am doing this research to find out more about 1) the experiences of youth of color in Tacoma schools and 2) how this connects to the history of school desegregation (laws that encouraged the mixing of students by race) in Tacoma schools starting in the 1960s.

What would happen if I join this research?

If you decide to be in the research, I would ask you to do the following:

One-on-one Interview: talking with me about your experience as a student of color (Black, multiracial, etc.) in your schools

Group meetings: hearing about other people's experiences and learning together about Tacoma's history around race and desegregation

Student-led research, action or project: Your ideas leading where we go from here. What does what we learn make you want to know/do/learn?

Could bad things happen if I join this research?

Some of the questions might make you uncomfortable or might be hard to answer.
You can say 'no' to what we ask you to do for the research at any time and we will stop.
You may feel some emotions when reflecting on your experiences at school. If it's too uncomfortable for you, we can stop the interview.

You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and we can end the interview at any time.

How can the research help me?

We think being in this research may help you 1_ learn to do research and develop critical thinking skills 2) understand the local history around race in your schools 3) develop pride and belief in yourself and the power of your voice through doing a project or your own research and sharing it with others.

What else should I know about this research?

If you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be.

It is also OK to say yes and change your mind later though I ask as someone who knows you that you do your best to talk with me early on if you're feeling uncomfortable or that you want to drop out

We will meet starting at the end of June 2018 through August 2018. There will be the opportunity to continue working on your own research or project once the school year begins through December. We will have food at all of our meetings ☺.

Here is what I imagine will be your time commitment:

Timeline	Steps and Partners
Late June (2.5 hours)	Initial Meeting with all students
During first three weeks July, (1:1 interview, 30 minutes (may be more than one)	Individual interviews: students' experience in schools
Late July (2.5 hours)	Report-back to all students & shared learning about Tacoma's desegregation history
August (weekly 1.5 hour meetings, 6 hours total)	Student-driven next steps of their own research or applied learning
September (weekly 1 hour meetings; likely	Student-led next steps. May involve research,

after-school, 4 hours total)	data collection, analysis and presentation
October – December: as desired, needed	Review of researcher's findings and feedback provided. Potential sharing of research with community.
TOTAL: About 17 hours, 11 meetings	

Is there anything else?

You can ask me questions any time. Take the time you need to make your choice.

I expect you to show up and give your best effort.
I expect you to have an open-mind and be willing to learn new things.
I expect you to be yourself and nothing else.
I expect you to talk with me if you're feeling uncomfortable or are thinking of changing your mind about participating. Don't just ghost me.

I promise to show up and give my best effort.
I promise to have an open-mind and be willing to learn new things.
I promise to be myself and nothing else.
I promise to talk with you if I have concerns. I won't ghost you ☺
I will communicate with you about any changes in our plan.

If you want to be in the research after we talk, please write your name below. I will write my name too. This shows we talked about the research and that you want to take part.

Name of Participant _____

(To be written by child/adolescent)

Signature of Participant _____

Printed Name of Researcher _____

Signature of Researcher _____

_____ _____

Date ***Time***

Copies to:

Parents/Guardians

B.2 Parental Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON TACOMA CONSENT FORM

A Critical Race Perspective on Tacoma's School Desegregation: Then and Now

Researcher: Alyssa Urish, Masters degree candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Washington, Tacoma, aurish@uw.edu, 949-981-2657

Researcher's statement

I am asking for your child to be in a research study about the history of racial desegregation in Tacoma and its current impacts on students of color. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to allow your child to take part in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the study, what your child would be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your child's rights as a volunteer participant, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want your child to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is exploring the process and impacts of desegregation policies in Tacoma Public Schools when they were first implemented in the late 1960s through shifts in the mid-1990s when Tacoma shifted to its present-day neighborhood schools. Desegregation refers to policies that tried to mix white students and students of color in schools, rather than have students of color concentrated in a few schools. This study also aims to connect Tacoma's school history to the present-day experiences of youth of color. I will be working with youth, ages 11-14, in one Tacoma middle school. These youth will engage in shared learning about the history of Tacoma's desegregation, participate in a one-on-one interview about their own experience in schools today and take part in an individual or group-determined project connecting their learning to their own experience.

STUDY PROCEDURES

The study will take place between late June and August 2018. Youth will have the option to lead and take part in their own research, action or project in the Fall; so, involvement in this study may extend through December 2018.

This study will involve one-on-one interviews that will be 30 minutes but may have follow-up interviews that could total up to 90 minutes. All interviews will be audio-recorded; if you would not like your child's interview to be audio-recorded, then I will not be able to conduct the interview. Examples of interview questions are: "What has your experience at your middle school been like?" and "How would you describe the racial make-up of your school overall?" Your child does not have to

B.2 Parental Consent Form (continued)

answer any questions they do not wish to answer and we can end the interview at any time should they wish to end the interview for any reason.

The study will also involve group meetings where we will engage in shared learning and workshops. Participants will hear me report back to them on similarities and trends I learned in our one-on-one interviews about their school experiences. The group will then have the option to consider "What do we want to do know, based on what we learned?" and will have support to carry out their own research, action or project that can continue into the start of the school year.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Your child may experience some emotions when reflecting on their experiences at school. If they experience significant distress, we will conclude the interview and the interviewer may also provide a referral to a mental health counselor affiliated with Comprehensive Life Resources.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Your child will benefit from learning about how to conduct research and the experience of doing and analyzing research. They will also gain a deeper understanding of the local education history and critical race theory which will support them as critical thinkers and activists in their education and lives. Finally, your child will develop or deepen a belief in the power of their own voice and will engage with others in a project and have the opportunity to share it with a larger audience.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION

All data will be confidential; your child's interviews will be stored in a password protected computer and a pseudonym will be used instead of your full name in all publications. At the conclusion of this study, all identifiers collected (such as names) will be destroyed.

B.2 Parental Consent Form (continued)

TIMELINE AND EXPECTATIONS

Timeline	Steps and Partners
Late June (2.5 hours)	Initial Meeting with all students
During first three weeks July, (1:1 interview, 30 minutes (may be more than one)	Individual interviews: students' experience in schools
Late July (2.5 hours)	Report-back to all students & shared learning about Tacoma's desegregation history
August (weekly 1.5 hour meetings, 6 hours total)	Student-driven next steps of their own research or applied learning
September (weekly 1 hour meetings; likely after-school, 4 hours total)	Student-led next steps. May involve research, data collection, analysis and presentation
October – December: as desired, needed	Review of researcher's findings and feedback provided. Potential sharing of research with community.
TOTAL: About 17 hours, 11 meetings	

Consent statement

This study has been explained to me. I consent for my child to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, or if my child has been harmed by participating in this study, I can contact one of the researchers listed on the first page of this consent form. If I have questions about my child's rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098 or call collect at (206) 221-5940. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed name of child (participant-researcher) Age

Printed name of parent/guardian Signature of parent/guardian Date

B.3 Interview Questions

General Warm Up

1. As you know, I'm doing this study to understand the experiences of students of color in Tacoma schools today. I want to start by learning more about your school experience. To start us off, tell me in general about your 6th grade year at [Tacoma middle school]. What classes did you take?
    a. What was your favorite class and why?
    b. What classes will you take this year? What are you most excited about?

School experiences

2. Who has been your favorite teacher? Why?
    a. Describe them to me.
    b. Paint a picture for me about what their classroom is like. What do I see on the walls? What happens in a typical class from start to finish?
    c. Please share a specific lesson or experience with this teacher that stands out to you.
3. Can you share with me a really good experience you had at school, a highlight from this past year even? What makes this experience stand out to you? Details - sensory
    a. Can you share with me about a bad experience at school? What was that like?
4. Are you involved in any clubs or activities? Which ones? How did you get involved? Why do you stay involved?
5. Who do you hang with at school? Who do you call friends and why? Describe your friends to me.

Race-specific

6. Have you ever heard the word "segregation"? What does that mean to you?
    a. Have you ever seen this or felt this in your school experiences? What was that like?
    b. Are there specific examples that come to mind? Please share.
7. Have you ever heard the word integration before? What does integration mean to you?
    a. Have you ever seen this or felt this in your school experiences? What was that like?
    b. Are there specific examples that come to mind? Please share.
8. How would you describe the racial makeup of/different races at your school overall (students, teachers, other staff?)
    a. What about of the classes you're in?
    b. What about of your teachers?
9. Do you talk about race at school? With who?
    a. In what spaces is race talked about? Who talks about race?
    b. In what spaces is it not talked about? Who does not?
10. In what ways do you feel welcomed? Most like you can be yourself?
    a. In what spaces or classes or events?
11. Do you ever feel like you can't be yourself at school? Why? What is that like?

B.3 Interview Questions (continued)

   a. In what spaces or classes or events?
   b. Other wording: *In what ways do you feel least welcomed or that you can be yourself?*

12. Do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than black students? Why? Are there particular experiences that come to mind for you that show this?
    a. Earlier wording: Do you feel like your race impacts your experience at school? How or how not?

Looking forward

13. Taking into account all you just shared, young people like you are perhaps best positioned to know what needs to change and how. What changes would you make to improve the experience for students of color at your school?
    a. More general version: If you could change anything about your school, what would you change?
14. Is there anything I haven't asked about that you'd like to share?

B.4 Interview Transcripts

B.4a Sanjay Interview Transcript

Date: July 18, 2018
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: Coffee shop, private room

[starts 1:48]

AU: **As you know, Sanjay, I'm doing this study to understand um students' experiences um in Tacoma schools today, in particularly students of color. So, I just want to start learning more about your general school experience, um. So just to start off, tell me kind of, yeah, in general about your 6th grade experience at [Tacoma middle school]. You can start off with, what classes did you take?**

S: Well for my first semester, I took you know the regular core classes and for electives I had social studies and drumline. Um, and you know, that was I think my experience was okay with those classes but in history I have I had the same teacher that I do now and my history teacher, Ms. Steven, she's really racist and there's like an account of times that I have like hardcore evidence. Well, one she has a Trump poster in her room. I'm not going to say that Trump supporters are racist but she's really open about it and she seems to be more biased towards white people. Black people, like, dark-skins, um there's this kid in my class, T., she picks on him a lot. And in the first period, I had her for 6th period. And, so, what had happened was, T., he was walking around trying to find a napkin 'cause he had spilled his water bottle and this other kid who was like spinning a ruler on a pencil, she didn't say anything to him. But she saw that T. had knocked down his water bottle and was trying to find, like, hopefully understood he was trying to find napkins. and she was like, [changes voice to high-pitched] "T., sit down or you're going to the principal." And he was like, "I'm trying to find napkins." [AU coughs] "I'm trying to find napkins to wipe up this mess I made. And she was like, [in high-pitched voice] "No, that's it. You're going to the principal. All you're doing is walking around and socializing." He wasn't socializing, he wasn't even talking to anyone. And I was like, "But, look at M. over there, spinning his ruler" and she's like "T, I don't need your input and I was like, "Okay, I'm sorry." Um, I'm a very, I would say, kind of ambiverted kid. But mostly introvert. I don't try to talk to anyone that seems like they'll cause me drama or give me a hard time in middle school.

AU: Mmmhmm.

S: Like so-and-so will say this but I really didn't say that. I'm not trying to start drama. I just want this to be a good time in my life. Um. And it was okay. I discovered a lot of things about myself. You know, discovering my sexuality and the people I like to hang out with and all that. Um. for my second semester it was terrible. I hated my second semester.

AU. Why was that?

S: Um [lauhgs]. I got suspended for the first time in my life. And it was such a terrible experience.

Mmmhmm.

S: But honestly, I got like I had like no school for a week, so it was more, honestly, a reward than a punishment. I know that sounds so terrible, but I mean, you're taking away education from kids for, you

know, nothing. There should be like alternative school or something for suspended kids or kids who still want to receive education over their little temporary break. Um

AU: What do you think that could look like? You could go into details about what happened or just talk about alternatives to suspension.

S: Well, I won't go into my suspension but maybe a program for kids who have like for two days us kids who have been suspended and it's like mandatory for like them to go to this other school and they're all in separate classrooms with like separate teachers because like hopefully there aren't like a lot of kids who are getting like mass suspended. So there should be enough teachers like one per kid so they're not socializing with other kids and doing maybe what they were doing about why they got suspended- fighting or selling drugs or stuff.

AU; What would they be learning about int these—

S: Just what they're missing out in regular school and I mean, that's it. And, [laughs] I wish something like that existed because when you're suspended or expelled you're not allowed on any.. yeah, school grounds so you can't go on there and be like, "give me the homework, I need" you know if you still want to learn during that time. Cause most kids usually just give up, they're like, "F the school education." And they have such a negative outview on it when they don't understand that it's kin of their fault for getting what they got. Um, so yeah, I just wish there was a program like that. And I know, like, some countries there are but, I mean this is America [laughs].

AU: Um, what would you say, thinking back to last year. What was your favorite class and why?

S: Um, I liked social studies because my teacher, Mr. Winters, favorited me, well favored me. And he was really nice to me all the time. I got to choose my seating arrangement. Because you most of the time in social studies you get to do hands on projects and stuff. Um, and I learned a lot about, like, the history and stuff and that topic I seem to take an interest in.

AU: Um, what sort of history did you all learn about?

S: We learned about, well, one we learned how to write a business letter which in my opinion is a real important thing to learn in the real world. And unlike some things that we learned about in school. And we learned about the wars and why certain wars happened and

AU: American wars? World wars?

S: American wars against - and how America was bought and created and how it came to look how it looks today. Who bought this state, who bought this state. The 13 civilized colonies, all that. It's a very interesting topic for me.

AU: Mmmm [T laughs]. What are you most excited about for the year to come?

S: Umm, I'm excited because I'm in - drumline is my only AP class. Oops, sorry. Um, so, in drumline you get to choose if you're above the year of 6th grade which is very rare, because 6th graders don't go into [uh, tilts head to side if posing] AP drumline. Um [giggles]

AU: Does AP mean you get college credit?

S: AP advanced placement

AU: Do you get college credit?

S: No, you can only get that from Washington State history. That's the only class you can get high school and college credits from. So, um, next year I'm going to be choosing a different drum than the one I've been playing on. And, also, Ms. Steven is leaving so she's not going to be there next year so hopefully another racist or biased teacher will not replace her.

AU: Do you know why she's leaving?

S: Um, apparently the school is too far away from her house for her. But, Okay. I think it's honestly because of the hate and the rudeness and the disrespect from the kids she's been receiving over her bias because I had spoken to her and she was like [changes voice to higher-pitch, "I don't live too far from here so work isn't really a struggle for me" And I was like "Ehhh [wrong-answer sound]." Oh, okay. And I'm also really looking forward to, honestly, a new schedule and better teachers. 'Cause a lot of the older students said I didn't have really good teachers and I could see compared to other history or [pause] history or history teachers, I didn't have really good teachers. But I think I had a good language arts teacher.

AU: Mmmhmm. Who has been your favorite teacher? And that could be.. that does't have to be [Tacoma middle school].

S: My favorite teacher would have to be Ms. Ely from my elementary school or Ms. Atkins from my online school cause she really acknowledged me for my intelligence and she was like, "Oh you're so smart and she kind of always gave me praise and I like that. [pause]

AU: Tell me more about Ms. Ely and Ms. Atkins and [pause] describe them to me

S: Ms. Atkins she was this nice little, she kind of gave off nice old lady next door who you play cards with and just is so nice to you. Um, she was always like super tender with me and she like if I make a mistake she wouldn't be like, "no, no, no, no no, it's this." She'd be like, "Okay, so try pronouncing it like this." She was always softer and way more gentle with me like public school teachers have been.

AU: You said she was online so tell me about the class you took with her and how you interacted if it was all online.

S: I was in um, [pause] I think first grade, I don't… Um, I think she was my Kindergarten and first grade teacher and I, we, I she [eh]. The K-12 program I was with, it's called Wabush [spelling?] They mailed us a webcam for us to use on our computer. And if you don't have a computer they mail it to you for like an additional fee of like a hundred dollars. Um, And they, so, we hook up the webcam, right? And we have online conferences and, oh my god, they like go on for hours, it's the worst thing ever. And the kids have like free chat and you just, oh my god it was so chaotic. And there was also like a drawing board on there. And she'd be like, "Okay try drawing a fish." And the kids would just go crazy they were like [changes voice]: "oh my gosh, we have access to the drawing board." Cause like the kids are like kind of obedient and they were just like, "okay she didn't say draw on the drawing board, so we can't yet." But when she said we could, oh my god it was so crazy. Um, and then there would be like separate ones for each kid and she'd be like, "Okay, A., you're drawing board looks nice. [AU coughs]. Sometimes she would give us separate assignments like, "what do you think Native Americans look like? Draw a picture and have your parents mail it in to me." There was a lot of mailing and separate meetings going on. Not like their houses, no, but like, "Oh, can you meet up in this library in Parkland?" when I obviously live in Tacoma. But most of the time the location of the meeting would be more convenient for the teacher but not really the parents or kids. And we also like drowned in like shipments of books and supplies and that's where it kind of went wrong for us.

AU: This is the homeschool program?

S: Yes.

AU: Yeah. Okay, [pause] What about Ms. Ely?

S: Oh, I love Ms. Ely.

AU: Describe her to me, describe- like paint a picture of the classroom.

S: Ms. Ely's classroom was a very welcoming place. It was almost like a second home to me. Cause when I come to school I'm expecting all these annoying, you know, bothersome kids and then there's Ely's room and I'm like, "Yaaay, I'm here." You know it's a relief there's this soft carpet and she would sometimes during reading time, independent reading time, she would put down a fuzzy carpet in the corner of the room and it's so comfortable, oh my god,. She would have these bungee chairs and stuff, oh my gosh. She just wants to the best for her students, honestly. She kind of gives off mother vibes. She's very caring and nice. Um, she, her, she always has these national park pictures on her wall. Cause she loves going to national parks cause that's like her hobby I guess. Um, um, she has a few kids, uh….

AU: Is there like a certain memory. Does like a certain experience or memory come to mind when you think of either of your favorite teachers that really like exemplifies why they're awesome in your mind?

S: One time, I came to school in slippers and Ms. Ely like me slide for it. And she convinced the other teachers to let me slide for it.

AU: Why do you think she did that?

S: Because she likes me? I-Or because like maybe she realized that maybe, you know, they're very nice slippers they don't look like slides or anything. They're very like, going out-y. And I was like, "I don't see anything wrong with these." And she was kind of like, "Okay, I got your back." So maybe she kind of just realized that maybe like if I do this, like, I don't know. It was just a nice, kind act. I don't really know why she did it.

AU: Mmhmm.

S: That's kind of what I like most about her. She's very unpredictable [pause]. And I like her.

AU: [pause]. Say more about unpredictable. Cause I can also see that as a reason to not like a teacher.

S: Well, um, if there was a very rude kid in the class sometimes she would flip on them and sometimes she would be super kind to them and I was like. What? What happened. Why do you like all this kid all of a sudden. But she wouldn't like them she would just, I think she would just test out, what if I'm nice to this kid? Maybe he's rude to me cause I'm rude to them. I was like, no, that wasn't a very good plan. They're still rude to her. A lot of kids don't like Ms. Ely and that I don't understand. I think it's because they're more of the rebellious kids and so when they try to do what they want. "No, I'm not going to pick up this crayon." "No, I'm going to sharpen this pencil when you're talking." You know, maybe, she's just like, "Alright, fine. I see how it is. I'll be rude to you too." And, so, that is, I mean, if you're nice to her, like me, then you don't get bad treatment.

AU: Mmmhmm. Mmmhmm. [pause]

S: Also, first impressions matter, so. Be nice to your teacher first thing.

AU: Um. [slight laugh]. So, we talked about teachers but going back out to school experiences, can you share with me a very good experience, um, even like a highlight form this past year.

S: There's this mentor type of guy. His name is Mr. Packer. He's so cool, honestly, like he's [pause] kind of off the record. And like he's, for instance, if you do something really bad, you know, uh bring an illegal substance to school and change your mind. He'll, like, kind of support you, not like, "Oh yeah do this," he's like, "What are you doing? Put that away, stop. You're going to get yourself in so much trouble." Or if you're talking back to a student – not student, teacher – and you're like being rude to them and they're like [changes voice] "Go to ISS!" Mr. [Packer controls ISS when it's not lunchtimes. The dean controls it when it's lunchtime. So, if you get sent to ISS it's like, "Oh, you know, oh no." but Mr. Packer is always there, he's like, "Why are you here? You're always here. What's wrong this time? Go back to class. You know, don't talk to your teacher. Don't do this. That person wasn't talking about you, you're just being a little paranoid. Just go back to class." And he's always there for every student like most of the time. Like there's this girl with an eating disorder like a really bad eating disorder. Mr. Packer talked to her and like got her out of it and that just kind of, I think that kind of represents him as a person. He's able to support people really well and kind of get them out of crappy situations and that's a really nice attribute in my opinion.

AU: You had like, you know you brought that up as a highlight of the past year. So tell me about an experience you had with him?

S: With him, well, when I got sent- - so when you get suspended, you get sent to ISS for the rest of the day – and that's such a pain for me. But he let me play on the computer. You know, I was the only student who got to play on the computer. Um, and kids told me, "Oh, he does that, you know, he makes you feel special and that's nice." And, they didn't –they weren't really like, Mr. Packer kind of was upfront about it. And he was like, "I do this often but, you know, it's kind of nice to feel treated especially when you're not in class and I know you're not the type of student who, you know, does that." And he really like talked me through it. He was like, "I completely understand. You know, I've been through exactly what you've been through. I had to do the same thing. You know, it's okay." It was nice.

AU: Yeah.

S: Very comfortable, like a warm blanket.

AU: Um, well, on the flip side can you share with me about a bad experience you had at school this past year and what that was like?

S: Well, like in what context?

AU: I just kept it general. It could um, it could be, you talking about your suspension. It could be, an interaction with a teacher. Um.

S: Um..

AU: You shared your highlight. It could be lowlight.

S: It would probably be with Ms. Steven. A small bad experience, I'll share this one first is: I was getting kombucha from the, from my teachers mailbox for her. And I dropped it and it broke. And she was mad at me. So that's a good small bad experience

AU: for Ms. Steven or a different teacher?

S: A different teacher. A computer teacher. Ms. Nordy. She loves kombucha.

With Ms. Steven. I was just sitting and having a good time. So, I tap a lot because you know drumline cadences get stuck in my head and drumline is a favorite of mine. So, you know, I tap a lop. I try to do it on my legs and stuff. So, one time I was tapping on the table, like this. [taps]. But I had like fake nails and stuff so I was tapping with my nails and it was very nice. And then she was kind of like. "Sanjay, stop tapping. And I was like, "Ok." So, I started tapping on my legs, because it's kind of an uncontrollable urge. And then she was like, [changes voice] "Alright, Sanjay please stop." And I was like, "Okay, sorry." And another kid starts tapping and, I get, he's very, he's white. And he's, all that. He starts tapping very violently. She says nothing to him. And I'm like [makes face of disbelief.] You know, like, [sucks teeth] I just kind of felt mad because you know the third time I started tapping like so quietly like she could only see my fingers moving, there was no noise coming out. and she was like, "Ok, Sanjay, that's it. Please go wait in the office for the remainder of the class." And I was like, "What [makes noises] look at this kid!" And she was like, "Okay, don't worry about him, mind your own business, go to the office." And I was like, "Okay, that's chill."

And I try not to talk back to teachers to save my reputation to teachers. But if a teacher is making me mad [AU coughs] I won't hesitate I'm like Okay, but look at this kid, like I'm not going to put them in their place but I'm just going to let them know, what they're doing is making me mad and I prefer they didn't – especially if it's especially if it's wrong. <u>When there's a kid doing the same thing as me but he's of a different race I'm like, "Okay, that says a lot about you."</u>

AU: So that experience being treated differently is what makes it stand out in your mind?

S: Yeah and, in my opinion I'm not too dark and so I didn't think, you know, I won't face as many hardships as darker people would. And that's being honest, I mean, If we don't acknowledge the issue, we're not going to talk about it [piano starts down below in café]. And so, I've never been treated differently or of lesser equality than other people. So I, when it came to middle school and I was like, okay, everyone is going to know I'm smart or I'm cool. No one's going to treat me different or less. When that teacher, Ms. Steven, kind of put me down I was like [makes motion of balloon deflating.] And another thing is I have really good grade in that class. And, um, uh, she, there's a hundred percent club and I try so hard to get exceeding on tall of my things just a little bit so I can hold it against her just in case she tries to say I don't have good grades. And I'd just be like, "actually…" And so, I work really hard on all of my projects in that class. And I do put a lot of color and a lot of work she doesn't have to ask for. I do put it on there. When I see this kid who has an A minus, and it seems like a very minor difference, but if he's white, you know, she's like "Oh, okay" you know K., you have the best grades in this class I'm like [purses lips, makes sour face.] It really makes me, it puts me down a little. I don't like feeling inferior.

AU: In that case, you attribute it to skin color.

S: Yeah, I'm like, it's kind of obvious.

AU: Mmmhmm, mmhmm. Um, okay. Well, we'll move into some questions that will talk more specifically about race so feel free to expand on things you've already shared. So, you've heard the word 'segregation' before.

S: Mmmhmm.

AU: What does that mean to you?

S: Um, uh, it's kind of similar to the fifth step of genocide in my opinion. It's kind of separating people by race or separating people in general but especially by race. Um, and maybe sometimes treating the minority as you know not human or lesser than human.

AU: How have you ever seen this or felt this in your school experience and what was this like?

S: No, but I've seen something similar to it but I think she was just. Again, Ms. Steven, oh my gosh. And so, she tries to justify by, "I'm separating you guys by your last name." No. Is she bad at the alphabet? Like, no. Most of the darker kids would have to sit way up front where she could see them really close. And [inaudible] black kids would have to sit at the back like it was in the 50s or less than that, I don't know. And, so I'm just like: "But she's sitting them in the front so she could keep an eye on them, I'm guessing.

AU: Where did you sit in the class?

S: Um, I sat in the back. Because it was like the first few days of school and we could choose where we sat. And so, I always sit in the back of the classroom. And, yeah, so in the second semester I had to sit in the front, because that's just how things are, I'm guessing "That's just how things are," that's what she always said.

AU: And so it was the second semester that she did it "by last name" in quotes, but… Mmmhmm. Um, so that would like be an example of what you're saying of segregation.

S: And I know it's like very minor but, I mean, it still counts in my opinion

AU: Um, have you heard the word "integration" before?

S: Pretty sure I have but I just don't know.

AU: Well, what would you say? What does that word mean to you?

S: The opposite of segregation? Because I know "inter" or, you know, stuff like that. It kind of means like you know inte-grate, or mix.

AU: yeah. So what do you think that means, yeah, in relation to schools?

S: Being more diverse, you know. Um, try to justify diversity. Cause like a lot of people are like [changes voice] diversity is a conspiracy. Yeah. I don't understand. Cause I know a lot of people who will favor a certain a teacher because they favor them and sometimes that teacher favors a certain race and so that certain race likes her back and they're like "Yay." Yeah.

AU: Mmmhmm. Um. One question about that and we'll go back to integration. Teachers you mentioned as being your favorite or even Mr. Winters, social studies. It was, you know, things you explicitly said were because they showed you favoritism in some way. Was that because you shared a race in that way?

S: I've [pauses] I've never really thought about it. But I think back on it and it was so strange. Because Mr. Winters being a cis-white male. Um, well, I don't think it was necessary to mention he was cis, but I think it is. Um, and so, kids, there is this kid J., he also really liked Mr. Winters and he was black. And M., she's not black but she's of darker skin tone. She's not white. And, me. I'm not white either. I'm caramel. Eh, so, I think maybe he favored black kids. But I think most of the black or colored kids in 5th grade were kind of… Honestly they were more ex.. ecc. ecc [Eeeeck- mumbles over words]. Eccentric. … most kids they didn't really put out effort or stuff. We were always, we were always hyped. We were

always like, “Yeah!” Me, M. and J., he always showed us like, sort of special treatment but not too much so the kids wouldn’t say anything. He was just kind of like, ‘cause we were just hyped all the time, like “Yeah, we’re ready to do this assignment!” Yeah, so like, I think he honesty likes my personality. I’m not going to say any race. ‘Cause I can’t see Mr. Harris being racist. [pause] cause although he does has a privilege in society. Every white person has a privilege in society. And, I mean, maybe, I don’t - He’s not abusing, he’s not like [changes voice] “I’m white, you’re black, I’m better than you.” He’s a very humble man, I appreciate his forthcoming as a fifth grade teacher.

AU: Oh that Mr. Steven! I was thinking, you also have a Mr. Steven for social studies?

S: NO, that’s Mr. Brown.

AU: Oh! You said Mr. Steven. I thought you were talking [inaudible] Social Studies?

S: Yeah Mr. Steven taught social studies. Mr. Brown looks like Mr. Winters.

AU: And business letters? That was all fifth grade?

S: Yeah. That was all fifth grade. I’m sorry for the confusion.

AU: What did you say the same with Ms. Ely and Ms. Atkins? That your connection was maybe not about race but more about personality -

S: Yeah. intelligence

AU: Okay. Going back to integration. So, you talked about it being a mix, intentionally focusing on diversity. Um, would you say that you’ve seen or felt this in your school experience? Like an intentional integration of race?

S: Well, it wasn’t really like in school, it was kind of on school grounds. Uh, Uh, when we were doing a Black Lives Matter walk-out and it was kind of fighting, we were like “equal rights!” and we were all ativitis and I was totally up for it. I so love like protests and activism and all. That’s my thing. Um, and so one of the BSU black student union members who were, they were kind of leading in. And they realized, they were like, “Hold on, we’re segregated. Integrate!” And I was like, “Oh, yay! That’s a big word!” All the kids were like, “What does that mean?” And all the 8th graders started moving because I’m assuming they knew what that meant, or like older kids at least, not just 8th graders. And they were just sort of moving. And you know, the sixth graders were like, “Oh yeahn I know what that word means. And they started moving because other kids were moving. And, you know, one of the leaders, A. was like, “No, mix colors! You’re segregated! Mix colors.” “Oh, okay we get that.” So, I think that’s kind of forced integrity- integration.

AU: Was this in your march, what he was saying in terms of mix?

S: We weren’t like marching. We weren’t allowed to move or else we would all get like big trouble.

AU: So you were standing?

S: Yeah, so they were like, “No! You have to move.” So, yeah, we did.

AU: How would you describe the racial-makeup of [Tacoma middle school] overall? I mean like students, teachers, other adults?

S: Okay. So, there’s only two black staff members there. And it’s Mr. Ruiz and he’s like light-skinned and it’s Ms. Richards who is dark-skinned. The rest oft them are all white and I think that kind of makes

me mad. Like there's no black teachers and there's been uproars about that and kids complaining about that. So, when we get a black substitute kids, very rarely, all the kids are excited. They're like "Ahhh! You're our first black teacher, kind of." And, you know, they're hype too. They're like, "Oh, the kids are hype about me, I'm hype too." So, yeah, most of the students are black too. Um, but the white kids, they're, they're they're, humble. Most, most of them at least. There's some of those snobby white kids.

AU: What percentage do you think are black or of color?

S: I'd see. Of color. If we're not counting the 0.1% blacks, I would say like 97%. A lot, the majority of us. Like, yeah.

AU: So just three percent of whites, 3% of the student body is white, you would say?

S: Like, all white. Like not majorly black. Like, I'm not talking about physically black cause then there's those white kids that are – uh, mixed kids – that are very white on the outside but their dad's black. So, I'm like, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking more so about the kids who are like, both parents are white.

AU: And that's just like a small percentage? Um… you said only 2 black – did you say teachers or just like staff in general?

S: Staff in general. They're both. I don't know what Ms. Richards is. She's like a coach to most sports teams. She's, she's not a counselor….Mr. Ruiz is a counselor. I don't know what Ms. Richards is.

AU: What about – and same with like leadership? Principals, assistant principals…

S: Oh, Mr. Boarder. Mr. Boarder is half-black. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I completely forgot about him.

[omitted 2 lines spelling out his name]

AU: He's the AP? Right?

S: He's the vice. Assistant, vice, I don't care.

AU: So teachers, not very diverse. Are there other teachers of color? Or when you talk about black staff you're thinking about all the teachers of color?

S: There's an Asian teacher. Does that count? I don't know.

AU: Does it count?

S: I don't know.

AU: There's some gray, right. You talk about black and white, there's some gray. And leadership, I had kind of asked, students, teachers and just other staff. What about the classes you're in. Does that reflect the overall makeup of the school? Are your classes more [pause] Do you see like, um, a different makeup in certain classes like your AP drumline, like you said. Is that a certain makeup of students?

S: AP drumline, there's a lot of white kids. There's only [whisper counting names] like three black kids there if I'm not mistaken. There's a Puerto Rican but he's not [whispers: he's not actually Puerto Rican.] The rest of them [classes] they're diverse. They have a good ratio.

AU: What's a good ratio?

S: Like, preferably, equally. You know, or like equal if not close to black and white people. You know, hopefully there's not just that one white person in class or that one black person in class and they feel left out and they kind of realize that.

AU: I mean like if it's -- it would be interesting, we can look up the actual percentage. You're saying it feels like, right, 97% are people of color. Then in a class, if you have 10 students, uh, nine of them being people of color would actually represent the school. If it was more 50/50…

S: Well, somewhat. Like, I would have to like think about all my classes, like, hmmm okay there's this many black kids in that class. Or this many white kids. It..

AU: You're going more on the feel…

S: Yes, like alright.

AU: … accurate represents my experiences. It stands out when it's really off. Like you said, drumline. This is not like a typical [Tacoma middle school] classroom. Do you talk about race at school?

S: I try not to. Cause, like, kids there they are like especially uneducated kids about it, they're really sensitive. They're like, "Yeah, this kids' black." And they're like "Ahhh! That's racist." And I'm like "How's that…?" And I can't even speak 'cause they start overpowering me and they're like "That's racist, I don't care what you say." And I'm like, "Okay, I'm sorry." And I kind of like have to submit their stupidity. [AU coughs]

AU: Uh, is there any like certain spaces or people do you talk about race?

S: The majority of my friends are 8th graders. Mostly because they understand more about the issues I speak about and we're kind of on the same mindset. And we can use big words together. So, uh, I mostly talk about with my good friend R. [smiles, giggles] So, we mostly talk about inequalities and stuff and he understand where I'm coming from and I understand where he's coming from and, like, we mostly speak out about these topics. "We have to do something about these topics! But what is there to do? How can we do something when we're so little in society? And, he's like, "Yeah you're right. Eh, we'll figure something out."

AU: Are there any adults at the school that you talk to about this or do you feel like you could?

S: Uh, I feel like I could talk to Ms. Starr about this. Ms. Starr is really supportive about this. She's a really big activist. And she's like, this is what you need to be woke about in society.

AU: Was she your teacher this year?

S: No. I'm not an [equity-elective] student. I want to be an [equity-elective] student but next year I'm doing French and I'm not dropping drumline. So I'm just like [shrugs shoulders].

AU: [equity-elective] is an elective?

S: Yeah.

AU: Oh.

S: Yeah. I think. It should be. It is. Yes, it is. [laughs].

AU: I don't know. Cause isn't it just your language arts class?

S: It is half Language –It can be Language Arts. And I actually don't know how [equity-elective] works, I'm sorry. You'd have to talk to A. or some other [equity-elective] student about this.

AU: Also, if you want to be in that class, maybe it's easier than you think. We should probably find out.

S: But I mean you'd have to like, okay, so like at the end of each year you have to choose your electives at like an after school conference thing. And they're like, "choose your electives." And [equity-elective]'s on there, I know that. So, maybe you like choose it and they see if you're able for it, you qualify for it. I don' tknow how [equity-elective] works, I'm sorry

AU: It's okay, we'll ask. It's less for me but more like… Ms. Starr, yeah, I heard a lot about her so yeah [inaudible].

S: she's awesome

AU: In what space is race, in what spaces is race talked about? Who talks about race? Maybe…

S: I know Ms. Starr talks about race a lot. Ms. Christian, mostly [equity-elective] teachers. And [pause].. yeah. I can't think of anyone else. // Oh sorry. I know there's teachers who acknowledge it's going on. I mean everyone acknowledges racism. They all know it's going on. It's a really big topic right now. It's always been a big topic. Um, and, so I mean, I'm not going to be like, oh. Cause everyone knows what, *hopefully* everyone knows what racism is and you know acknowledges it. But there's only a few who speak out about it and they're like, "This is what's going on. //We need to do something about this."

AU: What does that look like when people //do something about it?/

S: //Um, it's/ mostly just physical protests like walk outs but I think the smaller things do count, you know. Um, and, if there's… Okay, there is [pause] you know, I can't really see it like see it as being anything else than just… Like I know there's other things to do than just physical protests like, you know, write a letter to someone. Do something small. But I can't think of anything right now.

AU: What are students protesting?

S: Students are mostly protesting equal rights.

AU: At [Tacoma middle school] or –

S: At [Tacoma middle school].

AU: Can you give me an example?

S: Cause I know some kids think Ms. Joy is racist. And I don't have Ms. Joy. She's a 7th and 8th grade teacher. I don't have her. But a lot of students think she is cause she treats the black kids lesser than the white kids and I'm just kind of like, "Okay, I guess she goes in with the bucket."

AU: [pause] Um… equal rights at [Tacoma middle school]. You were saying like Ms. Joy is not practicing that. So they protest specific instances. What caused or what led to the walkout you mentioned?

S: I don't know. There were starting to be posts on Snapchat like alright this day, this time to this time. Do this. Out of these doors. We're kind of like, "Okay." So eventually it went around really fast. And then a few days passed, and we were like, you know kids start – you know the school finds out about it and it was school sanct [fumbles over word] sorry – school sanctioned for the time mentioned on the post. And it was like an app-30 minutes and after that, some kids started going in. And then we waited a little bit longer and they're like, "Alright, come in now." You know, and I was like one of like 30 kids who

stayed out until the end of the day, you know talking about these things. And we did get locked out and it was really extreme. It was crazy. But, I mean, the school system's sucky, what is there to do? [I: Mhm] I'm always like, "Yeah! World history's going to be lit!" But, if they teach the truth, then you know it's going to be lit. but most of the time they only teach about the water surface, they don't teach about the iceberg underneath.

AU: [pause] Uh, did any teachers take part in the walk-out?

S: Ms. Starr, she took part in it for the most part. Like longer than we were supposed to, you know. For that we were really thankful. And I don't know if it was this walk-out or the other March for our Lives, but there were snacks. Either one, one walkout there were snacks. And Ms. Starr offered the snacks. She's very nice. No one asked her to, you know. But, I mean, it's food so we were going to take it. But, eventually Ms. Starr went in.

AU: Why did you all get locked out if it was school sanctioned?

S: It was school sanctioned for the time advertised but we stayed out past that time so most of the kids got locked out. So the kids who stayed out 'til like you know 2:50, we got locked out. And I don't understand because we're fighting for Mr. Boarder. We're fighting for Ms. Richards and Mr. Ruiz. But Mr. Boarder was the one who locked us out? I mean, that's, okay. [changes voice] whatever you say!

AU: Why do you think - what do you think made him do that?

S: I think, I don't think it's moreso because of his, like, you know. I don't think – his, his color does matter in this situation but I think it was more so, you know, the kids are breaking the rules. And I don't understand the whole lock us out thing honestly so I can't say much about that if I don't understand it, but I think it was stupid and unnecessary.

AU: Um, would you think there's certain spaces where it's not allowed…. Where like talking about race is not allowed?

S: Uh, no, but I think. So in history one time we were talking about , "Ok, it doesn't matter if you're 000.264% black, you can't say the 'n" word, you know. And they were like, you have to be physically black to say it or some type of shade of black to say it. And I was like, "What about Asian people?"you know cause as you said, you have like the gray. And they're like, "No, shut up." And the discussion started getting louder and they're like, "No, you're stupid, you can't say the "n" word if you're white. Ms. Steven, 'cause she started hearing it, she said. "Hold on, shut up. You can't talk about that." And we were like, "This is free time. We get to do what we want. Stay out of our discussion Ms. Steven." I don't, like, whenever a topic of race is brought up in her class, like, there was another instance T. was tapping – no, he wasn't. He was talking or tapping, he was doing something wrong and M., again [white student], was doing something wrong. And then she chose to kick um, she chose to kick T. out of the class and then A., physically white but mixed kid, he said something about it and she didn't say anything, right, and then J. this very black kid, he said something about it and they both got sent out. And I was like, "That's convenient!"

AU: Mhm. So when [S: Mhm]AU: Race is explicitly brought up, then it's shut down or //there's consequences/

S: //Yes/ I was like, "What are we supposed to do?"

AU: Um,

S: Oh wait, and another thing, is the kids and the teachers are always hyping us up, but then when we do, we get locked out of the school. Then we get… [*looks at man walking out door by us*] "Oh, okay." And we get yelled at. [says: *I thought I knew him*]. We just get punished for speaking about what we think is right and actually doing something about it. They just want to clip our wings and stuff.

AU: Do you think there's a way that they would feel more comfortable with you all doing it? Or is there truly just a disconnect?

S: I think there's truly just a disconnection. Like the plug is always pulled early, you know? Because finally when something starts happening, you know, real people start like, just strangers start joining. And there's people honking, you know. I think that's when they like really wanted to shut it down. They're like, "No! Actual people want to do something about this. This is wrong!" I'm like, "Mmm." [*Sighs*.] What is there to do?

AU: Yeah. Well that's part of what we'll do maybe, start to talk about together this second part [of research]. In what way - I just have a couple more - In what ways do you feel most like you can be yourself at school or most welcomed?

S: Umm, I always feel welcomed in Mr. Packer's room. Always. Cause I can just stop in whenever I want. You know, if I ask to take a lap during class, I can just stop in and be like, "Hi, Mr. Packer, how's your day going?" Um, and he's never just like "Get out!" you know. Cause he's not really an education class. You're not, that's not like a core class or some-- It's not even a class.

AU: What class is he in?

S: He's not a class. He—

AU: ISS?

S: Yeah, he covers ISS and all that. So, I can always just stop in and say 'hi" and I always feel welcomed or I'll just chill in there. I personally never chilled in there because I personally am scared to get yelled at by my real teacher, so yeah, but from kids' experiences, they're always like, "Yeah, I loved Mr. Packer." Mr. Packer is cool.

AU: And he wasn't one of the people you mentioned as a person of color, so he's a white man?

S: He had to stay in – Huh? Oh no he's black.

AU: *[I make a confused face]*.

S: Well I don't count him as staff. He's kind of there as a volunteer He doesn't get paid for what he does unfortunately. So I don't exactly qualify him as staff.

AU: Mhm. Are there others, I don't know, volunteers, just anybody, adults you see in the school? Are there more people of //color/.

S: //A few days/ in the week, these adults, I don't know where they're from. I know one of them, he's from LC downtown. He's from there, he comes and visits. He's always like, "Hey, Sanjay, and I'm like, "Mm, hi". He's really, like outgoing.

AU: He comes to McCarver. Um, yeah. Well, conversely, so you said in what ways do you feel most welcomed, to be yourself. Mr. Packer's room. What would you say, are there spaces where you, how do I word it? Do you ever feel like you can't be yourself at school?

S: Yes. I'm a really big goofball and I love talking, but I always love taking about serious issues. So, you know, I also do talk a lot. That's my – that's a big problem of mine. I talk a lot. So, when the teachers talking about something boring, I'll just scoot over to the side and I'm like, "Hey, A., how's your day going?" [AU: *laughs*]. And, she's like, you know. So, I understand how that can be disruptive to the classroom environment but then there's a few other things, I try to share my idea and my idea's immediately shut down. And I'm just like. [makes explosive sound.] You know, like, crushed.

AU: Oh I was going to say, what is that like?

S: Like I'm in a hydraulic press and I'm just trying to keep myself rom getting crushed in such of a biased society of our school.

AU: And is this, like what, where does this happen? What spaces, classrooms, events?

S: I'm not comfortable sharing that.

AU: Okay, okay. More than one space?

S: Mhm.

AU: [pause] Um, you already answered this but I'll share it in case there's anything you want to expand upon. Um, do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than black students? You've already said, in some cases.

S: Somewhat. I think some teachers kind of try their best to make the students feel equal. They're like "hey, no ones lesser. No one's superior, No one's inferior." And some teachers really do try their best, but you know eventually. Those little teachers, yeah.

AU: I ask are there particular experiences that come to mind? I'm thinking some you already shared with Ms. Steven. And just, same actions, different consequence. Um, any other experiences?

S: Not that I can think of right now.

AU: Um, so yeah taking all that you shared into account, it really confirms my belief that, like, young people like you have these experiences um and the insights like you have are perhaps best positioned to like know what needs to change versus someone coming in and saying like, "Oh, yeah let's just do it this way cause we haven't don't his before." So, with that in mind, form this conversation or you're own thinking. What changes would you recommend to improve the experience of students of color at your school?

S: Having, getting an actual like education teacher, you know. Not just someone to cover the ISS room. And getting a teacher of color. Of dark-skin, not, you know, light-skin. Not any of that. Just like, a true [says softer volume: not true, everyone's true] a dark-skin to cover a classroom. Hopefully Ms. Steven's to you know, heal those who are wounded. And, so that, you know, the kids feel comfortable talking to someone other than Ms. Starr. You know, someone who black kids can relate to and they're like the teacher's like, "yeah, I understand, I had to go through that as a kid, too. Teachers were rude back in my day and stuff." So, like an old – or young—I don't' care. Old or young black teacher, I think, would be easier. I think that would make the experience better and that would change the perspective of a lot of kids at the school.

AU: Mhm, mhm. Did you say that, to clarify, for the ISS room or just in general?

S: Just in general. Not just to cover the ISS room. Add a little bit of diversity to the teachers, at least. I mean, they're all white, come on.

AU: Why do you think that is?

S: I don't know.

AU: [pause] Is there anything else Sanjay that I haven't asked that you'd like to share?

S: Well, I was watching this documentary, not documentary, it was this video It was like: Can you talk black? Can you talk white?" And you know all that vision profiling, or auditory profiling and stuff. And he was talking about, they showed a few video clips, and they were like stock market managers, I don't know. They live in their own cubicles at work and they write notes and they call people, you know. I don't know what kind of jobs require that business man where you just have your cubicle and you're all cool. But, so you're- so they're calling people and there's this black guy and he's like, "You wanna get people? Use your white voice." And he's like [*changes voice*] "hello, we were wondering…" you know a more formal speaking way. And I notice that black people, most of the time they, when they speak, they don't' use their words. "So they would have to be more annunciating, and articulative." So, like I'm not just being like, all black people speak this way. They do. And it's a real issue. And if we don't talk about, I mean, who's going to acknowledge it. It's not an issue, but it's a thing. So when they're all talking in their white voices, studies have shown, that, you know, more people are willing to do what, you know, they want, even when it's over the phone, especially, cause they can't see that they're black and they're just guessing. They're like, hm, this sounds like a white person. **And you're always safe when you're speaking like a white person in my opinion.** Because in case the person's racist, you know, and they think you're black or something. Or they know you're black from the way you're speaking and they're kind of just like, "Oh I'm less willing to do what you're saying because I'm racist and I think you're less than me. And I don't want to be told what to do by you." So, when they're like[*changes voice*] "Buy this product" in a more formal speaking voice, I think it's more appealing to the audience, in my view.

AU: Yeah, that's a really interesting video. Where did you find that?

S: Um, it's Insider. It's either Insider or Great big Story.

AU: Well thank you. Any question you have for me?

S: No.

AU: Just figured I should ask.

AU: Okay—

S: Actually, yes I do.

AU: What's so appealing about being a teacher to you? And especially, why middle school?

AU: [*laughs]*. I'm still figuring that one out. Um, okay. Appealing about being a teacher. I think – as I got into education and that wasn't what I studied in college so it was like senior year figuring out what I wanted to do. Learning about alternate pathways into the classroom. I began seeing education as my generation's civil rights issue. The more I learned about inequities in education. Where you're born, the zip code. You can look at zip code where there's not as many resources or it's a poorer neighborhood, people tend not to graduate from high school, go to college. This was 2009 at the time, that was insane. Education which I always thought was the great equalizer was really made to do what our founding

fathers, old white men, wanted it to do which was to weed out the "cans" from the "can nots" so in some ways education was doing just what it was supposed to. That really lit a fire under me. I wanted to be a teacher to upset that and to yeah I guess challenge that narrative of what it means to be a teacher. Reflecting on my own experience realized that even though I went to very good schools where like it was always kind of a given that you would go to college. It was just like which one? And how much money could you get to go to college? I didn't have a very critical education. Like I was taught to memorize thing, pass tests. Being someone who was white, middle to upper middle class. That's how the system works. If I thought critically I would realize how messed up it is! And, so, I don't know, all those things made me want to go back to teach and help kind of shake the system up. And the more I've been in it, it's is listening to young people and helping them from a young age and not like me which was in college where I started thinking critically. People do that early on. And then, why middle school? I think of the conversations I have with you all now. I mean you and I were having these type of conversations when I met you in third grade but for many students, the type of conversations I want tot have and the type of work I want to do outside of the classroom with students um, just developmentally, people will say you need to get people in high school. But I think middle school is this kind of untapped--

S: Kind of like the developmental stage--

AU: Yeah! And for me, middle school personally was a really hard time for me for a number of reasons, but I feel like I could have used an adult to have helped me develop confidence that it took a long time for me in high school to get back. S: Mhm. I've been spending time at [Tacoma middle school] this summer and sometimes I'm like, "I don't' know if I could do this."

S: I think that's understandable. Because I think middle schoolers are just developed enough at the right age to have a good quality conversation with time but at the same time they still need to learn enough more. They have room for learning – everyone has room for learning—but they have extra extra room for learning but at the same time they have just enough… good quality conversation for learning about today's topics.

AU: But who knows, as you all go to high school maybe I'll say, "Maybe I'll do high school." Thank you for your time.

S: No problem, thank you for your time.

July 26, follow up call with Sanjay

AU: Who you, who you like hang out with? You kind of mentioned this a little bit when you talked about how most of your friends are 8th graders but, what did I ask – it was just, yeah, who do you consider your friends? How would you describe your friend group?

S: Um, yeah, um, I usually mos-the majority of my friends are 8th graders considering they do have a similar mindset and they just, yeah. And I also hang out with a few 6th graders, 7th graders are ehh.

AU: laughs

S: They're decent. [laughs]. But, yeah, I have a few good friends in 6th grade. Like L, M and my friend M. I have six of like the majority of my friends. And then I have my 8th grade friends like Katie and P. and a bunch of girls and J. but that's it. Yeah.

AU: Mhm. Um, what do you look for in like who you spend time with, who you call friends?

S: Um, I look for things for people who are really "woke" about to-like- topics today. Political topics and corruptive-corruptive topics. And ones who are just really knowledgeable about that type of thing so we can talk about it, discuss it. Also people who, um, thye're fun, not too talkative, please, and [pause] preferrablly sophisticated

AU: Mmm.

S: [chuckles] That sounds really mean but, yeah.

AU: What do you-what do you mean by sophisticated?

S: Um, not like good grades and all that but just like, uh I sound so shallow. Um, I think mostly just I did want to be able to have a decent conversation with them and have them understand me. I'm not saying (changes voice to lower pitch) "Oh you're inferior, you're [inaudible]" but, just, I – what I look for in a friend is just try to have a decent conversation with them and not cause too much confusion and.

AU: How would you describe the racial makeup of your friend group?

S: Um? Mostly Asian.

AU: Mhm.

S: Yeah, a lot of my friends are Asian.

AU: MHm. Is it important to you that your friend group is of a particular race or diverse in a certain way?

S: Um, no, it doesn't really matter. It's just like–it -t –I don't look for a certain, like, ethnic group of friends- like "Oh I don't want to be friends with you, you're great, but you're black, so I can't be your friend." No, I think that's kind of shallow, so. If you're a decent person, I'll be your firned. There.

AU: [Chuckles]. And decent to you is like, what you said, "can engage in conversation," "woke" and all the things you just listed.

S: Yeah.

AU: Okay.

S: And they have to put their education first. They have to respect their education. If they're like, "Oh" and they're like goofing off in class, I can't respect that person, like "ahh."

AU: Cool, okay.

[picks pseudonym]

[Tape ends].

B.4b Marcus Interview Transcript

Date: July 24, 2018
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: Parent Workplace

[starts at 1:48]

AU: So, as you know Marcus I'm doing this study to understand students' students' experiences who are students of color in Tacoma schools today. Um, so I just want to start by learning more about kind of your school experience and we'll start kind of general and go more specific to talk about race.

M: Okay.

AU: So just to start us off tell me in general about your sixth grade year at [Tacoma middle school] and like, how that was, and what classes you took?

M: So, for 6th grade at [Tacoma middle school] the classes I took was my first period 'cause I was in Star so I had like, I didn't have like my regular first period where I go to class and learn a subject. I had P.E. Like I had P.E., swimmin, martial arts -those were the three they had so far. I was going to do the one where I had P.E. on Fridays and stuff on other days, but I was like, you know what, I would stick to P.E. 'cause I don't want to go to swimming and then martial arts and then forget how the order goes. And, so that was my first period. My second period was [equity-elective]. Um, I loved [equity-elective] 'cause it was preparing me for college. And in 5th grade we had some type of short [equity-elective] type thing, but like my third period I had my advisory after [equity-elective]. And my advisory was just like a class where I could- where we would just calm down and do stuff about the body. And like, for the last like month, the month before school ended, we watched the Supersize Me documentary and learned about the body and how it changes its ways. If you like eat fast food like McDonalds that's what he ate for 30 days straight. Um, then I had my third period science and then, 'cause everybody knows what you're going to do in science, except we did more easy stuff instead of like taking notes, taking notes, taking notes and then watching the teachers do the projects. We also did the projects, like we did – if I was to say my favorite project that we did, after we watched the bee movie 'cause we watched the bee movie to watch the ex-extinction of bees 'cause that's what was happening. And [inaudible] the bee project where she gave us Cheetos in a cup and she put a Skittle in there. And the Cheeto dust was our pollen and we had flowers so we had to like touch people's flowers with our Cheeto-dusted fingers as pollen [AU: Hmm] 'cause pollen, when the bees take the pollen and put it in the flower the flower grows more. So we opened up flowers, and saw like all the parts of it. And then for fourth period I had history ; that was pretty good 'cause it was, it was all hands-on and we would go on tangents like we would stop what we were doing and do like breaks and stuff. And then my fifth period that I'd have to say it was alright, my language arts, but I'd have to say it was kind of my easiest class because all you had to do was [clears throat] all you had to was, like, you just had to like we wrote poems and stuff. And we just wrote like a poem and an essay and we read the Outsiders and watched the Outsiders. And my teacher language arts, some people be like, "Did you teachers teach you anything?" Like, [inaudible], my teacher, he was -- I wouldn't say he was strict but he was good on rules. Like he can whistle and like, he whistles like loud like at when you're going to sports games and so everybody's talking over him he'll whistle and he doesn't do it to get on peoples nerves, he does it so they can listen. But I wouldn't' say he's strict, he's

pretty, uh, he's a pretty good guy, he's just, he's just like, he's on like rules, kind of. His rules aren't really that bad. And, he, he actually gives us good advice saying we're gonna succee—if we keep doing what we're doing we'll succeed and he just like he'll give us some days. Like we have to read for 15 minutes and he sometimes he'll just let us read the whole class period.

AU: Wow.

M: We have a new book, you know. Then, I go get on the bus or walk home with my friends or go to Bobcat club. And I go home, eat dinner, [door opens to break room. Mom walks in to kitchen, brings M. carton of Café Latte milk drink and a glass and sets down on table in front of him] watch some TV and then come back to school the next day [AU: Mhm] ready to just keep doing that.

And I wouldn't say it was boring exactly but like it was fun 'cause sometimes I wasn't feelin it in my classes but like my teachers, all of them. Like my science teacher and another science teacher they all said that I should be a mentor at [Tacoma middle school]. And when I signed up for mentoring thing and I did my thing for mentoring. Um, they just asked me like five questions and the final question was like an ice breaker. Like it was - they weren't going to try to make you nervous but like I was nervous at first, I was like, "Oh, wait, this isn't that hard. ''cause what they just did was like, they um, they basically said like, "why do you- why do y- why do you want to be a mentor?" And, like, my teacher when I found out the news that I was a mentor, [door shuts] 'cause Ms. Miller, the principal there, she said, "You, is your name Lamin?" I was like, "Yeah, why." And she said. "Well, you're a mentor, congratulations. They didn't want to tell you they were going to surprise you, but I couldn't keep it a secret 'cause every-all your teachers were saying that you should be a mentor." And, like me, I-my jaw dropped when I heard that. 'cause, here I thought I was- I had a feeling I was going to become mentor but it wasn't a big feeling 'cause like I don' think hard, like I don't think like, "Oh yeah I'm going to be a mentor, I already know it." I'm like, "the possibility could be I'm a mentor. 50/50," and to find out I'm a mentor for seventh grade is going to be good ''cause we did mentoring and we did – they did- our mentors came to our advisory class and we just did fun stuff with them. We always won prizes. And even the mentor said I should become a mentor, or I should do mentoring. So that was like an extra thing I was like, "they really want me to become a mentor."

AU: Would you have applied if people weren't telling you to apply?

M: Um, yeah, because like before one of the mentors-before some of the mentors told me I should do mentorship, my teacher – or my advisory teacher and my science teacher [''cause I have the same teacher]- she was like "You should definitely do mentor. you'll be a good mentor.] And I was like, I told her, I'll look forward to it. I said, I'm going to think about this [door opens] because you know it's kind of confusing for a – it's kind of confusing 'cause like, you could think 'cause like in the mentor paper, I read it, I wasn't going to skip skip all the words and say like "Da-da-da-da-da, oh this?" I have to have- I have to have a 2.5 or something like that, but I have a 2.45 almost a 3.0 GPA, so that's pretty good. And like when I first started the year, I had like a 1.45 and I was like, "Wow, 'cause I'm like- I was like, "I'm not going to be able to do sports and all that." But then I talked to my teachers about it, they gave me extra, like, work. And I was like, sometimes I was lik- I wouldn't be feeling it. Bu then-but they told me I could turn it in whenever I finished it. I wasn't going to be like the people who waited a month and turned it in. Soo on my free-time, I do it. 'cause then I gots from a 2.4 and I thought I still had a 1. 3 GPA 'cause in [equity-elective] we were doing colleges. So I found out a college I could go to if I kept my 2.4 – my 2.45-

which I don't want to keep, I want to get like to a 3.0. 'cause that's where all the smart schools are. Like you could go ta, I wouldn't say Harvard 'cause those are all schools you have to get like a 4.0. And that's hard. Like you have to get all As. My mom said, "If you want to go to Harvard, you have to get all As,. But I could go to like Seattle Pacific Univer- Pacific University, UDub, Duke. ''cause I want to go to a school where you can also play sports, I don't want to go to one of those technical schools like- TCC's different, it's a community school and you can-they have sports teams, they have baseball, basketball and all that. 'cause we went to our TCC field trip, I was looking forward to it. And like, my mom she went to UDub and I don't know where my other family members went, but like, I want to go to college and graduate, especially in high school. 'cause I have two years now before I go to high school. And I'm thinkin, high school's going to be way harder. They're not going to baby you like in 8th grade they're preparing you for high school. Like you get-you don't get more leeway. They're going to be like strict 'cause they want you to learn. Some people-I 'm not saying all teachers but some teachers they're just mean in general. And like, people are telling me about a teacher at [Tacoma middle school]. I think that someone in our group was talking about. But like they're telling me that she's racist and stuff. But I've never had a teacher that's racist. Um, all teach-I think-every teacher I've had has respected, has respected everyone's color. I think that's a good thing 'cause we don't want people that don't, that disresspect peoples color 'cause that's just mean. Some, there's some teachers out there that just like their skin color, like its especially white people but like they'll talk about other skin colors and it'll offend the other skin colors 'cause they're like "wait, you're a teacher, why would you be telling those two older people." And some teachers, they're mean, they'll say like, "you're never gonna succeed." I've gotten that in third grade. So wh-

AU: From a teacher?

M: Mhm. Third grade, they said I'm never gonna make middle school. They said, I'm never gonna succeed in life 'cause I'm just a bad kid. And I was like, I'm a bad kid but it's like people throw me off task. In third grade, my teacher, she had cards and, she, if you made a bad choice, she make you flip your card green. If you had green all day you got some points, for a store. If you got blue, you got a little bit of points. If you got yellow, you had to go - Yeah, if you had yellow, you had to go to a buddy class and then if you had red you had to go straight to the office.

AU: Can you share with me about like who your favorite teacher has been and um, like, describe them to me?

M: My favorite teacher would have to be, that's a hard choice.

AU: It can be more than one.

M: I have three, no four. Ms. Hinds, Ms. Lewis, Ms. Ryann and Ms. [pause] and Ms. Jordan. Those are my four teachers that I think actually helped me.

AU: Maybe talk about each one and, um, what about them stands out to you and like why they were your favorite //teacher/

M: //Ms. Lewis/, why she was my favorite because in kindergarten, she was just that teacher that was like fun to like the kindergarteners. She gave us snacks after lunch and stuff. She told, 'cause like I was having a hard time 'cause like we had some teacher, African American teacher, 'cause like she was pregnant at the time when I was in kindergarten. And so, she gave-she-'cause like we had little cubbies

in our classroom. So she put up a picture of like the baby in everyone's cubby and, uh, the teacher told us to give 'em to our parents. And my mom, when I gave it to my mom. My mom was shocked because Ms. Lewis and my mom were like friends at that time. And so, the time went by, it was like first grade then and I had Ms. Ryann. She was a good teacher too, she was actually my first African Amer – no second African American teacher. And like -

AU: Does this-just to interr-one quick que- clarifying question. The kindergarten teacher, did you have – Ms. Lewis came in after the teacher had a baby? Or you had two teachers in kindergarten? You had two -

M: [pause] I had a boy African American teacher after Ms. Lewis, while Ms. Lewis was in labor.

AU: Oh, Ms. Lewis had a baby! Okay, okay, okay.

M: So I had an African American teacher for like the rest of the year, two months. And then, first grade I had the African American lady teacher and there it was pretty good, they were helpful. And then, Ms. Hinds was my fourth grade teacher. And her class was pretty fun. I have another teacher in mind. But yeah, Ms. Hinds, she was just all around good teacher. Um, she's actually in school right now studying to become a principal. And, like, she was telling everybody that and when she had her kid we all met her husband. And we had another teacher, like an assistant teacher, Ms. Isabel. And we always did fun stuff in her classroom. And, like, I wouldn't say her classroom was boring. And another fourth grade teacher would have to be Ms. Reynolds. And like in third grade that was the class I wen to. And I'd have to say, when I was in third grade being bad 'cause my teacher said that I was being bad and would never succeed. I told Ms. Reynolds about that 'cause one time I went to her room crying and she told the class to do the rest of the problems, she came up to me and she said, "Why are you crying and why are you in here?" But she said it like-'cause she-'cause she- 'cause like, Ms. Reynolds known me 'cause I always went in there. Sometimes I'd get mad and instead of going to the office I'd go to Ms. Reynolds and talk to her for a little bit. And then I would go to the office and Ms. Reynolds, before she died, um, she was just, she would like one time she gave me some fourth grade classwork and I was like, "Wow, this is hard" and she was like, "Try your best." And I actually got, 'cause there were ten questions there. And I actually got three out of the ten questions right. And I felt smart for that 'cause then in fourth grade when she died, like it sparked everyone, like all those fourth graders all were crying and like they have this thing, it had Ms. Reynolds's picture, it said, "In loving memory, Ms. Reynolds" and it's in the office in Ford. And, me, when I got the c-and I was here when my mom got the voicemail that said Ms. Reynolds died. Like I just dropped to the floor crying. [AU: Mmm] 'cause it was hard for me. 'cause a teacher that I'd known died like a year after I known her. And like [AU: Mhm] everybody cried. Like all my friends were crying, holding back their tears. I was crying too 'cause like, I was like, I had-I barely got to know her that much. I only known her for like a year and I was like, "I need to know her more 'cause she was a good teacher." So like it was hard for me for that whole week just me feeling sad, always being in the blue zone 'cause like [hallway: can hear some say, 'goodnight!'] I couldn't handle it. I was like, "Wow, I can't Ms. Reynolds's there" so they put an extra teacher in. And then, Ms. Jackson, my science teacher, she's the one who told me I should become a mentor. And I was like, I was like, "Okay, mentor." 'cause like, I was like, "Mentor sounds cool." Its like, I think July – it's after summer academy – but I got to go to my mentor training. And I heard, 'cause, another one of my friends is a mentor and we're going to do mentor training and it's like ten bucks for a shirt, a mentor shirt and it's a [Tacoma middle school] shirt, 'cause it says [Tacoma middle school] and says "mentor" down there, it's a purple shirt. And I'm like, it's

pretty spot on, they get a shirt so they know I'm a mentor. 'cause like people didn't believe I was a mentor. 'cause I'm like "I'm a mentor" and they're like "no you're not" and I'm like "Yeah I am." And then when the papers came in, to say who was a mentor, my name was right there. And they're like, "Wow, I can't believe you're a mentor. I should have been a mentor." And I was like, they're like, "How'd you become a mentor" and I was like, "I honestly don't know." I wasn't going to brag about it. I just felt happy for myself. That whole day, I was just happy for myself.

AU: Yeah.

M: Everybody was happy for me. 'cause like, I'm short. And I don't care that I'm short, it's just how, it's just how, it's just how tall I am right now. I know imma get taller, I've gotten taller. But like, um [pause] people say I'm too short. Like I tried out for [Tacoma middle school]. I got cut in the first round, 'cause they had two rounds

AU: Tried out for what?

M: Basketball and like I got, 'cause I was one of the small people but I was taller than the smallest person there. And it was just like my height, not exactly my height, but a little bit of my height. I even asked the coach and it was because I wouldn't be able to block most of those players that play the other positions. 'cause you see a four, four foot something basketball player and they're like, "how's he gonna do this?" You're gonna get clowned for it, or get joked around for it. And like everyone's sayin, "You're too small, stop playing basketball and that." But, like, the greatest basketball players are small too.

AU: Allen Iverson

M: Allen Iverson was small.

AU: What were you going to say?

M: Um Isaiah Thomas

AU: Mhm. From Tacoma

M: Um and Nate Robinson and Spud Webb, they were all small. And Spud Webb made, Spud Webb and Nate Robinson, both were able to dunk, so was Isaiah Thomas. And they're saying I'm never going to dunk and I'm going to stay five foot somethin when I get a bit older. But I'm like, "That's not going to happen 'cause I haven't hit another growth spurt" and like I know I'm growing. It's obvious 'cause they're like, "you're never gonna, you're never gonna play basketball." Some of my friends, they actually say I'm good and I know I'm good. I'm not fil – I'm not high rank like all of the 8th graders and stuff. And honestly I wasn't mad that I didn't make the team. 'cause I'm like Michael Jordon didn't make the varsity team when he was in high school and he was still a good player.

AU: Where did you hear these stories about people who didn't succeed right away?

M: There's this Gatorade commercial. [AU laughs] 'cause I was watching TV- I was waching-I was actually watching NBA finals. And a Gatorade commercial came on and it was Michael Jordon. It's like: "Don't play the varsity basketball team. Don't-and then there was like other sports players. Like football players, there's like another football play-Eli Manning. And he was like, "Don't think you're going to be the first found pick for football and all of that." So I was like, I was like looking at like Michael Jordan's story and all this and it was, he got joked on. So did Isaiah Thomas. But like people say like Isaiah

Thomas is like under, under people. He's small but like he's good. He's, he's actually getting, he's like six foot right now. And like er'body's like he's way too small to be playing basketball. But like, there's like, point guards that are small like – all these six-foot point guards trying to go against some seven-foot-five. That's like the tallest height for a NBA player is seven-foot-five. But like –

AU: Can I bring us back to the conversation,

M: Yeah

AU: Uh, what you had said… oh! It was when you were talking about [pause] sharing your news about being a mentor. It made me think about who you hang with at school. Like how would you describe who your friends are?

M: My friends are like the people. Sometimes they can get me off task, sometimes they don't. Sometimes I get them off task. Like, they still have my back, no matter what. Like this one time, I got suspended for a day for hitting this kid. But like he, he was messing with me and stuff and talking about all of like, all of this mean stuff about me and it was hurting my feelings. So I went up to him and I said, "Come say it to my face," I punched him. And so, my friend he backed me up but he kind of made the situation worse by fighting him. And so I got suspended for five days and like – oh I mean, one day. My friend got suspended for five days. Like two or five. But like the teacher, Ms. Nolan, she said if I were just to go into the office. And it was a substitute too. She said if I had just gone into the office and told her what he said, he would have gotten in trouble. I would have been in able to stay at school. And so, it was just like playing basketball. Like basketball calms me down. If I was to say, people have stuff that calms them down. Basketball calms me down. If I get mad at school, I go to the basketball court and whoop my friends and play basketball.

AU: Would you- are your friends all in to sports? And basketball too?

M: Mhm. Basketball and football. And one person soccer and baseball and basketball.

AU: How would you describe, um [pause], the identities of your friends? In particular, race?

M: They all, I have tons of African American friends. Like one Mexican friend, Latino. And then I have one, I have like a couple white friends. But I treat them all equally. I don't separate them, if I'm hanging out with all of them, I treated them equally. But the identities, I have three friends and all three of them, like people said we look alike, in some way. Like me and another friend named Develin. We kind of looked alike [sound of M. grabbing potato chips from bag] like we started off the school year with short, curly hair. And we ended out the school year with long, curly hair. Big, curly hair, curly afros. He liked to pick his hair out a lot of the times. And, like, he like the next like Sunday and I said I couldn't 'cause it was too nappy. The next day he came and gave me some type of stuff that would untangle our hair. So we just picked out our hair that whole day and we both had like some huge afros. And people think that my hair is short when I have my curly hair, but like when I pick it out, it's huge.

AU: Mhm.

M: And I kind of don't like picking out my hair all the time because, just like one hit and it goes down and I'm like, that was a waste of time and stuff. Yeah, I can still pick it out and stuff.

AU: I was going to say you have your hair realy short now, why's that?

M: 'cause I didn't pick it out like I was supposed to do. Brush it and stuff. I was going to get the sides and the back cut and get like a man bun type thing or some type of hairstyle so I get like twists but then I was like, you know what? Forget it. The dude said you should just cut your hair off 'cause I think it'd look better and then get some waves. And like I've been working on my waves. [touches hair from back to front]. Said I'd look cool if I had waves and the cut hair. And I was like, "OK." But I may just have the waves in for the whole school year. And like, when I was younger, 'cause my mom's white and my dad's black. People like – me and my mom always went to the store – people, 'cause I'm baby-faced, people would say, um, is that my like grandson or my nephew, or her nephew. And like, my mom would say, "no, that's my son." And they'd be like, "oh." But they like, but like people also said I look like a girl with my curly hair. [AU: Hmm] But, like, it's all right because one time I went to am/pm and he cal-this dude he called me a lady. He was like, "sorry, ma'am." And then he's like, "are you a girl?" and I'm like "No, I'm a boy." 'cause like I didn't say anything so he didn't know. But like if I wasn't to talk and I had my curly hair, people think I'm a girl but I'm really not. And like it gets on my nerves sometimes because people think I'm a girl, but I'm really not. So that's why sometimes I cut my hair 'cause then I look equal and I look like a boy. But even though I look like a girl, doesn't mean I'm a girl. [AU: Mhm.] 'cause if I was to talk right now, I wouldn't sound like a girl. I'd sound like a boy. And it's just those simple things. Those simple features that happen like sometimes people mistaken like today, I mistaken some boy for a girl. On accident. And like he got mad for me for a minute so I apologized. I was like, "I'm sorry, I get it all the time too." I says I actually cut my hair but I was like, "I'm sorry." And he was like, "It's okay." 'cause today I had a basketball and like he was like, "It's okay." 'cause like, he's pro– 'cause like, I know like, like tons of dudes they look like their moms, they have their moms' face. And it's just how you were born.

AU: Mhm.

M: And so

AU: Like you said, you're in the time when you change, you grow.

M: Yeah

AU: Let's move into ask some specific questions around race

M: Mhm.

AU: Um, I think we've talked about this so - you've heard the word segregation?

M: Yes.

AU: What dos that mean to you?

M: Well, like fourth grade when I <u>finally</u> learned what segregation was. Segregation to me is like black people get separated. White people get separated. Asian people get separated. [pause] Indian people get separated. All these like races get separated. And they're all like these groups okay. If you're in the city and there's segregation in that city. They did like they did back in the old days. Whites only. Coloreds only. But, like, when I was looking at, when I was doing the subtle passage, we did this little video. We saw this picture of white people, like the KKK, they still believe in segregation. And like at the, um, well it was at the Black Lives Matter thing, somebody threw up the Nazi sign ,when we were doing it

AU: Like another student?

M: And, I called them out on it and they got in trouble. And there's people just goofing off out there. Like [changes voice to sound sarcastic] "Yeah, Black Lives Matter". Just playin around with it but it was a –it's a real thing. Black people, there's- you-you don't really hear about white people dying, you hear more about black people getting shot. Or black people, little black a– black kids, I saw this video and it was this little – like this five year old little black boy and he died in a cross fire with a cop and another black man. So he got shot in the head in the crossfire, 'cause they shot his car. 'cause it was a crossfire with two people and they both had guns and the boy and the little girl died and then I saw this nother video and it was this cop and he broke into this house 'cause he heard something and there was a little girl sitting in the um living room. He had a flash light and he shot the little girl in the face. And like all you heard was screaming and all you hear was, she was screaming, "I can't see, I can't see!" And like, I think it was an easy mistake but like cops, people are telling me that cops do it to kill all the black people so it's back to white people, but I don't think its happening. Some cops probably do it but they get fired on it. 'cause another black person's going to call them out on it if they were there.

AU: Mmm. And what would happen?

M: the cop would get fired or go to jail. Caues I saw this other video and this cop, he tried to arrest this black man for dating his daughter and so he broke law, 'cause that was not lawful. 'cause you can't just do that. You can't pull over a dude just for that and then throw your daughter in jail, just for that so he went to jail and they got their daughter out. They didn't have to put their the daughter in jail. And it was like, most of these things were all about black people. [AU: Mmm]. 'cause like, the only reason why at like schools that black people say the "n" word. And I know its true because back in the old days that's what white people used to call black people. So now black people, whoever started calling black people that, probably added it on. 'cause like, you know, white people were like, "be quiet, n-word," but it was like that and then they changed it to the Spanish word for black. And, it was just- it was just like crazy for me 'cause I saw- I was watching this African American movie, and it was like slaves. And it was, um, this little boy's dad got shot while the mom got raped. 'cause that's what white people did to black slaves. And they would auction them off and stuff.

AU: Where do you see all these vidoes? Do you watch them on your own or are they in classes?

M: So, like when I hear a story about like a black person getting shot I'll look it up 'cause like you see a little sneak peak on the news. So I'll look up the video 'cause sometimes they have the video on there. Like they had the video about the Parkland shooter. He actually said on YouTube, he was going to be the 2018 Parkland shooter. [AU: Mhm] And so YouTube deleted thinking it was a joke trying to scare people in Parkland. But like, I was-I'm like, they, I was like, that's probably their reason 'cause like nobody wants to hear that so they probably did that and everybody's like, "he's not just gonna do that. He's just Nicolas Cruz, a normal kid that wouldn't do that. Or would do that, a normal kid, He just always gets mad." But when I heard about the Parkland shooting, I looked more in-depth into it. Like a documentary about it and I found that Nicolas Cruz assaulted his girlfriend. And then, he had-they had-his parent, 'cause they're black 'cause he got adopted. His parents have a gun safe. And somehow he got a extra key.

AU: Yeah

M: He actually probably bought an extra key, like the key copiers, and opened the gun safe and put his AR in [pause. Sound of smacking teeth] a music instrument case and he said he was going to band

practice so the parents believe him, like “Okay, have fun at band practice,” went in the Uber and went to Parkland, pulled the fire alarm – ‘cause you know everyone’s gonna go out the school when there’s a fire alarm pulled – and shot everybody one-by-one when they came out. But he probably pulled that and then knew people were gonna come out. ‘cause he obviously went to the gym first ‘cause some of the gym was in the front

AU: Yeah

M: No – ‘cause he went from the top, went up the elevator and pulled the fire alarm

AU: You know a lot about this

M: ‘cause I had-’cause I saw a documentary about it. ‘cause they, they have the camera proof too. To see it. And he [inaudible] the elevator and stuff. Yeah.

AU: Well I’d asked you if you heard what segregation meant to you. I’m wondering, Marcus, have you ever seen this in your experience, or felt this in some way thinking about education s-in particular?

M: Ummm, yeah? ‘cause I heard a ton of, like um, I saw this one thing, and I was there. It was a group of white people trying to bully this little black kid. And they’re like 13 trying to bully this ten year old boy. Calling him an ‘n’ word and pushing him to the ground so me and my brother and two other friends that don’t go to [Tacoma middle school]. We all pushed the white people out, ‘cause it was- four people there trying to bully him. So I got him up. And then we just pushed them away and we’re like, “why are you doing this to him?” And they said, “‘cause he’s a filthy n-word. He doesn’t deserve to be here.” And I was like, “Woah, don’t say that. He’s only ten.” ‘cause you know, like Mariah said, at the thing. That people are gonna, when they’re younger, they’re going to be like, “Who-what’s that type of person and stuff? And like it could offend someone or that person in the like, ‘cause they’re learning. They need to learn. They- ‘cause-they-’cause they don’t want your parents to have to tell you and then you gow up to that person and be like, “what type of race are you?” and something like that or say it or you hear like white people say it to them and you’re like, “you’re a n-word” and you get beat up. ‘cause that’s just what happens ‘cause black people don’t like being called that by white people because of history of white people calling them that and making them do all this slavery stuff and I was like “Wow,” ‘cause I was just watching videos about it.

AU: So where did this group of – this, how many white boys //did you say/?

M: //Four/.

AU: How old were there?

M: 13 or 12.

AU: And where did that happen?

M: It was like at a school. And like the kid looked like he could pick up his fight but like if it was a one-on-one you know he would probably like get out the way. But you know after we came in, they all walked away.

AU: This was at your school?

M: Uh, uh. It was at People's Park. And they walked away and they never came back. We didn't say anything mean when they were walking by. We just like picked him up, we said, "are you okay?" He said, "Yeah." He said he just hates why people do that to him 'cause he's another race 'cause I know there's white people out there that do that, just because of another race.

AU: And that felt like segregation to you?

M: A little bit. 'cause like, especially at school sometimes there might be segregation. 'cause like people say that [Tacoma middle school] is an only blac-a black person only school. There's more black people there than white. Or there's an even amount of black people and white people but there's mostly white people. I kind of think that's segregation 'cause you never know. Just because it's in the ghetto, doesn't mean it is ghetto. There are some schools out there that aren't ghetto, but they're in the ghetto. It just happens, okay.

AU: Why do you say [Tacoma middle school] is in the ghetto?

M: 'cause like [Tacoma middle school] is in the ghetto. People say Ford is in the ghetto. 'cause there's tons of black people there. And I'm like, okay there's tons of black people there, its no big deal about it. It's just, it just happens. 'cause there's different skin colors. I'm not trying to call people out but there's albino people out there. I know an albino actor. And you can think that they're white but they can actually be black. And you're like, "Oh yeah, they are white." 'cause their skin color. You don't want to judge a book by its cover. 'cause albino people, they can be a white albino person and he could look white and you could assume he's white, but he could be like, actually, I'm actually um, black and I'm, I mean I'm actually black and stuff and you would assume he's white, but then you find out and you're like, "Oh yeah, that's stupid. I can't believe you actually dress up like you're white." And it just makes no sense to me, why they do that. 'cause like, they're just a different skin color, they're albino. It's just a disease or something like that. Or how they're born. Its not their fault they're like that, not like they did it on purpose.

[sound of someone getting ice]

AU: have you heard the word integration before?

M: No

AU: Um, can you-If I were to say the word integration, what might you think that means?

M: Um, like, not segregation, like not segregation all the way but a little segregation. Like not too much.

AU: Mhm. We can talk about-more about this when we all come back together but integration is, like you said, it's related to segregation but like the word, in-te-grate, is more bringing people together across race. So, like, traditionally, white people and black people coming together. So desegreagtiaon, right, was when they said we have to undo segregation. But because you put black people and white people and people of all colors in the same school doesn't mean they're going to mix. Like you describe your friend group, it sounds like its more integrated. Um, do you see integration, as I kind of explained it, at [Tacoma middle school]?

M: Mhm.

AU: Or like, in the lunch room//

M: //Yeah/

AU: /Do all the black kids sit together, all the white kids sit together

M: It's actually a mixture. 'cause like I have a Big Brother, like the Big Brother, Big Sister program. And the interview, they're like, "Do you want someone who's gay, straight, lesbian. What skin col- I said, "I honestly don't care what they are. Unles-eve-if they're just a human being, they can be a human being." But I got a white guy named Kyle. He's actually really athletic. And I like that 'cause I like to be athletic. And once every weekend, every month, we do something and like we went some-we went like, um, disc golf. It's like frisbee type things and it's like golfing. And that was pretty fun and we sometimes get some food like he showed me this good like Mexcian place. And we had quesadillas and tacos. And it's just like, I don't think it's, I think it's integration ''cause if I was if I was to say I wanted someone black, I would say that. But I said I don't care. And my mom was surprised 'cause my mom thought I would want someone that was black. But all-everyone's everything its' just a different skin color and how they talk. For me, I wouldn't call someone out if they were to say, "Bro, you should be friends with him." I wouldn't be like, "No, he's white. Eww." I'd be like, "Okay," Because I like people who are athletic and are chill at the same time. I don't like people who are crazy and hyper. But yeah, like I have athlete friends. All my friends are atheletes.

AU: Yeah

M: Played sports. //

AU: /I have a question, I saw your mom come in, should we check with her and see, I don't know if she has to- if we have to leave at a certain time. 'cause we're just going – do you want to ask. [sound of chair moving back.

[43:00 – 43:45] Conversation with AU and M's Mom.

AU: Do you live close to here?

M: [sound of teeth smacking]. I mean, a little bit? I wouldn't say we live close but we live-

AU: Do you live in the neighborhood?

M: We live like 15 minutes away from here

AU: Oh! I had no idea. I thought you lived in Hilltop.

M: I mean we sorta do. But we sorta don't.

AU: Mhm. Um, how would you describe the racial-makeup at your school? So what I mean is like, how would you describe the different races, uh, of your school overall and then you can talk about like of students, of adults?

M: I've mostly not seen like any African American teachers in [Tacoma middle school]. But I have seen like all, I've seen a lot of white teachers. And then, so why? I don't need a black teacher just to be like, "Oh yeah it's [Tacoma middle school], I have a black teacher." I will have any skin color teacher, it just-they just have to teach well and be nice and chill. I don't want a teacher that yells at you //all the time./

AU: //What is teaching well/ like for you?

M: They're fun but also work at the same time. Like they'll tell a story sometimes or stuff like, my 5th period teacher, Ray, that's what he does and it's like, I'm like, "Okay, that's pretty nice." 'cause like all my teachers have been nice to me. There's none that have been ever been mean to me or get under my skin except for that one teacher who I told you about in my third grade. But like It was confusing why you'd tell a third grader he wouldn't succeed. 'cause that makes no sense. You're going to ruin the 3rd graders dream already.

AU: And that stuck with you.

M: Yeah, it stuck with me for a little bit but then I was like, you know, forget it. I know I'm gonna succeed it, I just gotta work hard.

AU: What about the racial makeup of st-how would you describe the different races of students? Or like you were saying that it's a majority black school but then maybe it's half and half

M: It's more like, it's not as much like Asian kids that I see. Or like Mexicans. I see mostly white and black. But mostly like mixed kids. And I was to think if we were to still have segregation, in like the mixed kids. Would the-I think the mixed kids – the mixed kids would still be colored. [pause] but like Martin Luther King, he actually helped. If we didn't have Martin Luther King, we would never have- we would- we would never think about stopping segregation [AU: Mmm.] 'cause it's – 'cause like you never know. A black person could like a white person. A white person could like 'em back. And, I saw this film, it was a kids film and it was like, It was like martin luther king as a kid. And, he was playing with a white boy in football. And the white boy's older brother punched martin Luther king in the face. Martin Luther king wen to school and he saw a Mexican kid. He's like "what are you doing?" and she's like, "I'm working, I have to work." And like people say racial jokes like about black people like saying all like black people like chicken and watermelon and cool-aid. But, like you never know. They could, they probably wouldn't like Cool-Aid or watermelon 'cause like some black people have tastes. Like I really don't like eating watermelon. its just because of the seeds. I can't handle the seeds. I'll eat apples, 'cause you can eat around the seeds, but like watermelon, that's different.

AU: Why do you think people make those general statements about?

M: 'cause they probably think its funny but inside they know its probably messed up. They probably like, they probably think, "Oh, I think this is funny. But then they're probably like, "Oh, why did I say that? I know something's going to happen to me." And yeah, it's just like - I don't get why they do it. They probably do it to be funny but,

AU: It's not.

M: It's not

AU: Do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school then students of color?

M: No, not really.

AU: Why is that?

M: 'cause I think all the kids equally 'cause I had-I had-had a ton of white people in like my classes. And they all had a good experience. They all had the same experience.

AU: Mhm.

M: [smacks teeth]. There's no like person that this teacher loves its just-they know that they're going to be like a straight A or a straight B [smacks teeth] person. But like my mom wants me to get Bs and As. She wants me to strive for Bs butnot-but if I get As that's over it. And I'm like, "that's going to be hard, 'cause we have to do 10-24-7." 10 days, 24 – wait, no. 10 minutes, 24 hours, 7 days.

AU: Mhm.

M: So I have to go back to my stuff at 7 days. And next day, I have to do all this work. But I have five different classes. So I have to go to my binder and do all classes at once. And for me, that's kind of hard – for me that'd be kinda hard 'cause you know you have to like [pause, smacks teech] you have to

[little girls from daycare enter room. She's asking us: "You have turtle? You have turtle, guys?"]

AU: No.

M: All the way

AU: Um

M: But like, it's [pause] it's more of like that, 'cause, I forgot, oh yeah -my score. Oh yeah, it's more hard for me, 'cause I have five different classes. And they kind of expect me to do that all in one day. It's 10 minutes each. That's be 50 minutes to an hour for me to get all my classwork done. For that one notebook.

AU: Marcus, I'm thinking about what you shared about like, Black Lives Matter and recognizing that like some police officers treat people differently because of the color of their skin or like the boy in People's Park. And you also shared that in like your school experience people haven't treated you or other people differently because of their race. Do you think in-its-is that- do you think that's the same at other schools?

M: Yea, probably because like most of them are on the Hilltop and people

[Mom: you're not drinking coffee? M whispers: I will. Mom: Take it home or drink it ,one of the two. M: Take it home. AU: laughs].

M: but like more people attend schools on the Hilltop. And like, I coulda went to Hamilton middle school but like most of my friends from Ford were gonna go to [Tacoma middle school]. And I'm like, my mom wanted me to go to [Tacoma middle school] so I could get into Star. I didn't wanna go to Hamilton and then at 3:30, go home with this other, my other friend from Ford and just play till my mom gets back and--

AU: Do you live by Hamilton?

M: Yeah.

AU: Okay, okay.

M: But I don't wanna go to Hamilton 'cause I only know one person there and I know a lot of people from Ford that go to [Tacoma middle school].

AU: Mhm.

M: And like, it's just like, why would I go to Hamilton and only know one person there instead of going to [Tacoma middle school] and knowin tons of people there? And it was just like [sound of chip bag as M. reaches for more chips] it's better to know more people that just one. So then I don't have to be one of those just like new people fittin in to a school 'cause like I already knew I was going to go to [Tacoma middle school] 'cause like my mom said-said it. And, I [inaudible, AU talks over] the Star thing. I got a note, I got a letter from [Tacoma middle school] and it said, "Congratulations, your student M. made it to Star. And I was happy, 'cause I wanted to be in Star.

AU: Tell me about like, a little about Star and why you were so interested in it.

M: I was interested in it 'cause my mom even wanted me to go in it. 'cause I'm kind of fidgety, like if I'm in class for 55 minutes, 'cause that's how long our classes are. You have ta, I fidget around and I can't focus but like for Star, you have your morning exercise and then you go to two classes then you go to lunch and then you go to your other two classes. And its just like, "Mmm" but like when we go-when we went to People's Center, 'cause that's in the Hilltop, [AU: Mhm.] um, we're by the police station so if something happened the police could come, immediately 'cause it wouldn't be that hard. But like, we had swimming, martial arts and P.E. and if I was to pick a good one, I'd have to say it was P.E. 'cause P.E. we did a little bit of a stretch and then we did a work-out like lift weighting and stuff, and then we had free time. It was just-it was fun hanging out with my friends for that first year. And it's just like, I'll see you next year. And It's like that- it's, that's how school is. People think summer is just a holiday. It's not. It's like a break. It's a long break. 'cause you go to school for that whole 'til June 15th then you have your long break, then you go back to school.

AU: Mhm. Mhm.

M: //That's how it is./

AU: //Sounds like you're/ someone who, who likes that flow, who likes school

M: Yeah

AU: Um. Do you ever feel like you can't be yourself at school?

M: Mm, no.

AU: No? No space. Well, that's good. In what ways do you feel like you can most – in what like, ways, in what spaces, in what spaces, do you feel like you can most be yourself? If that's with a particular teacher or like group of friends, whatever.

M: Teacher. Like my teachers they'll-they know I'm a good student. They'll be like, "Marcus, Marcus I need you to focus." And I'll focus. They're not like [changes voice], "Marcus [hits fist on table], I need you to focus now!" and yell at me, they'll be like, "Marcus, can you please focus." I'll be like, "Yeah, yeah, I'm sorry." 'cause I'd rather be a good student and get good grades than be a bad student.

AU: So, you-you're saying that in classes where teachers kindly hold you accountable, help you focus, that that's you being your best self or being your m– what did I ask? –being most like yourself?

M: ‘cause for my first conference, my [equity-elective] teacher, said I’m a-I’m a B student. It’s just, my friends throw me off. And I throw them off. And I’m like, that person that [draws out word] eeeeeverybody looks up to, ‘cause I’m a class clown. I have to say to myself-I have to say, it’s true everybody says I’m a class clown, but like everytime I do something funny, everybody’s gonna laugh.

AU: Mhm.

M: But if I don’t say anything funny, everybody’s gonna listen. So, my teacher holds me accountable in my [equity elective] class, she’s like, “Marcus, I need you to listen ‘cause everybody’s gonna follow you,”and I’m like, “Okay.” But I could-I could be a B student. Like all my teachers say, I could be a B student. It’s just how-it’s just everybody looks up to me. And knows I’m funny. And I think every day I’m gonna pull a funny joke out and ruin the class.

AU: That, yeah. You said, there’s never a space where you don’t think you can be yourself.

M: Never been a space.

AU: So, even when -if you say I’m a class clown and a teacher says, “Don’t be that,” you still feel like true to yourself?

M: [Nods head].

AU: Why’s that?

M: It’s more like, ‘cause I’m funny. [Pause]. And my teachers, they know I’m a good student. It’s just, I make that -I make that choice. I hold myself accountable on it. And, it works out. I had a good year, said goodbye to all my teachers for the long break. They said-they said, “Marcus, you better get this-you better-please have a “B.” And you can still be a class clown sometimes when it’s appropriate, but not all the time.” And like, I know, I’ll work on that. And like, okay. ‘cause they all lookup to me in my classes. They’re like, I know, they’re all like, “what is Marcus going to do today? What’s the joke he’s going to do today?” I’m like, “Wow,” ‘cause I think-I thought my teacher was just saying that. But everybody does look up to me. I say one joke and “boom!” everybody laughs.

AU: Mhm. They’re recognizing that leadership in you. I’m surprised that people aren’t telling you-aren’t pushing you to be an A student.

M: I think B’s enough for me. I think As will be-I think As would be hard because I have to study, do extra work, like full extra work. Instead of being the average B student, you’d have to do, let’s see, if you did all your 10/24/7s and you just, [smacks teeth] you just like, you added more stuff to it. You add extra notes, took more notes, all of that when they did your binder check. I think it’d be an all A student. But all the people that I know have As, they all have A minuses and Bs. I don’t know anyone who has an A plus.

AU: So do you – sounds like you don’t have any interest, or much interest, in doing-in reaching for an A minus?

M: [shakes head no]

AU: Not at this point?

M: No, I'll go for a B, or a B minus, or a B plus. But like A is like the top of the notch, like you have to, like the sky is not your limit, it's like whatever your limit is.

AU: Are people who get As made fun of in every way-In any way?

M: Nope.

AU: So it's not like a fear, like a I don't wanna be seen as super smart?

M: It's just-it's just hard because like, for me, my mom knows, my mom, if I got all As in my classes forever 'til I gtet to college and I graduate, I think I'd scare my mom. 'cause she'd-I think my mom would be happy but be surprised. 'cause she says I should strive for As but get mostly Bs. And I'm working on that. 'cause all this-I had Cs. I had a B minus. I had a B minus in my Language Arts class then I had a C plus, C minus, C. And then I had a D plus. And those were pretty good. I wouldn't say they're good but they're – and, they're a little bit good and a lot of stuff I can work on.

When I get back to school I 'm going still have my-I'm gonna still have my normal grades. They're gonna let me get them all up and all that. And it's just like, it's gonna be hard – it stresses me out – 'cause I have five classes and have to do all these 10/24/7s.

AU: Mmm.

M: I know it's a good way to learn but it's hard on me 'cause you have to-you have to like, focus, you have to write your notes, highlight them, underline, find good sources in all the [inaudible]. It just, it just

AU: What is the 10/24/7?

M: 10//

AU: //you mentioned it a few times/

M: 10 minutes, 24 hours, 7 days

AU: Of studying? 10 minutes, 24 hours a d-

M: So, how it would go is: go home [pause] wait,. 10 minutes, yeah, 10 minutes. Wait. 10 minutes. 24 hours. 7 days. Yeah.

M: And it's

AU: Spending 10 minutes a day per class?

M: Spending 10 minutes on every class work that's highlighting, underlining, all that. 24 the next day, you would write questions, that you know the answer to. The 7 is you do your summary. You do your summary on your notes and stuff and then you're done. You have to do that for every day.

AU: Last question on race: Do you talk about race at school, if so, like in what spaces, with who?

M: We don't talk about race in any of the classes or anybody; I've never heard about like any race. Racial things. Just they talk about sports and music and all of these new things.

AU: What about this Black Lives Matter thing?

M: Umm that day they had racial stuff. Like for the gun violence, they had, someone-like some people had shirts that said “Shoot me.” And they did this, they had their arms up, like it was black people, they had their arms up it like [puts arms up]. And it says, “Shoot Me” on their shirt. It says, “Shoot Me or Let Me Live.” And they-it-they had this circle that said “Let me live.” And they had their hands up. ‘cause that’s what all black people-that’s, so for all the black people they made them do this [hands up] and for the white people they made them do this [hands looking like pointing a gun]. Then they – they were more of the black-it was a mixture. They had people doing this [puts hands up] and they had people doing that [hands in a position like pointing a gun.]

AU: Who’s they?

M: Students

AU: Okay.

M: And

AU: So some people are clearly talking about race. So you’re saying, in your circles, not so much

M: Not so much. And it was like, they said some chant. “Peace, justice and liberty and something else.”

AU: After going to that protest, ‘cause you could choose to go or not, right?

M: Mhm

AU: So after choosing to do that, did that-how did that make you think differently about race if at all?

M: It made me feel like kind of before. I like it for the gun violence, that was when we had the peop- no it was the Black Lives Matter where everybody was [inaudible] tryin to shoot up our school, but it was like scary ‘cause we had that good day talking about it. And, on the gun violence one, the assistant principal locked all the kids that were still out there protesting.

AU: Mhm, //you said that./

M: //And/, and it was just like that. And some kids snuck out from the baseball field to go protes. And it was just like they were going to take people-people took their backpacks out there and they were just out there all day.

AU: Mmm.

M: ‘cause they let people stay out there. But then when they have to go inside, what was the point ‘cause they had people that had to like-that left when they had to leave.

AU: Mhm

M: But, yeah, I was like, “wow.” I was like gonna sneak out but then I didn’t want to. ‘cause I didn’t wanna get in trouble. ‘cause I take the bus. And they said if you sneak out then you couldn’t take the bus the whole week. So I was like, “Nope,

AU: //Yeah/

M: //It's too risky."

AU: Yeah, well, taking into account what you just shared. I mean you are able to talk in many ways about your education experience and what you hope for yourself. Um, what's worked for you, not so much what hasn't work, we haven't talked about what hasn't worked. But I'm curious, Marcus, you know what changes would you make to improve the experience for students at [Tacoma middle school]? And even for students of color, in particular?

M: I would [pause] mix up more of the classrooms then having a ton of white people in there.

AU: Is that how they are now?

M: I mean, it's kind of an even match. But, like, put a couple more black people in there. Or just like go through the names and see what like race they are. And just like put a couple Mexican people, Asian people and all that. In like a couple classrooms and then do that for all of them. And then if all like one race is already full of one classroom and then put some other people. Just keep mixing it around, make it new. An, keep tryin.

AU: Mhm

M: That's what I would do?

AU: Why?

M: 'cause I want people to see that there's more capable of others and not just to be like, 'Oh yeah, I already know black people are doing stuff." I want them to see which ones are goo- which ones you know and which ones you don't know. 'cause you could see someone who looks mean and tough, but then they could actually be a nice person.

AU: Mhm

M: It's just, you don't judge a book by its cover. It's just like people sayin that you're ugly. You can say they're ugly but like maybe when they get older they could grow up and get all type- like, so I heard this thing and I backed this kid up. At school, they're like, "you're ugly, you're never gonna get a girlfriend." And I was like, "How do you know that?" 'cause you probably don't know when he grows up now when you said when he grows up, he's probably going to get all these girls on him." And then, they're like, "whatever." And he's like "thanks' and I'm like "no problem 'cause, It's just-don't judge a book by its cover." They can look like that but everbody's everyone. They can probably, when they hit puberty they can probably look better. You never know. That's just how people are.

AU: Yeah. You got a lot of wisdom in there. [laughs]. Is there anything I haven't asked about this topic that you'd like to share?

M: Not that I know of right now.

AU: Okay, okay. Thank you so much. I know we went way over what I was thinking, but I appreciate, um, yeah, your candidness just talking about your experience even as people were coming in and out of the room.

M: Yeah.

[Tape ends].

B.4c Alexandra Interview Transcript

Date: July 13, 2018
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: Community Center

AU: Friday the 13th, at 2:30, here with Alexandra.
[starts at 2:00]

AU: OK, so as you know, I'm doing this study to understand students experiences as students of color in Tacoma schools. So I just want to start by learning more about your experience. Um, so tell me about your 6th grade year at [Tacoma middle school]. What classes did you take?

A: Um, well, my advisory I had Ms. Nordy. We like just-we did random things. We learned about like, you know, how much sleep you should be using. Sometimes you know she'd just give us free time. Second period I had Ms. Howard for Language Arts. Third period I had Ms. Steven for history . Fourth period I had Mr. Emmot for science. Fifth period I had Ms. Starr for [equity elective]. And sixth period I had Ms. Alstrom for P.E.

AU: Mhm. With [equity elective] is it- is it a certain subject like reading focus or, how would describe what you learn in [equity elective]?

A: We learn like about the history of black people and we also, like, it's mostly meant for college preparation and like what you can do to get there.

AU: So is it-okay college prep. It sounds like history or social studies, too?

A: No- yeah. Cause like our teacher, I don't know, like we did like Black History Month. We learned a lot about like black people and historical figures and like, um, Black Lives Matter. We mostly did Black Lives Matter. But yeah, and she also just prepares us for college and stuff.

AU: Uh huh, got it. What was your favorite class and //why/?

A: //My favorite/ class would be [pause] [equity elective] and P.E.

AU: Why?

A: Cause [equity elective] is like fun. Like we do fun stuff. It sounds really boring, but we like actually have fun, like crack jokes. We do like [exhales] how's this explained? [inhales audibly] Um, we just like read articles and correct them but we can like talk to a partner if we want to. And, um, in P.E. we like, we, um, every week is a different subject. There's soccer and basketball and sometimes we can go exercise in the weight room. And sometimes we have free time.

AU: Mhm. Um, just so I'm making sure I understand too, part of what you like about [equity elective] is that you're, um, learning about interesting things, like you mentioned history of the Black Lives Matter movement and //black people//

A: //Yeah/, and there's no one in there that I dislike cause we're all friends and we all know each other.

AU: In your class?

A: Mhm.

AU: Okay, who has been your favorite teacher and why?

A: Mmmm [pause] Ms. Starr. My [whipsers] [equity elective] teacher. Cause she's like fun and she doesn't really like [pause] she doesn't always follow like the teacher rules [smiles] but like she's really funny and she knows like, she knows what's boring and what's not, so she knows that we're always interested in what she's tryna teach us.

AU: What do you mean when you kind of say with a smile that she doesn't follow the teacher rules?

A: Like sometimes she curses and sometimes she gets like the ruler or like the yardstick like the really big one and if any of us didn't turn in our homework, she'd pull out our hand and slap us on the hand with it. But no one really cares.

AU: Like hard slap //or like being funny/?

A: /No, not hard// slap. It's just like a "boom." But sometimes she just gets our hand if she can't find the yardstick and goes just like "boom."

AU: Why do you think she does that?

A: [laughs] I don't know. It's just funny. Everyone starts laughing

AU: So she's [A: yes] //doing it to be funny versus like really inflicting [inaudible]/

A: /Yeah//. She's not like actually [makes noise] heeeeh!

But also, like I remember, during the last week of school, we had like crab fights. Where we would-you know how like you sit back it's like a backwards push up? Y[AU: Mhm]. eah. And we could like kick each other, punch each other [recorder battery beeps] but not in the face or anything. [pause] So yeah, and she's really fun.

[recorder battery dies. Conversation around changing it out]

A: Oh that only needs one?

AU: Yeah, but I think it was on its last leg. Set this one up again. [replacing battery] Okay.

A: [leans into microphone.] Having some technical difficulties, please stand by

AU: Please stand by. But this one's still going. So um, tell me more about like, maybe paint a picture for me about what her class is like. Maybe even from what it looks like, to what a typical class, how that might run, um?

A: Well, like, oh my gosh this is so hard. [recorder beeping] It's like, um [equity elective], mostly draws in people that are like college material, I don't know how they figure that out.

AU: Do you apply to be in that class or how are you [inaudible]?

A: No you don't apply. It's when you're in sixth grade, they just, I guess you just-they just put you in there. I don't know how I got in there. But, yeah, everybody's like on the same page. And if like-we-we're not allow-nobody ever really insults another student, it's not like that. There's some kids who like don't understand so we help them understand. And like there's these things we do called tutorials every Tuesday and Thursday. It's like we have a question or if there's a math test coming up, we can ask a question and put it on the board and we all like help them understand it. We don't give them the exact answer. We just keep asking them questions around it so they get the answer.

AU: What did you call those, tutorials?

A: Yeah.

AU: Okay. So it sounds supportive.

A: Yeah.

AU: Is there a specific lesson or experience with Ms. Starr that stands out to you?

A: Hmm. Uuuummm. [pause]. Hmm, uhhh, well I remember she was like, we were all, um-so it was like ASB, we all, she was like talking to us like making us all go up there one-by-one and present to the why we can't-why we don't want to be in the ASB. And I want up there and she said that her son Monty would call me Ness-Ness because like kindness and hilarious and all the other things. And I remember, when I did my speech, cause I was running for 7th grade representative, she was so happy because she said it sounded really good. And she said if I change anything about you, [whispers] I'll kill you.

AU: [laughs]

A: Yeah. [pause]

AU: Mhm.

A: But she didn't exactly say that, but it was just like, that kind of face, you know, she's like [whispers] "just don't change anything about it, it's a really good speech." I'm like, "okay."

AU: So you practiced in front of the class or just //in front of her?/

A: /Yeah we were// practicing in front of the class. And everyone was telling us what we should improve about it and what was really good.

AU: Mhm. How did it go, your speech?

A: Oh it went pretty good. I actually won.

AU: Whaaat? So you are the seventh grade representative.

A: Yeah.

AU: Nice, congratulations.

A: Are you in- are you involved in any clubs or activities?

A: Any clubs after school? Well, I was in track. [pause] Yeah, that hurts a lot.

AU: Mhm.

A: Yeah.

AU: How did you choose to get involved in that?

A: Well, my friend A., she's all, [changes voice to higher pitch "You should join"]. And I'm like "Okay. Yeah."

AU: Mhm. Um, are you still involved in track?

A: Uh, no.

A: Well, I know it's summer but, like, will you do it next year?

A: Probably, maybe not. I may do like soccer or something else.

AU: Mhm. Yeah. What makes you want to be involved in things outside of school?

A: Um, well, you know, like college and also like you know just having something to actually do after school and being part of something's really cool.

AU: Um, can you share with me a really good experience that you had at school like maybe, I don't know, a highlight from the past year?

A: Um? Humm. Let's see, [long pause]. This is so hard, like any part in [Tacoma middle school]?

AU: Mhm.

A: Hmmm. Well, when I was crab-fighting with M. You know who M. is? M.?

AU: *Unh-unh*

A: I'll show you a picture of her later but you probably know, you probably do //know her/.

AU: /Oh// I know her brother. K.

A: Yeah

AU: Yeah-yeah.

A: But, yeah, I remember when we were, um, doing crabfights and like, I don't know, I just got so scared because she's so big and strong. And she's like, "it's okay, I'm not going to hurt you." And like automatically, I don't know what happened but I just started like randomly kicking her and so she kicked me back. So yeah.

AU: And what makes that experience stand out to you?

A: I don't know. It's just like, [pause] I don't know, I don't know, it just brought me happiness. Also, it did hurt a lot. Casue she had like really hard shoes on.

AU: What was the point of this crab fighting in Ms. Starr' class?

A: Um, there was no point of it. There was nothing to do and it was the last week of school so, yeah. [inaudible – makes sound].

AU: Um, thinking about the opposite of that, like, can you share with me maybe like a tough or bad experience this past year at school?

A: Mmm, let's see. [pause] Well there was this, uh, time where, um, I went off campus um to Jack in the Box, before school. I don't really get the point of that getting in trouble, [changes voice to high-pitch] before school so I went to Jack and the Box, I was hungry and got something. Then I went through the front entrance and Ms. Nolan caught me. Then I went to the front office and then I got ISS. Well, I got afterschool detention and then I didn't go and then they rescheduled it and then I still didn't go. So then I had ISS for the whole entire day

AU: Woah.

A: Yeah

AU: What was that experience like? You know, getting caught, then having to explain yourself er –

A: Well, it was kinda like, well I had anxiety about what my mom might say. And then, like, also, when like I got there, I noticed. There's like this girl named Professor Trevino or whatever who came to our school and I didn't get to go because I was in ISS. So -

AU: She came to speak or something?

A: Yeah, to AVI-she came to all the [equity elective] classes to speak.

AU: Um, yeah, when you think back on that experience now, like, I don't' know, what comes out for you? Does it feel like it was --

A: //It wasn't really that great.

AU: Mhm

A: It was kind of quiet, there's nothing to do, so you just sit there.

AU: For ISS?

A: Yeah

AU: Yeah. Um. [Lower-voice speaking to self] After school detention? You mentioned that you didn't go to the after-school detention time. Tell me about that.

A: Um, I just like didn't want to. You know so my mom, I remember I went to Starbucks also so I got in trouble for that.

AU: Is that a rule that you're not allowed to leave once you –

A: Yeah

AU: Okay.

A: And, um. [pause] Wait, what was the question.

AU: Um, like, why you chose not to go to the after-school part?

A: Um, well, my mom didn't really want me to go. Cause I had other things to do. But I remember when I went to Starbukcs off campus she was mad because they never called her, they just wanted to give me an automatic afterschool detention.

AU: Mhm.

A: So yeah I didn't really want to because she couldn't really do like any transportation. And she didn't want me to go on, um, the activity bus because she's like human trafficking or whatever. So, yeah.

AU: Yeah. So it sounds like the bad part of the experience was more like the punishment for it. Yeah, and how- Um, Mm, mm, mm. Who do you hang out with at school? Who do you call friends and why?

A: Um, well, I'd say M., S., A., M., the other M., N., C. My mom does'nt like her but I'm still allowed to say that we're friends. I mean? Um, but yeah, also, J., J., N., a lot of other people. S., M.,

AU: Is this like- are these different groups of friends or is this kind of like, if I were to come, I know not all of them, just cause I know some of those people don't go- not all of them go to [Tacoma middle school], um but is this like, one group? If I were to come at lunch, I'd see you all at one table or?

A: Uh, yeah but some of us hang out with different people at times too and J. and other people go to um, Jersey (middle school).

AU: Mhm

A: Yeah. And C, R, R and M. Yeah.

AU: [sound of voice outside room]. Um, and how would you describe like, your-I mean, how do you like choose your friends and kinda, choose who to keep around? Is your friend group diverse, would you call it?

A: Oh, well, like I just know like if I can trust them, or like sometimes like if they ever want to like help me with something.

AU: Mhm.

A: Or like if, they like give me advice. But if they like do something - if it's like a big mistake, like, then I probably won't forgive. But if it's just like a little mistake or something, I'd probably forgive them, but people like think I'm crazy because I like forgive people for things that they wouldn't forgive. I'm like, "Well why not?"

AU: What's like-can you share an example?

A: Like, um, hmm dang, I forgot. Okay. Ahhh, ahh, I remember one friend of mine slapped me. I'm not gonna say who. But you know I guess I forgave her.

AU: Like playful slap or like really slapped?

A: It was like really slapped.

AU: Mhm [pause]

A: I forgot why though.

AU: Are your friends of different races or would you-do you mostly //hang out with people from one or like others?/

A: /Yeah. Uh, they're all// different. Most of them, like- most of them are like black and Asian or, like just black or just Asian. And there's some Hispanic. I only have like a few white friends. Ony have like a few, I don't know why.

AU: Do you feel like you should have more?

A: Yeah, yeah.

AU: How do you identify yourself in terms of race?

A: Black, Asian and white.

AU: Mm. Have you always identified that way? Or was it-at one point did you primarily identify as like, "No, I am this."

A: Well, usually I just usually I thought, mainly as a kid, I didn't really think about race. The only race I thought about was being Filipino cause usually that's- they always just talked about being Filipino.

AU: Who?

A: My, my family.

AU: Mhm.

A: And like ate a lot of Filipoino foods. My dad really never talked about "you're black." But I mostly been talked about, you know, "you're Filipino" so, yeah.

AU: Mhm. Um, so now I have some questions that are more about race. Or going more specifically. So we talked about at our first meeting, desegregation. And I think when I first explained this project.

So, you've heard the word segregation, you told me. But what does that word mean to you, how would you describe it?

A: Um, like, you know if um, there's just like black and white people. Or like just white and colored people, then they would be segregated, like all white people in this room, and all colored people in this room.

AU: Mhm.

A: Or like the whites get more privilege than the blacks do. And like the colored people would have a dirty bathroom and like the whites would have a clean bathroom.

AU: Mhm.

A: Yeah.

AU: Have you ever seen this or felt this to some degree in your school experiences?

A: Um, well [pause], hmm. [audible exhale] Well, there's like this one, my history teacher. She uh, I don't know, she doesn't work at [Tacoma middle school], she's not going to work at [Tacoma middle school] anymore.

AU: What's her name?

A: Ms. Steven. And like, um, I remember J. and A., they were like talking in class. And she told them like to stop talking. And they're like, "How come all the kids in the back are white and they're talking and they don't ever get in trouble?" And she's like, "can you stop make your theories or you can go the office." And so they just went to the office because, like, you know.

AU: And that felt like segregation or different treatment?

A: Yeah, different treatment, mostly.

AU: What was that like for you? You were in the class I'm assuming?

A: Yeah.

AU: At that time?

A: Yeah. What was that like for you//as a student of color?/

A: /It was like//It was just like shocking. Cause everybody was talking about like she's racist. And I never really believed that but I didn't really believe that she was racist. I just like, feel like, she doesn't like, see like what people feel like when she-when she, like, does that to them. Like what they might feel.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Um, are there other examples that come to mind?

A: Um

AU: That you've seen around the school? Or in past experiences.

A: Nooooo, no.

AU: Yeah. Have you ever heard the word integration?

A: Unh-unh.

AU: What does that-what do you think that might mean, thinking about race?

A: Like instead of se- it would be in- so maybe like instead of separating, it would be like, you know, mixing. I guess.

AU: Exactly, exactly. It's you know, we talked about dese-people sometimes use desegregation and integration as the same. But they are different. Desegregation is literally just like, not segregating. So, okay, let's take some of the black students over here and white students there and put them at the same school, which is what our policy traditionally did, right? Like, looking at the numbers, look it's desegregated.

A: Mhm.

AU: Integration, um, I would say and people would – many scholars would agree – that integration is a step further to say, "Okay, alright, if I come into your 'desegregated school,' are students across races, building authentic relationships? Are teachers and students, like are-is there a true like mixing and appreciation-appreciating and valuing of people because – not in spite of their differences but, like, because of their differences. So, um. But just, you said the mixing, the integrating of different races. U, have you seen this? Or felt this in your experiences in schools?

A: Like, biracial relationships?

AU: What do you mean by that?

A: Like, you know, like white and black friends.

AU: Okay, yeah, so having relationships across race.

A: Yeah. I've seen a lot of it. There's a lot of, like, you know, mixes of race relationships at our school. So.

AU: Where do you see that?

A: Um, like, you know, like, in the cafeteria, in the office, my friends. //Just anywhere/

AU: Among students or staff or- ?

A: Students and staff.

AU: Hmm. Okay.

A: Yeah [pause].

AU: Um, are there specific examples that come to mind?

A: Mmm, let's see. Ummmmmm.

AU: It could be of the relationships you mentioned or of, um, I don't know if there was an experience or an event where you felt that like the mixing of races was like emphasized or important.

A: Oh, I remember like with the Black Lives Matter protest there was like, there wasn't just black people or just colored people there was white people too.

AU: Mhm. Um, and yeah, what was that like for you? Or, what is that like for you if that's part of your daily reality?

A: Well, it's just good to know that like [pause] it's not just black people who care. Yeah.

AU: Did your friends come out in support of that?

A: Yeah

AU: Of different races?

A: Mhm.

AU: Do you want to share more about what that protest was like and your role in that?

A: Well I wasn't really there because the day that that was, my dad was guest speaker in [equity elective], so I couldn't really just leave, you know, but yeah, I watched it from the window.

AU: Mhm.

A: A lot of people.

AU: I thought I heard that Ms. Starr took part in it but how did that happen if she was in the class with you?

A: Umm-

AU: Maybe that was a different one?

A: Yeah that was the, uh, that was the gun violence protest

AU: March for Our Lives?

A: Yeah. But she did help like spread the word about it and like help students out with signs and stuff.

AU: Mhm. How would you describe the racial make-up of, you know, so like the different races of your school overall?

A: What do you mean?

AU: Um, Like of, we can talk about it in certain groups. Like of students: How would you describe the racial makeup of [Tacoma middle school] with regards to its students?

A: Um, well like different classes have a lot of different races. And a lot of like groups of people who hang out are of different races. And like a lot of– not all staff hang out with the same race. But, you know like, like they're still friends with different people of race. But they're closer with people of the same race.

AU: Staff, you're saying?

A: Yeah.

AU: And what would you say are the percentages, so students, um, like what percentages would you say of [Tacoma middle school] students are students of color? Versus white? Does that feel different than Ford?

A: I don't really know percentage. But I know like-I know there's, I feel like there's more like bl-colored people than non-colored people at [Tacoma middle school].

AU: Okay, more students of color than not?

A: Yeah.

AU: Would you say it's like 60 percent and 40 percent white? Or does it feel more like 80/20?

A: Mmm, I would say like I 60 percent I guess.

AU: Okay, what about with staff?

A: With staff? Well, Oh my god. Um, there's more black staff. No—the teachers, mostly all the teachers are white. Most of the teachers are white. But like, like, there, like there's like a few. There's like, oh my gosh, how many? There's like one black lunch lady and there's a few like counselors that are black.

AU: Mhm.

A: Yeah.

AU: Could you like put a number to the number of black adults at your school?

A: Hmmm. Let's see, I'm just gonna count. Mr. Boarder, lunch lady, Mr. Packer, Mr. Lieu, Ms. Richards, Mr. Ruiz. Oh, there's like, like six. 10. Somewhere around there.

AU: Mhm. Yeah, so, different than the percentage for students of color [inaudible] Does that have an impact on your experience being a student of color?

A: Um, well, no [pause] but I feel like if there's just more like black teachers. I don't know why I just feel like there should be more. [pause]

AU: Can you say more about that?

A: Umm

AU: I mean I can tell you're like, "I just feel it, I don't exactly know why."

A: Yeah.

AU: But, um, have you had a black teacher before?

A: No.

AU: In elementary school?

A: Unh-unh

AU: Oh, yeah so it's like, "I don't even know what I don't know."

A: Yeah. I had a substitute teacher but like, I don't know though, an actual black teacher.

AU: What about, have you had a teacher of color?

A: Oh wait! Fourth grade, Ms. Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds is Latino and the person who took her place was Trinidan and Tobago-in. That was only once so, yeah.

AU: And what was that like? Was that a positive experience?

A: I don't know. Um, I was with Reynolds, I feel like she didn't really like me cause I was like always late. But like Ms. E, she liked me but I kind of annoyed her, sometimes. But, yeah, most of the time it was just good stuff.

AU: Mhm.

A: Yeah, cause like with different teachers of different races, like I remember Ms. Reynolds would like make us count in Spanish and Ms. E like at the end of the year we had to like learn about a different country or whatever.

AU: Mhm

A: Everybody had to choose their own country and we put up a poster board about it. And we maybe like made food and that nationality.

AU: You know Ms. Reynolds was black?

A: Oh, OK. I didn't know that. Now I know.

AU: Well, black and white. But, sometimes you can't tell, right? [A: Yeah] That's the important part about race, right? People make assumptions about you.

A: Yeahhhhh.

AU: Does this happen to you, Alexandra where people don't believe or don't know that you're Filipino?

A: Yeah

AU: So, you get it.

A: [inaudible] not Filipino, I'm like, [whispers] "Yeah."

AU: Mhm.

A: Mmm. let's see. Okay, I know how to sing "Happy Birthday" in Filipino but I'm [whispers] not going to, oh my gosh.

AU: I'm not putting you on the spot, it was more, um, yeah, I think that's a way that, uh, you would, people, in some ways, right, language is a form of credibility. Be like, "I'm not Filipino, watch this, Boom!"

A: It's weird, some people. I don't get it. People believe when I say I'm part white but they don't believe me when I say I'm part Asian.

AU: Why do you think that is?

A: I don't know. I really like- I really wonder why.

AU: My sense would be that it's just not as common. Especially out here, black and white, there are lot of people who are multiracial and biracial that way, but if you probably looked overall like Black and Asian combination

A: But like they would believe M. or Mariah if like they said like they were black and Asian, but like nobody really believes me until I actually have to prove to them that my parents are Asian.

AU: [indaudilbe]. Yeah.

A: Yeah

AU: Yeam I wonder why.

A: Me too.

AU: [laughs] Um, do you talk about race at school and, if so, with who or in what spaces?

A: Um, well in [equity elective] we talk about race and sometimes you know we just randomly bring it up, conversations.

AU: In [equity elective] or in other places?

A: In [equity elective], we just like [sighs]. We-so we have these articles about like race. This dude named um, [whispers] what is his name? Tim Wise or Tim Whyte or whatever, yeah. And he writes like all these different articles. There's like-we read chapter one through like 20. All these different ones. And we highlight, circle the vocabulary and talk about like what's the meaning of it.

AU: Mhm.

A: Yeah, he's like writing about, the-the-the denies racial – the white denials of racism. And like we like look it-look at it in quotations and wondering like you know.

[Door opens with her brother checking in about change in transportation plan. Interruption 26:10 – 27]

[A: Alexandra whispers into phone while I step away. To keep you two entertained, I would like to tell you a story. There was this one time I was walking down the street, and do you know what happened? I was walking [laughs] [I step out of the room to talk on the phone – Alexandra still talking into recorder] I was walking down the street and I saw this man and he looked at me and I looked at him. And then, he put a bag over my head. [Gasps] He grabbed my arms [Inhales] and he slammed my head fifteen times onto his car window until it broke. [gasps for breath] I don't know why it takes so long to break. But anyway,

He took me. And then I woke up, somewhere, somewhere dark. Scary. All I could hear was just thumping, and I'm just moving around. Feels like I'm in the trunk of somebody's car. All of a sudden it stops. Muffles of me screaming. Locked in handcuffs. Feet tied. They opened the trunk. Everything is a blur. I can not see, barely, anything. They take me. And they throw me down the stairs and into this dark, dark attic. And then, I find a way to untie myself. I find a piece of glass on the floor. Along with other shreds of glass that are stuck into my feet. And I take it out of my foot. And I take the tape off of my mouth. Take the ties off my arms. I get up. Turn on a lamp. There I see, I'm in a closed room. Blood over the floor. Dead bodies everywhere. Everybody of the same race. We're all black. And then, I hear somebody coming down the stairs. I pretend like I'm dead but they know I'm awake. And I find [whispers: it's the KKK.] I was so surprised when I saw it was them. I asked them why they where doing this to me. And they told us: "There need to be more of us in this world." And I was like: "Please, sir, don't do this." And you know, he does what he has to do. He stabs me. He stabs me really hard. In my stomach. Blood. Everywhere. But I'm still managed to get up and while his back is turned, I get a big piece of glass, pull it out of one of my feet. And I stab him. And I keep stabbing him until he was dead. Or at least I thought, he was dead.

I run up the stairs, I go out of the house. Surprise, there's no other members there. And I run, and I run, and I run! And all of a sudden, I fall down. Can't feel my legs. Something happened. I'm numb. Member comes running after me. Covered in blood! Suit is no longer white. It is red. He comes to me. Drops on the floor. Calls for back-up. All the other members come running at me. There, they are. Standing.

Circling behind me. I'm trying to crawl away. But they keep kicking me, they keep kicking me and I keep falling time. Every time I keep trying to get back up, they laugh. They burn me and they kick me in my stomach. But soon, somebody calls the cops. The cops came. And they sat down all the KK members. And they accidentally shot me, only once though. They managed to get me in a hospital bed. They rushed me, they rushed me and they rushed me. I got to the hospital. Nobody was there. No family, nothing. I soon come to find out. My whole family. Dead. Gone. They were never there. They got illuminati-ized. And all of a sudden, I'm alone. They told me I need a fake ID. So there, I got one. My new name was. Ha! Guess you'll never find out.

But soon I got up and I went from America to Dubai. Not- and then from Dubai, to China cause I couldn't afford to live in Dubai. I went to China. There was so many people. Poor, homeless, wanting money. And I found out, I had 180 thousand billion in my bank account. So, what do I do with that money? I donate 100 to each homeless Chinese person I can find. Then, I get me an apartment. Not too rich, you know, just regular old apartment. Cause I don't want to waste my moneeeey. Haha.

Then, I go and I learn martial arts and then I'm a Kung Fu master and everyone wants to fight me. I knock out everybody. I'm a champion. I'm known for my one-hit knockouts. But them, there comes a person just like me. Looks like just me, sounds just like me, acts just like me. I come to see it's an undercover [whispers: KKK member]. So what do I do? I fight 'em. Or her, don't know what it is. I fight, I fight, until all of their make-up comes off and all of a sudden it's a white person. And everyone's like, [gasps] "It's a phony." And everyone fights him and kicks him and all of a sudden, boom! He's out the door, running for his life, crying. And I run after him and tackle him and I say "Why?" You can come on our side now, you're safe, now. You're safe from those mean, deceiving people. You can be a good person, you can start over, it's fine. But he didn't want to. He didn't. But I know he did. I knew he did. So I picked him up by his feet, dragged him across the floor all the way to my apartment. Told him the fight was over. Brought him to my apartment, asked him, "Why did he do this, what happened?" He never answered, he didn't talked. Was just crying. Mad. Face was red, tears running down his face. And you know what happened? [Laughs], I was telling a story.

A: I get to listen to this later?

A: Yeah, you do I guess

AU: It was about ten minutes

A: [laughs] Holy cow.

AU: Okay, um, your mom says she loves you and J. went with your grandpa.

A: Okay, I don't even know where they're going.

AU: They're going to unload the dryer and J. wanted to work, and the good thing is, you don't have to hang around for another 40 minutes and we can just go get ice-cream and go home.

A: Yeah!

AU: Um, where were we? We were talking about, uh, what spaces you talk about race? Tim Weiss?

A: Tim Wise.

AU: Time Wise. And white people. Outside of [equity elective], are there spaces you talk about race? Do you talk about it lunch, with your friend groups? Or is it, mostly in [equity elective]?

A: Um, mostly it's in [equity elective] but sometimes when I just randomly bring it up [pause] Like something that came up on the news or something. Or, like the protest [inaudible]

AU: And so that might happen-Where might those conversations happen?

A: It might happen like in lunch, or it might happen like texting or just it might be like when we're walking to another class or whatever. Or at breakfast. Or after school. But yeah.

AU: Are there spaces where you, um, like in what spaces is race not talked about or not allowed to be talked about?

A: Um, we don't-we don't um, really talk, we're- I'm pretty sure Ms. Steven wouldn't really like if we like talked about race in her class. But sometimes she's just like [sighs]. Oh well, we don't really talk about it in science because science's like serious. You know, it's dark in there. And like, it's boring. And we don't really talk about it in uh second period. And, yeah. But in other places we might just bring it up.

AU: Mhm. Um, hm, hm, hm. And do you feel that there's certain people who don't talk about race?

A: Uh, let's see. Hmm [pause] Well I feel like Ms. Steven feels like she doesn't talk about race. But we know like she does. Like she might. I don't know because I remember like there're these kids that like went, like Ms. Starr set up like we were talking about microagressions and they were gong to talk about it personally with the teachers and they talked about it with a group of students. But when they talked about it they thought like they were attacking her and being like, "Oh, you're like racist" or whatever. But like no she-no they were like all teachers and they thought-she thought they were like all like just cornering in on her bout like what she did but like really they were just telling her what they microaggressions] were.

AU: Um, in what ways do you feel most welcomed and most like you can be yourself at school?

A: Um, in [equity elective]. Oh, in what ways? Um, oh like you know, I dunno just like when I'm with my friends usually or with a person that like really knows me. Yeah. But I feel like I don't really act like myself at home. [whsipers: I have to be like quiet and respectful. I don't want to be disruptive.]

AU: Where?

A: At my house. I don't really like-My dad gets mad at me. He's like, "you're so serious." But he doesn't know that at school I'm like a really funny person.

AU: Mhm

A: Yeah. But I don't know why I don't feel like I shouldn't be like silly at home. I don't know why I feel that way [voice gets really soft] but I just feel that way.

AU: Is that just at your dad's or at your mom's //too/?

A: /It's at// both. But sometimes it just might come out weird. I just act all weird and my mom's like. What the heck are you doing?

AU: Why do you think, like, in those spaces, in [equity elective], with your friends, you feel like you can be your truest self?

A: Because like they're all like people that don't like judge me. And like, they know me. And like, If I'm quiet, they know, like, somethings wrong. Yeah.

AU: Mhm.

A: [breathes into mic in a funny way]

AU: Specifically, with [equity elective], I'm curious how that space was created cause it just didn't start the year off like that.

A: Yeah. Like what do you mean, how did the class start?

AU: Yeah, like I get it with friends, where you're like, "I feel like I can be myself." But like in a-at-in a classroom setting. That's also-that's really cool and really special that that also feels like a space where you're not judged, and can be yourself. Did it feel like that kinda from the beginning of the year or was that built [inaudible]?

A: It was built. Cause we have some team-building and tutorials are really team building. Cause like you know what like might be hard for them and what like might be- like their weaknesses and stuff?

AU: Tell me more about tutorials again. Is that in front of a whole group or is that in small groups/

A: No there's three groups. We have, uh, how many mentors do we have? We have three mentors

AU: Mhm

A: in that class. And every Tuesday and Thursday, there might be a student who's like confused. Like maybe he'd be like, like, what is the square root of. I don't even what a square root is! But like you can't ask like, "what is a square root?" You have to ask something like where you can get multiple answers. So like if they ask like a question like, um, "how, how can, how do you divide a fraction?" Like you can like. Like we can ask you questions like what you think but you have to be able to answer it 50 to 80 but if you don't understand it at all it's going to be really hard. So like we know. And if they fully understand it, they write it out in steps and they prove to us that they know and we choose another person

AU: Who picks the topic of like what they need help on? Just the person who's being, who's like the focus pick or does the group pick?

A: The group doesn't pick for the person, they pick for themselves. We have this thing before tutoriall, it's like a day before, it's our homework. It's like a TRF. We have to fill it out. We put like the question and we pick like the steps and stuff. And then like the people get to choose who goes up there. If they want to go up there. But sometimes we have real-life tutorials. Like I remember we had a real life one and L. was like, um "how could I, like, get money to buy new roller skates?" or whatever and we like we provided her with different ways

AU: Mhm

A: than like she knew. [inaudible].

AU: I wish I had a space like that sometimes.

A: Heh, heh, heh.

AU: Do you ever feel like you can't be yourself at school and why- if so, why?

A: Um, there's just sometimes that are really serious that I feel like-I shoudn't like. Cause like I'm like a kinda funny person but like sometimes it's like meant not to be funny so I I just be quiet.

AU: What are some of those times?

A: Uhhhhh, like at an assembly. But sometimes if its' a loud assembly when no one can barely hear my voice, then I just start talking.

AU: What's it like in spaces where you feel like you can't be your full self?

A: It's just kinda boring. Cause like, in fourth period math, everybodys supposed to be quiet. And I just want to liven the room up a bit. Cause it's so quiet. Half the room is tired, yawning, depressed. Or like they're tired and they fell asleep. Like it's just so boring. Sometimes I just have to be myself because the room needs **lights**.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Do you ever feel like you can't be yourself in terms of, um, your racial identity?

A: Um, well, so there was this one time when like my stepmom took me to yoga and like it was all like old people but most of them were white so I just like-and they were all like serious and happy like the Lululemon-shopping type of people. And like I remember I kept falling over and my stepmom was holding in her laugh. And everybody, nobody really started at me cause I was the only one falling. I'm like, "how are you not falling?"

AU: [laughs]

A: Yeah.

AU: So that might have-well yeah-how would you describe that experience looking back on it? Like, what was that?

A: I don't know, just sometimes I feel uncomfortable if like I'm the only black person in the room. Like I remember my stepsister went to this thing like Tech Trek or wahterver and like my dad had to pick her up from it. And like me and him were the only two black people in there.

AU: Is your stepmom and step sister, white?

A: White? Yeah.

AU: Mhm. Um, yeah so that was an experience that yeah. It's very valid. Have you felt something similar out- in sch- in the school space?

A: Um. [pause] Noooooooooooo? No.

AU: Mhm. Yeah. I mean, it makes sense. From what you shared, if like there's a high percentage of students of color.

A: Yeah

AU: Do most of your classes reflect that balance too, like 60/40, or are there some that like, “wow, 100% of students in here are students of color or most white and I’m the only--

A: I mean, like most of them like just bounce around. Like advistory, it’s mostly white people. And second period, it’s mostly people of color. And third period, it’s kind of, I guess mostly people of color. Fourth period, I don’t really know. It’s like 50 or something like that. Fifth period it’s mostly colored people and sixth period it’s mostly colored people.

AU: Why do you think that is?

A: I don’t know. I don’t know. I mean, there’s mostly colored people on this side of Tacoma.

AU: Uh, do you feel that-ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than white students or students of color.

A: Um, yeah.

AU: And why do you think that is?

A: Um, well, like maybe like some um, Ms. Steven’s class. And like some don’t really see a problem with like what she says. Because they don’t really know whats it like?

AU: Does that happen in other spaces that you’ve seen? Like in the cafeteria, in or with other teachers you’ve mentioned her a lot.

A: Ummmm, no.

AU: Um, yeah. Taking into account all you shared, kind of reaffirms for me the belief that young people, in many ways, are best positioned to ike kno what maybe needs to change because you’ve lived this experience, the good and the bad and will continue to live in this world. Thinking about school specifically, what changes would you make, to improve the experience of students of color?

A: Um, well, hm. [whispers] That’s kind of hard. Well, [pause] I guess like I would like make more black teaches. I don’ know why. I just feel like uncomfortable. Cause like most-All of them are white, I’ve never seen a black teacher at [Tacoma middle school] before. So like, yeah, and we’re also like, make them feel like all of their voices can be heard. I know that all voices are going to be heard. But I want to like make a little box like for every grade. And they can put like recommendations for what they can change about the school. Yeah.

AU: Youre in a good position to live out some of these changes as a seventh grade representative.

A: Yeahhh.

AU: So different than other students, too. It’s like, these things that you’re starting to-that you’ve been thinking about and maybe will develop deeper thinking around this summer. You actually have a platform to do that which is pretty cool. Um, is there anything else I haven’t asked about that you’d like to share?

A: Oh, me and T., we’re going to run for co-president.

AU: Who’s T.?

A: A friend who's also got voted for 7th grade representative because there's only allowed to be two.

AU: Okay.

A: And like we feel like and since like we both won, we guess, we'll probably make more friends throughout the year so like in 8th grade we're going to run for co-president which is kind of like, you can have two presidents, but there'll still be a vice president. But we're gonna like, yeah.

AU: And, has that been done before?

A: Yeah, we had presidents in 6th grade. S and I.

AU: Is it a president for all students or just of your grade?

A: Uh, all students.

AU: Cool

A: Yeah

AU: So not this year, but the year after?

A: Yeah, the year after.

AU: Nice. What made you run for ASB in the first place?

A: Uh, Ms. Starr. Cause her like-she was like-she made us all go one by one. And like I told the whole class why I don't want to be and they gave me reasons we should be. And we did this thing called the [equity elective] ticket where like the whole [equity elective] votes for this one person, and like I remember for the [equity elective] ticket, um my friend T. and M., they were co-presidenting, running for co-president and they were on the [equity elective] ticket so everybody had to vote for them for [equity elective], in our [equity elective] class. And I remember I was on the [equity elective] ticket, me and A.

AU: Mhm, mhm. Nice. Anything else you'd like to share?

A: No.

AU: Okay, how did it feel, you were telling me before like, "I don't know how I'm going to answer these questions?

A: It felt better than I thought it was going to be.

AU: Why was that?

A: I feel like, I felt like there was going to be cameras, I don' tknow why. Like somebody video-tapping me. Yeah. I thought like the questions weren't going to be specific so I thought I'd have to ask like, [whispers] "Could you put that in a different way?"

AU: Mhm

A: Yeah

AU: But it felt doable?

A: Yeah

AU: Okay, that's good feedback.

A: Pretty [inaudible] story. You could write a book.

AU: The story when I walked out of the room?

A: Yeah. put it on an audiobook or whatever. [tape ends].

B.4d D.J. Interview Transcript

Date: July 17, 2018
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: Community Center

AU: So, D.J., as you know, I'm doing this study to understand students' experiences as students of color, today. Um, I want to start by learning more about your school experience. So, to start us off, can you tell me about your 6th grade year at [Tacoma middle school]? And, maybe to start: what classes did you take?

DJ: Um, so my classes were good, were like good but some teachers would like-like one of the teachers was racist [beep of recorder] like, like Ms. Steven, my history teacher, like she'll pick on all the black people in the class and I didn't really like that cause like she picked on me too. And my friends. And she will-she will always mess with our class just to go to the office or ISS and that was the reason why it was because it was kind of bad.

AU: Mhm. What was that like for you?

DJ: It was really good cause like she like pick on all the black people in the class.

AU: Yeah.

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Is there a specific experience that comes to mind when you were picked on?

DJ: I'm like, "That's messed up," cause she's only picking on us.

AU: How'd she pick on you?

DJ: Like-she'd be like- like-she'd be like, "Oh no, you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing" like she'd be like "just get out the class and go the office and just go to ISS."

AU: Yeah. Did that happen to you?

DJ: nods

AU: Can you tell me about that?

DJ: She said I wasn't doing my work and she just told me to just go to the office.

AU: Mhm. How do you respond?

DJ: [smacks teeth] I was like, "That's messed up" and I just went to the office.

AU: Do you say that under your breath or do you say that to her face?

DJ: I say that under my breath. I didn't tell her.

AU: Give me one sec Issaac. I want to make sure, cause you're talking quietly, which you always do, but I just want to make sure I can still hear. If not, I might put it a little bit closer to you. [audible playback of

phone recording] Oh yeah, you can hear. [still playing] Isn't that weird to hear your voice. I have to sit and listen to it and then type it [DJ: *coughs*] and whenever I hear my voice I'm like, "I sound weird." [pause – can still hear playback.] Okay. Guess we just keep going. Um. What other classes did you take last year?

DJ: [inaudible] I took art and I took math. Language Arts. And, advisory and Mr. Ross' class technology class and those are all the classes I had.

AU: Mhm. What was your favorite class?

DJ: It was probably um, um, either Language Arts or um, [pause] or, [long pause] uh, techn- technology class. [*voice breaks].*

AU: Technology? Why were those your favorite?

DJ: Cause like the technology class you get [inaudible] to use the computers and make like videos and stuff. And like, movies. Yeah.

AU: Did you pick that class?

DJ: Nah. [pause] They just gave it to me.

AU: Mm. Will you take it again next year?

DJ: Mm, yeah.

AU: Nice. Um, who has been your fav-your favorite teacher and why?

DJ: I think it's going to be Mr. Brown.

AU: Who is it?

DJ: //Mr. Brown/

AU: /Mr. Brown//

DJ: Yeah, cause like he's cool, like if I'm mad like, he'll come and talk to me about it and stuff. Then he'll just tell me what to do.

Au: What does he teach?

DJ: He teach, um, history.

AU: [*coughs].* Mhm. [pause]. Can you tell me more about what you like about him?

DJ: Like he's really cool and he's funny. He just helps everybody out. Get their work done and stuff.

AU: Mhm. Um, what is he-what is he like? What makes him cool?

DJ: And he was the coach for basketball so like, he was cool.

AU: Is he cool, like, what does he wear? What does he dress like? I don't-I can't picture him.

DJ: He's like tall and he's buff. And he's white. And he's bald.

AU: Mhm. [Pause.] Um, is there a specific memory that stands out with Mr. Brown and you?

DJ: Um, no.

AU: Like a time like you said that he calms you down when you're mad?

DJ: Oh, yeah.

AU: Was he ever there when you got kicked out of Ms. Steven's class?

DJ: No, he wasn't there, cause like he has the other classes too.

AU: That's right. But how– um, is there a time you can remember where he, like, calmed you down and helped talk you through something?

DJ: Yeah, it was during his class.

Au: What was-can you tell me about that?

DJ: Like I was mad and I was like, I was-I wasn't doing my homework and then he just came up to me and then he just take me and then just talked to him and then he just helped me out and then [inaudible].

AU: Mhm. What does he tell you to do that calms you down?

DJ: Like he'll make me like do like stretches and stuff. Or like do push-ups or jumping jacks [AU: laughs] or something like that.

AU: Mhm. Um, can you share with me a really good experience that you had this past year? Like, what was your best part of last year?

DJ: I think the basketball team.

AU: Tell me more about that.

DJ: cause like, we would go, like, look like at schools are looking like and we'd get to play them and stuff. And we'll get to see people there.

AU: Mhm. Um. [pause]. So you had to try-out for this team, I'm guessing?

DJ: Yeah.

AU: What team were you on? Is there just one?

DJ: I was on C team. There's three.

AU: Mhm.

DJ: Like C team's for the 6th graders, but then JV for the 7th and 8th is varsity.

AU: Mhm. Um, is – was there a specific – or can you tell me about a specific memory of being on the basketball team that was really great?

DJ: Our first game cause like we blew the team that we played out. We blew them out.

AU: How did you pay in that game?

DJ: I played good, cause I had good points and I had- and we was doing-we was passing the ball well. Running the plays right.

AU: Who did you play?

DJ: We played Tucker.

AU: Was it a home game or an away game?

DJ: It was an away game.

AU: Wow. Were there a lot of fans from [Tacoma middle school]?

DJ: Yeah, barely. But mostly Tucker.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Even more special to kind of win on somebody else's turf, I think. Um, can you share with me, like, what was a bad experience last year at school?

DJ: I think about Ms. Steven. Like how she was, like, how she was doing like, how she was, like, always talking about us and stuff.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Um, as someone who doesn't' know Ms. Steven or hasn't been in her class, can you help me understand like more – yeah, what-what does it feel like to be in her class. Um, like what was that experience? Maybe think about a specific day, where you can like talk about what happened that led to y-you or some of your friends getting kicked out?

DJ: Like, like she'd be like, "sit down, you can't move." And then, like, if you get up, she'd just say, "get out the class."

AU: Mhm. What did other students do when she would call you out or other people?

DJ: Some people would just be talking. And then some of them would just like be playing around.

AU: Mhm. What makes you say that she treats, uh, some kids differently? You said she treats just the black kids differently.

DJ: Yeah, cause like during the fourth period cl-class. Um, this-this-this one white kid was like doing something and then one of my friends was doing it and then she just kicked only the black one out. And then when both of them were doing it. And she let the other one go but she just kicked the other one out.

AU: Wow. Have people tried to talk to her about this? Or have you talked to other like school leaders about [DJ: Mhm] your concerns about her being racist.

DJ: Yeah.

AU: What do you they say?

DJ: But now, she's-she's leaving. She's not going to be at [Tacoma middle school] anymore.

AU: Do you think that's related to what happened?

DJ: I think. Cause she's not going to be teaching at [Tacoma middle school] no more.

AU: Did students call her racist to her face?

DJ: Mhm.

AU: How did she react?

DJ: She said, [inaudible/nonverbal].

AU: Mhm. That's a really intense experience to have at, uh, [pause] your first year in middle school. I'm wondering if you had other experiences like that, earlier in school. Like maybe at Ford, where you felt like you're being treated differently - and worse - because of your race.

DJ: No I didn't have it cause like, I don't think there was anybody racist-racist there cause like I don't know cause I haven't heard about anybody be racist over there. I heard about some kids being racist.

AU: At Ford?

DJ: Yeah but the teachers –

AU: Tell me about the kids

DJ: Like, they'd be like, "He's racist. He's only saying that cause we're black and stuff like that." I saw people who would be saying that about other people.

AU: Mhm. Did you ever have an experience with kids treating you differently cause of your skin color?

DJ: Not really. Cause I'll-cause I wasn't really hanging out with them, I'd be like with my friends and stuff.

AU: Mhm. And who-who are your friends? How would you describe who you choose to hang out with?

DJ: Like, I have like-I have a lot of friends.

AU: Did you say you have a lot of friends?

DJ: Uh-huh.

AU: What are they like?

DJ: Like black, white, Mexican all types, different.

AU: Is that something that's important to you? To have friends that are of different races?

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Why?

DJ: Cause like if something just comes up that's racist, they'll be like "why you guys only black people." Like stuff like that. Like some of that happens [with] my friends.

AU: Is it racist just to hang out with only black people?

DJ: No, but, they told me something like that happened to them. Cause like, that's messed up.

AU: Yeah, just to make sure I understood, what happened to your friends?

DJ: They just told me like when they was walking in a group, they're just and they're only black. They're like-Some people just walked up by them and they're like, "Why you guys just only black?" And they're like, I don't know, they just told me that.*[difficult to hear]

AU: Mhm. Yeah. What else is important to you, D.J., in who you call friends? What's important qualities for you?

DJ: Doesn't really matter cause some of them are fake. I only be with the real ones, not the fake ones.

AU: What makes a real friend?

DJ: Like, who's always there for you. Who helps you out if you need help.

AU: Are most of your friends people you went to school with at Ford?

DJ: Yeah. And more than just at For – I mean at [Tacoma middle school].

AU: And where do you meet most of your friends?

DJ: Probably at school.

AU: Um, But is it in a certain class, is it from your basketball //team/

DJ: /Um, probably like// that outside when we have like lunch. And the basketball team too, cause kids form Elliot come to play for the team.

AU: Mm? Mhm. [pause] Are you involved in any clubs or activities?

DJ: Yeah.

AU: You said basketball. Any other clubs or activities after school?

DJ: If it-if it was over now, I would go back to, um, the after school program.

AU: Mhm. How did you get involved with that?

DJ: Coz like at Ford I was an Achiever and I signed up for it.

AU: Why do you stay involved with Achievers?

DJ: Coz like I think they're cool like the field trips and stuff. And they have fun stuff there.

AU: What's some of the fun stuff that you guys do there? [DJ: coughs]

DJ: We get to play like football, basetkball, PE- like we just get to play with our friends and stuff.

AU: Mhm. Anything else you want to share about, um, either last year at [Tacoma middle school] or things you're looking forward to at [Tacoma middle school]?

DJ: No.

AU: Um, you mentioned Mr. Brown as like your favorite teacher. Would he be, if I-if I were to ask you who was your favorite teacher of all times. Would he be still the-the person that comes to mind? Or is there anybody from elementary school?

DJ: Um. Probably Mr. Winters too.

AU: Mhm. Why Mr. Winters?

DJ: Cause I had his class too. It was great. And he was funny.

AU: How was he funny?

DJ: Like he would make jokes.

AU: What's your favorite memory of Mr. Winters?

DJ: That, [pause] we played basketball [inaudible] outside. [pause] And I forgot the day. It was back one of the last like the field day, I think. [inaudible].

AU: Who won?

DJ: Him. Cause he's tall.

AU: [laughs]. Was it the, yeah. Nevermind. Um, Yeah. I'm wondering like what more about – so he's funny, he would play with you guys. Um, what other things stood out that made him really special to you?

DJ: Like, like he would help us when we'd need help, like with our work.

AU: He would-he would what?

DJ: Help us with our work. Help.

AU: [sound of shuffling papers.] Okay. Well we'll move to some questions, D.J., that are more specifically about race. Have you ever heard the word segregation?

DJ: Mmm. Well like, not that much.

AU: Not that much. What does it make you think of?

DJ: Like, like, like, like racist stuff happening to black people.

AU: Mhm. What else?

DJ: Mm that's it.

AU: Um, so you said like racist stuff happening to black people is what you think of with segregation. You talked about a little about this a little bit with Ms. Steven's class. Have you – in what other ways have you seen or felt this in your school experience?

DJ: Mm, Mm, um, [inaudible] Ms. Steven's class. But everything else was good.

AU: Yeah, so segregation like you said kind of like you said, messed up stuff happening to black people. Um, when I think about policies, like laws that our country had that, uh, made segregation okay, what

segregation was was like, when it was legal to separate people by their race. So you probably have seen pictures were there was like a drinking fountain that was like "for white people" and a drinking fountain that was like "for everybody else", for people of color, for black people. Um there were bathrooms, there was different parts of a restaurant, right. Or you couldn't ever come to in to some restaurants. [coughs]. So segregation was like the legal separ-separation of people by race. Do you see, uh, any sort of separation like that at [Tacoma middle school]? In classes, or, in //basketball?/

DJ: /Uh, no.// No.

AU: Well that's good. Um. Have you heard the word integration?

DJ: No.

AU: Any idea about what that might mean?

DJ: Uh. I don't kn-

AU: Kind of sounds like segregation right?

DJ: Mhm

AU: So *inte*gration, were if *se*gregation were to separate, integration, right that first part of the word "inte" – here's it's spelled like this [*writes the word down]*. So this part, like, inte [underlines letters "inte"] means that you bring it together. So, integration thinking about our history, uh, represented times when the court says 'okay, we have to desegregate. We have to undo segregation. Integration took that a step further in saying, it's not just enough to say, "Okay, black kids can now come to this school with white kids." Integration is thinking more, "Okay, how can we actually build relationships amongst people so they're actually, um, developing meaningful relationships, students, teachers, students to students. So I'm wondering, do you see examples of that, of that sort of *mixing* and um building of relationships at [Tacoma middle school]? [pause] Across race?

DJ: Mm. [Pause]

AU: You talk about your friend group right? That it's not just-you don't just hang out with black people?

DJ: [Shakes head.]

AU: So where do you see like the examples of people hanging out and mixing across their race?

DJ: Like I don't see it at school but

AU: Mm. Where do you see it?

DJ: Like, like, like I see it like at some parks or when I'm in the car. Like I see stuff going on that's just not right.

AU: Your talking about bad stuff?

DJ: Yes, it's just not right. I just see it but like I just can't go do something. I just see it and I just leave it- I just live it.

AU: What did you see that you're thinking of. Do you feel comfortable sharing?

DJ: Yeah like probably like I've got, uh, white people like these homeless guys. I think. They were askig like for money and the guy just walked past like the white guy just walked past it and he didn't even try to look at him.

AU: Mhm. Was the homeless man black?

DJ: Yeah.

AU: That is messed up. Like you said. [pause]. What about positive examples of people, um, mixing or building relationships of different races? Do you see that at [Tacoma middle school]?

DJ: No. I don't-I don't see that.

AU: But didn't you say that your friend group has people that are like white and Hispanic, Latino?

DJ: Uhhuh

AU: So then it sounds like it happens in some ways, at least in your friends? That people are not just saying, "Oh you can't be my friend because you're not black or you're not white."

DJ: No, or I don't see that happening

AU: No? Why not, or why do you think it's hard for people?

DJ: Cause like some people are like cool with each other [inaudible]

AU: They're what?

DJ: Like, they're cool with each other, like when they get mad, just talk it out. And then just be friends again.

AU: So are you saying, D.J., that it's-that people are more cool with other people from their same race?

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Mmm. And you don't see, many people trying to build relationships with like different races of people.

DJ: Mm.

AU: Yeah. I've been at [Tacoma middle school] quite a bit this summer. You see me, right? And it-I would agree in some ways that at lunch or in classes, even when people get to choose their seats. A lot of friend groups tend to be of people of the same race. Whether they're all Latino, all white, [DJ: Mhm] all black or mixed There's a lot of mixed kids. Yeah. Hmm. [pause]. Do you think that's something that should change or you think it's okay?

DJ: Ah, I don't really know, I think it's okay.

AU: Mhm. Who are your closest friend and what race are they?

DJ: Like, black.

AU; All your closest friends are black?

DJ: Mhm

AU: And why would you say that is//for you/?

DJ: //Or mixed/. Like it's like mixed, and black. [pause] Mhm.

AU: Why do you think that is for you? Speaking for just you, specifically.

DJ: Cause some of them, I have like classes with them. Yeah.

AU: D.J., do you ever feel like you get treated differently even within like, the black community, black students, because like of where your family's from, because of your accent?

DJ: [pause] No.

AU: That's really good. Cause I know sometimes people have told me like that even within people-groups of color, that people will treat people differently if they're light skin, dark skin, whatever, whatever.

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Have you ever heard that or felt that?

DJ: Mmm. [shrugs shoulders or shakes head no].

AU: That's really good. I'm really glad to hear that cause that can be really painful. How would you describe [Tacoma middle school] in terms of the different races of students? So what I'm asking, um, if I were just to ask you about the students, would you say, um, that it-like what-Is it mostly people of color? Is it mostly white? If you had to make a percentage, right? So the 100% is all students, like what percentage would be students who are not white?

DJ: It'd be like – it's be like, like 30-9 white. And they're like, 35 like, of like, like Mexicans and like other people like Asians. And then the black would be like, like 40 percent so, yeah, around there.

AU: So I'm thinking of it like you kind a, I drew this circle, right? You said almost like, you said 30, 35, 40. [counts] pretty much like almost adds up to a hundred. So you're almost saying like dividing it in thirds, except there's a little more black students. This is black, this is like I'm just gonna put other POC – do you know what that stands for?

DJ: Mm.

AU: People of color.

DJ: Mhm.

AU: And this is white, so if we were to look at all just people of color, black, Latino, Asian. It would be maybe, it would be like that. [scribbles over two quadrants.] So like 70 percent. And this [white people] is this like 30.

AU: What about with teachers?

DJ: The teachers of like, is like, 60% is white and like, 30 percent's black.

AU: Can you name ay black teachers?

DJ: Yeah, like, um, Mr. Ross, Mr. Ruiz. Mr. Boarder. And I don't know some of -I don't know some of their names.

AU: Mhm. But you can picture them?

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Okay, are you-when you say 30 percent, black, are you thinking just black or are you thinking people who are not-white, like if there's any Asian teacher or mixed teachers?

DJ: Um, there's mixed and some Asian and stuff.

AU: Yeah, are they counted in the 30 percent. I think it's like a 35. Yeah

AU: For teachers of color?

DJ: Mhm

AU: What about when you think of who runs the school, like the leadership? Principals, assistant principals, what is the race of those people?

DJ: The principal is white and the vice principal's black.

AU: Are there other school leaders like the dean or?

DJ: Mm, I don't know.

AU: Mhm. [pause] Um, yeah. So in general when you shared, it seems a little bit mismatched. Like there's more-more students of color than there are teaches and leaders of color.

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Does that feel okay does it feel, um, does it feel like it works or does it feel like it's a problem?

DJ: I feel like it works. Cause like except like, like the - there's good teachers so like just don't care about color. Like some of them just treat everyone the same way.

AU: So you said it's a-it's good because a lot of teachers it doesn't matter about race?

DJ: Mm.

AU: [pause] Uh, do you talk about race at school, D.J.?

DJ: Not that much.

AU: Not that much. Where- like in what spaces do you talk about race?

DJ: Like um, like if a teacher just asks us like to do like some work about it. Then, like, they'll ask us about it.

AU: Mhm. What classes did that happen in for you this year?

DJ: Probably like in history like-like when we did the walk out. Went outside, did like Black Lives Matter and stuff. The walkout.

AU: You took part in the walkout?

DJ: Yeah.

AU: What was that like for you?

DJ: Well like the news came and were guarding us. Some people they'd be like, they'd be like, some people would just be like, "that's good, that's good." Some people would just drive by and stuff.

AU: Mhm. What was it like for you to take part, like how did that feel?

DJ: It feel good. Cause like when I was like in part of it. I got asked, like [inaudible] like I feel like I should of done it and I did it.

AU: Do you know people who chose not to do it?

DJ: Some people didn't do it cause they're like racist. They [inaubile] Some people were just playing around outside.

AU: People you knew?

DJ: Not really. Like, only, I don't know how many.

AU: Um, you know at Ford we talk a lot about like your zone and what emotion you feel? Do you remember like how that made you *feel* when you were participating in this walkout about black lives?

DJ: Kind of felt like I was yellow zone coz like, like most of the people were doing what they're supposed to be doing

AU: They were or they were not?

DJ: They were and then like a little-little bit wasn't.

AU: So what made you feel yellow zone

DJ: Coz like they were just like outside of there just to be out of class, to play around.

AU: And why would that make you feel like in the yellow zone?

DJ: Coz they weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. Like what the lockout was about, they were just playing around.

AU: What were you supposed to be doing?

DJ: Like walk out and stuff-

AU: But is that like screaming? Holding signs?

DJ: Holding signs. Like Black lives Matter stuff.

AU: Um, who-who would you say are the people at school who like talk about race?

DJ: Never really any anybody. I don't know who talk about it, like

AU: Are there certain students, are there certain teaches who are always talking about it? Principals?

DJ: Unh-unh.

AU: So it just kind of come up, sometimes. Are there spaces where it is like *not* okay to talk about it?

[Beep]

AU: [*checks recorder – deletes file to make more room]* [*whispers*: Hold on one sec.] Keep going. I think it's just almost out of space. But this one's still going. [*whispers*: Let's do this. I'm going to stop this one. *Beeps. Restarts recorder, beeping.*] Think about that question why I do this. [*whispers:* C, D, Hmm. *Beeping*].

AU: Are there places, D.J., where it's not okay to talk about race? Certain classrooms or spaces?

DJ: [pause]

AU: What about Ms. Steven's class?

DJ: Like-like-like some people just be talking about it and she'll just walk by and not say anything.

AU: When you say talking about it, like what would they be saying?

DJ: Like about, like how black people be treated-black people and stuff-

AU: Mhm. So it's interesting, it almost comes up-it almost talked about more in places where things aren't going well.

AU: Uh-huh, let's see, in what ways do you feel most like you can be yourself, at school?

DJ: I don't know. I just be myself like in my class I have.

AU: What is being yourself? What does that look like?

DJ: Like doing my homework, listening to the teachers.

AU: Hmm?

DJ: Like doing my homework. Listening to the teachers. And doing what they tell me to do.

AU: That's what being D.J. is?

DJ: Mhm.

AU: Cause I've seen you, being at [Tacoma middle school]. Like sometimes I'll look over and I can see you- especially when we're out at fitness. Where you seem, uh, I don't know, you seem different than when I've seen you in school. Where you're, like you said, more listening, you seem more comfortable or like I think about last week when we were playing speedball and, you know, you get very competitive. And someone threw the ball and you didn't have a way to block it so you threw your water bottle [DJ: laughs] and it hit the ball mid-air and it blocked the pass, right?

DJ: Uh-huh.

AU: Like that's kind of when I see a different side of you, D.J.. And maybe, I mean, it's okay, we have different personal—like we have our school self and then our self with our friends. But I'm wondering at what places you feel like most whole, and most accepted and not judged.

DJ: Like, [inaudible] I don't know. I just don't know.

AU: You don't know? Sometimes it's easier to think about where we feel the opposite, so are there places where you feel like you, uh, you can't be yourself?

DJ: No.

AU: What about like Ms. Steven's class?

DJ: Like – that was the only class that was bad, that was the only bad class I had. But, yeah.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. D.J., do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than students of color?

DJ: Mm, [Shakes head side to side]

AU: No?

DJ: No.

AU: Even in that class, that history class you told me about. Where they're treated, from what you shared, treated differently for doing the same things. So is that a way that white students might have a different experience?

DJ: Yeah

AU: Have you seen that in other ways?

DJ: No.

AU: That's good. Um, do you feel like being black, uh, affects your experience at school in good ways or in bad ways?

DJ: No, [yawns].

AU: It's just the same?

DJ: [nods affirmatively]

AU: Okay. Well as someone who has experience in schools, like you, you've shared some of those experiences with me. I'm wondering what, what changes that you would make to-to-ex-to improve the experience for other students at [Tacoma middle school], in particular for students of color? Like, what changes would you make at [Tacoma middle school]?

DJ: [pause] Like, nothing, like really bad thing happened there so, I don't know.

AU: Does it only have to be bad for there to be changes?

DJ: Yeah like if they weren't going to class and stuff, like being bad [*hard to hear]. Like they will change their classes and stuff.

AU: But do you and your friends ever talk about, like, “Oh man, I wish this could happen like this.”

DJ: Mmm, no.

AU: Do you like where you all are doing this summer where you have fitness during the day?

DJ: Yeah.

AU: Is that something that happens during the school year?

DJ: There’s PE and there’s like a little of it during lunch, like we go outside.

AU: But it’s not like scheduled fitness like you have now?

DJ: Uh-huh

AU: Well there’s one example, right. Um, um, anything else that maybe I haven’t asked about but that you would want to share?

DJ: No.

AU; No? Okay. Thank you for your time today.

DJ: You’re welcome.

[Tape ends].

B.4e Mariah Interview Transcript

Date: July 19, 2018
Time: 12:45pm
Location: Community Center

AU: Alright, Mariah, so as you know I'm doing this study to understand he experiences of students of color, in schools today. Um, and this will be the first part to us doing more of like, a research project together [M: Mhm] but I want to start by learning more about your 6th grade year. So if you can tell me, um, what that was like for you and maybe to start with, like what classes you took.

M: Okay, so in sixth grade I took [equity-elective], I had math. I had history. I had art and [pause] Language Arts. And, with my history class we had a white teacher and, like, with one of my experiences, like let's say, a white boy or a white girl was talking and like we were – us people of color were sitting by them – we would be the ones getting yelled at. And like if we tried to tell her that we weren't talking, she would like send us out of the classroom. And [pause] like that happens very often in that class. And I've gotten in trouble in that class for like no reason but – that's one of my experiences and, yeah.

AU: Yeah, what was that like for you?

M: Uh, it-I felt annoyed. I got frustrated because I didn't really do anything but, if she said I did, then, I can't argue with her. But yeah.

AU: Have you had experiences like that in some way or another before? At school, out of school?

M: Mmm, no.

AU: Mhm.

M: But yeah.

AU: Mhm. Um, what was, like, what was a highlight from your sixth grade yearr?

M: Um, a highlight from my 6th grade year was when, uh, this is a tough question [smiles] Um, okay, is when I was in [equity-elective] and we did this competition and we were crabfighting against our best friends. And, I lost and yeah, that was one of my highlights.

AU: Tell me more about this crabfighting [M: Okay] cause I heard about it another way and I was a little confused.

M: [laughs] So we could be on our hands and our feet and like one leg is up and one arm can be up and, like you're trying to kick your opponent and try to get to touch the ground, like with their butts. And, I touched the ground right away [both laugh]. It was hard. I was going against my <u>best</u> friend.

AU: What was the purpose of this crabfighting?

M: Um, I don't know but I know, like, the people who won they all got in a group and they went against each other. And then, yeah. I don't know what the purpose was. It was like a team-building exercise.

AU: Mhm.

M: But yeah.

AU: And why do you think that was that stuck out in your mind from the whole year?

M: Because it was funny to watch. And it was fun and entertaining to see like best friends go against best friends and see who was stronger. And see who could last.

AU: Um, and I just realized I know I switched right to highlights after you shared like a-a pretty intense experience. So part of it was to say like "Okay, let's--" like that-but I also just want to honor, like, that's really intense. Um, and, I also heard that that teacher's not coming back?

M: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, there's like a new science teacher. Cause like they even said it in our last pep rally. But yeah.

AU: How do you feel about that?

M: Actually I'm kind of glad. I'm glad she's leaving cause most people did not like her at all. But yeah.

AU: Why do you think she's leaving? Or do you know why she's leaving?

M: Um, like I know a lot of my friends or like a lot of people in that school complain about her to the office. So that's probably why. Or she's just retiring.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Um, is there like a specific-I mean, you talk about a time you got in trouble. Are there like, more context, more details you can share about what happened that time?

M: Mhm. So, like, If I'm sitting here and I'm writing like in my notebook like I'm supposed to when we come to class. Um, and like somebody next to me is not. She be like, [changes voice] Mariah, are you writing? And I be like, "Yes." And then she makes me come sit by her or something like that. And the person next to me wouldn't be getting in trouble but, I was.

AU: Mhm. Um, it sounds like in that experience, and I've heard this from other people, but that people are definitely singled out because of their skin color, their race. Um that seems also like an extreme case. Are there other ways that that happens at [Tacoma middle school] where it's maybe not so obvious?

M: Um, so sometimes I know I hang out with like a lot of people that are my skin color. But I notice that if I'm sitting at a group of a lot of white people. They'll be like two of us black people or one of us. And then the rest are all white. And, yeah.

AU: Mhm. And are you treated differently when you hang out with majority white people versus majority black people like by administrators or other adults.

M: Mmm. [pause] Nnnno? No. [clicking of pen sound]

AU: Yeah. Yeah. So what made you bring up that example when I asked, like, yeah.

M: //Um/. Cause what made me bring that up is because, usually in that history class, I-I jus- it shifts my whole day because that's-that was my last period. Sixth period. And there's Ms. Steven. And, so. That shifted my whole day. Like it'd go from happy to like annoyed – like, in-yeah.

AU: Mhm. Do you ever talk to your parents about what would happen in that class?

M: So one time in that class I did call her racist

AU: To her face?

M: Yeah, and so I got sent to the office. And I did get in trouble, by my mom. But she made me write a letter to her. And I feel like I should have apolo – that I should'v- that I should have apologized at first, but at the same time I felt like she kind of deserved it. Cause most people think the same about her.

AU: Mhm.

M: [whispers] Yeah.

AU: What did you write in your letter?

M: Um, I don't remember. But I know I did write, "I apologize."

AU: Mhm. I didn't know if it was the type of letter where you were also like sharing more why you said that or if it was just a hundred percent like

M: //"Oh"

A: /"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry"//

M: It was// like why I said it and then I apologize at the end and sincerely, "Mariah." But yeah.

AU: Do you think she's open to hearing feedback over time? Sounds like you're not the only person who said stuff like that to her.

M: Like, if we're tryna tell her – like if we're tryna tell her like – um, let's say she's being rude to a black kid, if we're trying to tell her like, even this girl, D., she would tell Ms. Steven, she's white. She would tell Ms. Steven, "Oh yeah that's racist." But at the same time if a black kid is trying to tell her, she would automatically send them out. And she'd call security or something like that. Mm, yeah.

AU: It sounds like she also stands out from the rest of the teachers?

M: Mhm.

AU: Um, but yeah, I-I guess I was curious if there's other ways that you see things from other adults in the school that aren't again as blatant-ly racist.

M: Oh yeah! I have to say something else.

A: Mhm

M: One time we did a, a Black Lives Matter protest and we stand out on the sidewalk and then, like, it was time to go in, so we went in and I went to my- I went to my last period class to get my stuff. Cause sixth period was already going on but we were still out at the protest. And when I went upstairs, I came downstairs to my sixth period, Ms. Steven, and there was this whole group, like banging on her door and calling her a racist and stuff. Like the whole group that was outside went to her door and started doing that. And like Ms. Steen was like. She was cussing and then, like, the principal came down, like, the two principals came down, and, yeah.

AU: What happened?

M: Um, so we were doing the protest and then came in. And then like they were like, "Oh yeah let's go to Ms. Steven's room." Like I could hear them from when I was upstairs in my last period classroom. And then I came down. And my friend, like they-she kind of fell down the stairs cause everybody was rushing to go to her class. And she broke her ankle. And so, then they went to Ms. Steven's class. And, they started banging on her door, calling her racist, and all kinds of slurs and stuff. And, yeah.

AU: What do you think about how that went down?

M: Umm [pause] I don't know. That's a hard question. But, yeah. And I know that she-she like gets emotional when people say that – when people say they hate Trump and stuff. And they were- she -one time she went up to the class and she' was like, "I can't stand people. They hate Trump. Why can't we just make America great again?" Like she said it like that, yeah.

AU: Mhm. She gets-what do you mean when you say she gets emotional? Does she //cry? In front of you?/

M: /Um, like-// It's like she gets frustrated. Or, um. I forgot the word, like [pause]. I would say white guilt but, at the same time [pause], frustrated. But- or angry. Or something like that.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Hmm. I have some more questions about that but I think they'll come out a little bit later too. I can't think of them exactly right now. Um, so going back a little bit to like maybe more general about the sixth grade year. What was your favorite class and why?

M: My favorite class would <u>always</u> be [equity-elective]. Because we went on a lot of field trips. And we have like competitions, guest speakers, handshake contest. We have to check our grades every week and like we would line up in a group. Like we would line up in a line, see who has the highest. And then, like, we'd have like different competitions every Friday. We had guess speaker and like-at least five times a month. We would have, um, team building. And that was like games and stuff. Or sometimes, like, the tutors. I had Mr. Zimmer as a tutor. And he would go through our notebooks and he would find like highlighted stuff. Um vocabulary. And then we'd like get points and then we get prizes and stuff.

AU: Mhm

M: And I just always love that class. And plus she had my sister. So she expected me to be – try to – li-ge-blah! [AU: laughs] [Sighs] Try to be a leader, kinda since she knew my sister and she had her for three years. She wants to try to get me like up to my sister cause my sister she's a great role model and, yeah.

AU: How do you get in to [equity-elective]? I was trying to understand this from talking with Alexandra.

M: So, in fifth grade kinda like close to the end of the school year, they give us like this packet and they have us sign it, answer questions and get our parents to know about it. And then, we'd automatically be in it in sixth grade. But that depends on our grades in fifth grade. And so, in sixth grade, we have a, uh, we have an interview and we get interviewed by the 7th graders and the 7th graders get interviewed by the 8th graders. And, so, I have the best [equity-elective] teacher, <u>ever</u>, Ms. Starr. Um, like, Ms. Starr, she is very challenging, like. She's <u>very</u> challenging. Like. She doesn't like sixth graders but she will get to love you like seventh grade and eighth grade. But getting into [equity-elective] is hard though. Like when we have our interviews, you have to have perfect notebooks, perfect binder, every school supply that you need. Highlighted notebooks. 10/24/7-ing. Um, your [equity-elective] notebook should be looking the best out of all of your notebooks. And, like-

AU: How would you know this in 5th grade though when you hadn't been in it?

M: Like-?

AU: Is that what it takes to get in //or no/?

M: /Like what?//

AU: Like how do you know how to setup your notebook //to get into the class?/

M: /Oh,// no you don't. It-they give you a packet first and you answer all the questions. Like, why do you want to be in [equity-elective]? What do you know about [equity-elective]? And then once you get into [equity-elective] in 6th grade -

AU: But how do you get in?

M: [laughs] Uh- when you sign up?

AU: Okay //so you sign up/

M: /When you sign up//

AU: And you have to have the grades?

M: The grades come in sixth grade. So you sign up and then you're automatically put in [equity-elective].

AU: Okay.

M: And then you can get kicked out if you're interview didn't go good or if you didn't have good note-notebooks.

AU: When is your interview.

M: Um, interview - I had my interview [pause]. We all had our interviews June. Yeah, June.

AU: So the end of your 6th grade year?

M: Mhm. And then, on the last day of school. I'm the only one in Ms. Starr's class. Ms. Hawkins- like when I told her I'd miss her and everything the last day of school, she whispered in my ear that I made it into [equity-elective]. And I was like so happy. Like, trying to get back into [equity-elective] is hard. Like really hard.

AU: So do they have just fewer classes? Meaning like maybe there were four sections of sixth grade [equity-elective] but then there's only two of seventh grade?

M: Um, sixth grade [equity-elective] has two classes cause there's [fitness program]. And then seventh grade. I think they have two classes too? I don't know. But, yeah. So -

AU: Why do you think it's so much harder in seventh grade?

M: Um, cause there's gonna be – like when we did like the, um, like in Janu-January. When it was Black Lives Matter month. We went on for two months. Instead of one month. Cause like we were reading like a whole college packet and. We had to learn like – we learn about 50 or 60 like new vocabulary. We

have – forgot what it's called [pause.] I forgot what its called. But we like sit in a circle and we're like where-it's like- it's like a debate but at the same time, we're asking and answering questions.

AU: Hmm

M: From each other.

AU: Is it the tutorials? Or no?

M: Um, no.

AU: Socratic?

M: Yes. Socratic seminar. Yes. Socratic Seminar. And I feel like that would be more challenging because we get higher level of reading in seventh grade. But in sixth grade we did have very high, um, level reading. And, yeah.

AU: Mhm. Mhm. Um, maybe the answer is obvious to this because you've already answered, but who has been your favorite teacher [M: laughs] and why?

M: Um, Ms. Starr because she's-she's like-she's like strict. I don't like super nice teachers that like, super nice teaches that let any kid do anything. Like with Ms. Starr it's like automatically like- like-like this. Like when you go into the classroom, you're automatically silent. If you talk in the first five minutes you automatically get written on her list. So like you should know-you should know the expectations. Like she will -in the beginning of the school year, she'll teach it over again. Like she'll have examples. She'll have somebody be a bad kid and somebody be a good kid. And we'll have to cuss at her sometimes. Like just for an example. I didn't want to be that person but, um, yeah.

AU: I'm sure students enjoy that opportunity.

M: [laughs] Yup. And, yeah.

AU: Tell me more about why she's your favorite. Cause you probably had a lot of teachers in your life.

M: Yeah. She's my favorite because, um, she treats everybody equally. Um, she keeps track of a lot of stuff, even though she's had like over a <u>hundred</u> children. She's been a teacher for 30 years so she already knows what to do and how to keep track of her students and teach them. And, it's like she – it's like you- it's like if you're emotional, she'll snap you back to reality and get you hyped up and happy and stuff. And we'll play a lot of games and she's just a really fun teacher [AU: Mhm] and, yeah.

AU: Who would come in second place in terms of your favorite teachers?

M: Like, my whole school life?

AU: Yeah.

M: Okay, um [pause]. I think Ms. Olson from Ford. She-she's also kind of like Ms. Starr but she's like more nicer which is why she comes in second place. [AU: laughs]. I like strict teachers for some reason. Like I like strict teachers and -

AU: Why do you think that is? Like go a little more on that.

M: Um, it's probably because I don't' like to be sugar-coated or something like that. Or, like I don't want anyone to be too nice. Like I like a little bit of strict. Um. [pause] yeah, I don't know. [laughs] But yeah.

AU: [whispers: Let's see] Is there a specific memory that comes to mind with Ms. Starr or Ms. Olson that kind of exemplifies why they are your favorite [whispers] of all time?

M: With Ms. Starr, she'll like try to make jokes or like, if we're talking she'll make us do a push-up or she'll do a push-up with her or she'll – no she'll do a push-up with us - and like it's so funny because she like makes jokes about herself, and like when she does a push-up, like she makes it funny so like we're laughing 24/7 but at the same time, we have to know when to stop and how – and like when to get back to work.

AU: Mhm

M: But-And then- that's one of my most favorite memories.

AU: Have you had to do a pushup with her?

M: Unh-unh. I'm not bad in that class. Cause I already know like we'll have tardy letters. Like if we- let's say like say you're to that door point and the bell rings. She'll see like-she'll be like "Hmm, should I let her pass? Or should I make her be late?" And so we'll have to sign the thing. I've never had to sign it because I'm never late to that class. So, like she'll make somebody-he'll make people sign it, like their initials and the time and the date and then if they make it to three, we'll have to write a tardy letter and have our parents sign it. And so, that's what I like about her. It's parent approval and like, I don't know, I just love her so much. But yeah.

AU: I think from hearing you speak, too, it reminds me of how I feel about certain friends and people I like in my life. Like when people are strict with you, it, sometimes, it can feel, right, that they have your best interest at heart. They're not going to let you fall. So you trust them.

M: Yeah

AU: Mhm. Um, and I'm glad that there's a balance too, so it's not like army style. Just yellin [changes voice], "Go harder!"

M: [laughs]

AU: Um, let's see, we talked about a highlight. Um, I asked about like a bad experience you had at school, is there something different – or, eh – anything else you'd share?

M: Mmmm, no

AU: Yeah, I mean I think about what you talked about with mat--

M: Well, actually. Yes. I had a teacher, his name is Mr. Emmot and one time I had to go to the bathroom. And like class was about to ring in two minutes but I had to go super bad cause I had been holding it all period. And like this white girl she asked to go to the bathroom and he just automatically let her go, so I just left class. And then, he called my mom or it was dad and they didn't really s- they didn't really – I didn't get in trouble, because if I had to go, then I just had to go. So I left class and [pause] and I don't know. And I also had this friend T., he had to go to the bathroom too and he didn't let him. And so, but he like, no. I feel like, most of the white kids are liked more by the teachers. But yeah.

AU: Yeah, that's [pause]

M: It's pretty normal to me but at the same time, I'm used to it. So.

AU: Was it like that at Ford then if you're used to it you say?

M: Um, I went to Jackson also. But at Ford, I felt equal at Ford. But at Jackson, um, I had this one teacher, Ms. Vasquez and I felt like, like she would like, she would love the black like– not the black girls – the white girls. They were her class pet and stuff. Or, I don't know. And that was second grade. But yeah.

AU: Did you always have that attitude like "I'm used to it"? Or have you felt different ways about it different times?

M: So I went to Ford kindergarten, first grade and then in second grade I went to Jackson. And then in third grade I went to Jackson and then I came back in fourth grade. So since I was used to it at Jackson, when I came back, I had a-I had Ms. Mason and she was a black teacher so I didn't really experience anything wrong with that. But, fifth grade I had Ms. Ely. She was kind of like, liked the white kids more too so, I just had to get used to it since I experienced it in second grade, in third grade.

AU: Why do you think that is, not you getting used to it but that some teachers favor the white students more?

M: Um [pause] I don't know. Uh, [pause] I don't know. [pause]

AU: Mhm. [pause] Yeah. Um, Was Ms. Mason your first black teacher?

M: Mhm.

AU: Have you had other black teachers or even teachers of color since?

M: Unh-unh. //She's like my/

AU: /So all your other teachers have been//

M: Yep, she's my first one, which was fourth grade. //And all the/

AU: /None in// middle school?

M: [shakes head no]

AU: What was it like having a black teacher?

M: She was like well-more strict than most white teachers lkike-

AU: So you loved her!

M: Yes! Well, my mom loved her. I think she was like too strict like she was rude but I've learned to like strict. But she, um, oh wait, I had Ms. Kenzie for, um, cause my teacher, Ms. Mason, she had cancer so she was like out for a few months and I did have a black substitute for those few months. So I basically had two, kind of. And, Ms. Kenzie, she was nice but she wasn't that strict. [background noise – moving tables in room outside]. But at the same time, we'd have a corner, we wouldn't get sent out of the classroom like with most white teachers, or like yeah.

AU: Would you say you have a preference? In a white teacher or a teacher of color or just- are there other things that are more important?

M: Like what, I don't understand the question.

AU: Like if you had to pick your ideal teacher, you know?

M: Okay.

AU: Is it more important that their race reflects your race, um, or are there other qualities like the strictness //that you-/

M: /I feel like// if I had an ideal teacher, I would want her to like-if she was white I'd be cool with that, like if she was more of the Black Lives Matter, go, stuff like that. And if she treated people like, with different race, equally. And with the black teacher, if she had strict- like with white teachers too, if they have strict, and they're on Black Lives Matter and stuff like that, like I'd probably-I'd probably like that teacher, but if they're like rude when like black people go to the bathroom, or, stuff like that, I would like them more. Yeah.

AU: Got it. Uh, are you involved in any activities or clubs at school?

M: Um, I did quit going to Bobcat Scholars – I mean Bobcat club [afterschool tutoring and enrichments], cause that was boring but, um, not really.

AU: Mhm. M-m-m. , [pause] Yeah, I guess are all the clubs afterschool?

M: Mhm.

AU: And sports too?

M: Mmmmmmmm, yeah, yeah. And some of the games would be during school, like at the end of the school day. But yeah.

AU: Who do you hang out with at school?

M: Like the names?

AU: Um, I guess I'm more curious about like who would you consider your friends? So kind of like describing people to me. Like, "Oh I hang out with //all the athletes" or -/

M: /Okay, okay.// Yeah. Um, if they're like 100 percent with me. Like if I say, "Is my hair messy?" and they say, "Yeah." Like I don't like if I have friends and I ask them if my hair is messy and it really is and they say, "no." Like, I want them to be 100 percent. Um, I want them to be like- I want them to be real. Cause I know there's a lot of people who are like fake friends. Like they'll talk about you behind your back and stuff. Like I don't like people like that if they talk about you behind your back. And so, like, Alexandra. She's one of my best friends because she's like- she's goofy, she's nice. She's like one of those friends that I could also count on to be there. And, yeah.

AU: Was that the same in elementary or did that change in middle?

M: Um, so in elementary school with Alexandra, it's like, I didn't really hang out with her. But then when we got to middle school, it's like I did because we sat at the same lunch table or we'd hang out with the same friends and that's what brought us closer.

AU: That was my sense because I didn't

M: Yeah.

AU: I wouldn't put you two together in //elementary school./

M: /Mhm//

AU: You said earlier that you hang out mostly with friends of the same skin color.

M: Mhm.

AU: Why is that?

M: I feel like since we had the same experience or, we go through some of the same stuff, that we have more in common. And, yeah.

AU: Mhm. Is that something that's important to you as well like in making new friends?

M: Umm? No not really? But, yeah.

AU: Mhm. There's that expression, right? Birds of a feather flock together.

M: [Laughs]

AU: Have you heard that?

M: Uh, uh.

AU: Meaning like, yeah, you find like who you're naturally more comfortable with

M: Mhm.

AU: And that doesn't mean that you're closed to meeting other people but like, who you feel like will understand you when you say, "Is my hair messy?"

M: Mhm

AU: Probably people who've had the same experience like you said, or have gone through the same like woes of figuring out how to do their hair. Which I still feel like I'm figuring out at my age.

M: [laughs]

AU: Um, okay [makes sucking sound with cheek] so now more race-specific questions. I feel like we're going back and forth cause we started talking really specifically about that. But, um, you've hard the word 'segregation?'

M: Mhm.

AU: Cause I feel like we talked about it when I asked about this project. But tell me what that means to you?

M: Segregation [pause] being separated by race. Treated differently. Uh [pause]. Yeah. Kind of like segregation.

AU: And, have you seen this or felt this in your school experiences?

M: Um, [pause] with teachers having favorites, yes. And, teachers yelling at students, yes. Uh, and, yeah.

AU: And when you say having favorites, yelling at students, that feels like segregation because, how?

M: Because, like, either the teacher's yelling at a black group and then with favorites it will be the white kids and, yeah.

AU: What's that been like for you?

M: Hard cause I've tried to be a teacher's favorite. [sound of clicking pen] Like by being a good student or following the directions and stuff.

AU: Mhm. Um, are there any specific examples that come to mind like new ones, I guess, cause we have talked about some?

M: Unh-unh.

AU: Have you heard the word integration before?

M: I feel like I have in [equity-elective] from one of the, um, books, but at the same time I don't know what it means.

AU: Mhm, um. What does it sound like it might mean? Segregation, integration.

M: [pause] The opposite of segregation?

AU: Mhm.

M: I think.

AU: Mhm.

M: But being all mixed in a group, having the same rights and stuff. I don't know.

AU: Good job. Yeah- we talked about-I know when I talked about de-segregation. Um, sometimes people use de-segregation and integration interchangeably. But they are different. De-segregation refers to the laws that said like segregation is no longer allowed. So you have to undo it. Which really just meant like, "okay these students can come to this schools and therefore we-" If you look at the numbers, you know, there's fifty percent white students, fifty percent students of color, so we're desegregated. But like you said with the-mixing people, being equal, integration can be harder because it's saying it doesn't matter that you go to the same school, are you in the same classes? Are you treated the same? Are people actually friends, uh, across race? So that was, when we do some of the learning together, you'll see that, you know, Tacoma School District said, "hey we desegregated." But, um, there's more to the story there.

M: Mhm.

AU: So with that understanding of integration, do you feel like you see examples of integration at [Tacoma middle school]? Students mixing more more authentically or at a deeper level, maybe?

M: Mmm [pause]. I feel like, at lunch, like, there'd be a group of the girls, but there'd be all different races. And behind us, a group of the boys, all different races. And, yeah.

AU: Um, is that a table you sit at? Or just like there's two tables out of the whole lunch room that are more integrated.

M: Where I sit at.

AU: Mhm.

M: Yeah.

AU: What has that been like, being in spaces that are more integrated?

M: Um

AU: Like what do you hear? What do people talk about? What is the general feeling in spaces like that?

M: It feels good. Cause there'd be like Mexicans, or Cambodians, black people but we're all kind of the same shades. And so, it kind of feels good and, yeah.

AU: Mhm. Are there ever white people in integrated spaces or are they more integrated around people of color?

M: //Mhm/. It's more integrated around people of color but at the same time there'd still be like white people at that table. But, yeah.

AU: Um do you feel like race is talked about at school?

M: Um, I feel like if I wasn't in [equity-elective], I would have, like, I would have, like I wouldn't know as much as I do now about racism. Like [equity-elective] is the only class that taught that. And most people in that school aren't in [equity-elective]. And, I feel like some people, like they won't notice when they're being racist but I feel like people in [equity-elective], they would know if somebody's being racist. Like if somebody just came up to you and said like "hey can I touch your hair?" Or, like, like they would say stuff, but they wouldn't' notice it; they wouldn't notice if they were being racist.

AU: Is it just your [equity-elective] class that has that learning or curriculum?

M: It's just [equity-elective] or no- wait. It's all the [equity-elective] classes.

AU: Which are-there's just two, right?

M: Yeahyeahyeah. There's two [equity-elective] teachers.

AU: So, who talks-My next question was, "who talks about race?" Ms. Starr. And people in her class. Are there other, um, you know places where you feel like, yeah, we talk about race here. Whether that's like on the bus, uh, it doesn't have to be formal spaces, it could be like, yeah, in the hallway

M: Uh, cafeteria. Or like gym, the halls and that [equity-elective] class.

AU: Mhm. And who – when you talk about it - who do you talk about it [race] with?

M: Um,

AU: Or better yet, do you talk about it who- do you talk about race with people who are not in [equity-elective]?

M: [pause] Not really, like in [equity-elective] it's like, like, I know the sixth graders it's like we can all trust each other like we're one big family. And if Ms. Starr catches like one of the white kids saying something racist, like she will call them out and correct them. But like it's not like it would be embarrassing for them. It's just, they're learning more. So that they don't really say it again or do it again. Or something like that.

AU: Mhm.

M: But yeah.

AU: In what spaces is race not talked about, or kind of unspoken, not allowed to be talked about?

M: Basically, Ms. Steven, she gets, like, white guilt [pen clicking] when we try to talk to her about it or when we try to talk about race with her. "Oh, I'm not racist, I have black students, I have black friends." Like that.

AU: Tell me more about white guilt because that's the second time you've mentioned it.

M: With white guilt, they feel guilty when it comes to race or something brought up about race or talked about race with a white person. Like with white people they have white fragility, white guilt, um, [pause] there's more, I just forgot the vocabulary. But-

AU: There's a lot more. We have a lot of stuff. Mhm, mhm. So not talked about in Ms. Steven's. Any other spaces where you'd say, "Yep, nope. Not allowed to talk about it here."?

M: Mmm, uh-uh. No. Well, [pause] No, no. But yeah.

AU: How do you describe the racial make-up of your school. Thinking about students, first. Like, if you had almost had to put percentages to it, like thinking about a pie chart?

M: Oh, okay. About [pause], okay, about [pause] 40 percent black people? Um, 20 percent Hispanic or Mexican. Um, wait that's 90 percent, right? Wait-

AU: Sixty

M: Oh yeah, sixty percent. Um [pause] 20 percent [pause] Asian and then [pause] 20 percent white. And, yeah.

AU: So with that about, 40-20-20, 80 percent students of color?

M: Oh wait.

AU: 20 percent white?

M: Wait,

AU: Black, Hispanic and Asian.

M: Mhm. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I'm confused with your question.

AU: [moves chair closer, shows numbers written in notebook] Mhm. But just thinking how many are people of color versus white. Does that feel about right? Like when you think about who you see day to day, 80 percent not-white, twenty percent white?

AU: What about teachers?

M: Oooh. Um, I know we have Mr. Harris is security, and he's black. And then, most of the teachers are white. I haven't met any black teacher in that school. And I don't know one. Well Mr. Ruiz, he's uh – oh wait, actually, Mr. Ruiz and then, forgot the girl's name—they're both counselors and then, they're both black and then, Mr. Harris, security. That's about the only black teachers or staff that I know there. [pen clicking]

AU: Mhm. And none of those are teachers.

M: Yeah.

AU: How does that sit with you? What do you think about that?

M: Mmm, that's kind of disappointing. Cause like it's mostly white teachers with black students and that to me seems about a lot of racism. But at the same time most of the white teachers aren't all racist. But, yeah.

AU: Why do you think that is? The-the, um, different percentages?

M: Okay, so with the teachers, when from what I notice in [equity-elective] when we're like reading articles, most of the white, most of the white people get like jobs faster, easier, get careers easier. And most of the white people like they're, they have more money than like black people. And I've noticed that like most schools there's mostly white teachers because like it's easy for them sometimes or they don't have to go through a lot to get a job or career. Or it doesn't take them a lot. But

AU: In school I guess the last level was school leaders. Like, if you think about, I don't know if you have like a dean, an assistant principal, principal, I don't know if counselors are on leadership teams.

M: Oh, I just forgot the principal, he's black. Mr. Boarder. Wait what was the question?

AU: Oh just thinking about like the percentages at different levels. So students, teachers, kind of other staff, and then school leaders. If-just seeing how they reflect. So you have Mr. Boarder is the assistant principal, right? The principal is white woman, //I don't know who else is on/

M: /I forgot her name//

AU: [jokingly] You forgot her name?! Ms. Miller.

M: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AU: I've been over there a lot. Um [clicks tongue three times] I think-I feel like I met another assistant principal, maybe she was the dean, a white woman. But, yeah.

M: Yes. Ms. – Nolan. There's Ms. Nolan and then there's Ms. She's a white lady too, I just forgot her name. Yeah, I forgot her name.

AU: So similar maybe to the teachers? Majority white but there's one speckle of color.

M: Mhm.

AU: Okay. In what ways do you feel welcomed at school?

M: Um, so in the morning there's Ms. Boar- Mr. Boarder. Like if it's Monday, he'll say "Happy Friday!" or if it's Tuesday he'll be like, "happy Friday!" and then on Friday, he'll actually say, "happy Friday!" Um, I feel welcome by that cause he's there with this big smile on his face. Then when I go to the cafeteria on the mornings. There'll be all my friends sitting on the table. Then we just talk, chat and stuff or go to our lockers. And there where there's outside there's always a lot of energy with one of our friends being like really funny or weird. And, in the classroom like you make new friends like at the beginning of the school year. And then you get to know them really well and they become your best friend or good friend, but yeah.

AU: Um, how do you feel-like or- in what ways do you feel like you can most be yourself at school?

M: Um, I feel like I can most be myself around my best friends. Like-

AU: And what is that like?

M: Um? It's like me being weird or goofy or they're telling me, [says in silly voice] "Stop! Stop! Just stop!" and we're all just judging each other in a funny way or stuff.

AU: On the other side of the coin: In what ways do you feel, um, l- like you could be least like yourself?

M: Um, I feel like I could be least like myself in my other five classes but in like that one [equity-elective] class, I feel like I can always be myself: goofy, funny, normal and yeah. Like in my other classes it's just me being calm. And I know I'm not calm, I'm like really hyper usually. Yeah.

AU: Why do you think that is?

M: Um

AU: That you feel like you can't be your full self.

M: Um, probably because I haven't known them that long. And I feel like, Ms. Starr, I've known her since my sister was in middle school. But now my sister is in 11th grade. And so, I've known Ms. Starr for a while. And

AU: Do you feel like if you did-if you just met her this year?

M: I wouldn't be myself probably.

AU: Hmm.

M: But yeah.

AU: Are there things that she does though to also help you feel//more like you can be your full self?/

M: /Um, yeah, like if she puts on music [AU: inaudible] yeah, she'll make us stand up and dance or sing along or we would pass around a microphone and we had to sing in the microphone and like team building, we had to get to know each other. Get to know her, she gets to know us. And stuff.

AU: I'm glad you made that connection because, I think, from what you've shared, right, that there's more than just you've known her for a long time. Like it sounds like she does stuff to intentionally allow people to be silly, to get to know each other, which helps people get out of their shells sooner. But, um, to her credit, that's hard to do in a year. But I've heard that from multiple people who haven't known her as long as you have. Um, do you- you've talked about this-but I'll ask it and you can expand on the things you've said. Um, do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than students of color?

M: Mhm. Um, like they would get better grades like [pause] mmm, yeah, they'd get better grades or they'll be like the smart person in the class. They'd get to do everything. They'd get to grade papers. Get to take down stuff from the wall. And then, with the black students, we'd be doing work, like we would do school work, sitting down. Or, if we were done with something, we'd just sit there. Or we'd get another piece of paper. But with the white students, they'd be like taking things down from the walls, they'd be helping the teacher, grading papers and stuff. But yeah.

AU: [whispering to self: Um, you shared particular experiences.] Is this just something you feel like will be, "This is just gon be the case of the next seven years plus?"

M: //Yeah./ Yeah, I feel like it wont' really change. Cause that's how it is in reality now, nowadays. But, yeah.

AU: Yeah. What do you do- like how do you keep moving forward and uh- like give a care, right? //If it feels like well, nothing's going to change/

M: /Like,// if it's just like that, I just go on about my day or. Sometimes I feel emotional or I go cry to Ms. Starr or something and she'll try to cheer me up. Stuff like that. That's how I move on. And like not care. Cause, that's just how it is.

AU: Mhm. Well, all you shared, like you have a very, um, what I would call, like a systemic awareness. It's not like, like you recognize that things aren't personal in some ways, like this is just how it is. That's just like very heavy to understand at your age. Um, but it's why it furthers kind of my belief that young people like you are best positioned to say like, here's how things -like-like-you can help see things differently. Because I think older people are sometimes cemented in that belief that "things are how they are." But that, really, young people, are, yeah, best suited to know that things need to change and how. So, kind of my initial question about this is, if you had to make a recommendation about this – or maybe you have your seven-point plan for what needs to change – what changes would you make to improve the experience for students of color?

M: Um, I would say, more black teachers, more black staff, just more people of color around the school. But at the same time, it all be equal. So that we all experience the same thing. But that would, that would never happen cause, of course, black people they experience racism but at the same time white people, they don't, they don't experience white people-I mean they don't experience racism, they experience, um, forgot the word [pause]. It's like, not-not racism but at the same time, there'll be somebody actually giving a point or they'll be rude to a white person but at the same time its not racism.

AU: Do you mean, are you talking about if white people receive unequal treatment based on being white? Yeah, like discrimination?

M: Yeah, that's what it's called! Uh! Yes, discriminate. They would just-they just experience discrimination. Like not racism but discrimination.

AU: Um, what would you hope would change or be accomplished with kind of this goal of having more black staff and just people of color around the school?

M: Um, there'd be at least not as much racism as there is now. And I feel like there'd be more black people being happy at the-at the end of school or [pause] just [pause] better.

AU: Is there anything I haven't asked that you're hoping to share or that you want to share before we wrap up.

M: Unh-unh.

AU: We went through a lot of stuff. Can you believe you were talking for 53 minutes? Did it go by fast?

M: Really?

AU: Did it go by fast?

M: Yeah.

AU: Are there questions you have for me at this point? Like even if it's, "What's your view on this?" Or, um, just about the project in general?

M: How do you feel about there being more white staff than black staff at – in schools – or at, um, or at jobs?

AU: I think it's a huge problem. [M: Mmm] Uh, it's tricky because I also recognize like "well, I've benefited from this, right?" [M: Mhm] I think it's also really rooted in a lot of the things you said about just how people get jobs and the, um, financial freedom people have to like go to college and get advanced degrees. And people who maybe have, a lot of families of color maybe right, who are-um, we have other obligations because there's not as much wealth in their family so they have to take care of other family members and therefore don't have the freedom to go to school pursue other degrees, so you see that in the medial field, etc. But I also really think it's rooted historically and that's one of the things I learned in this first part of my research that I want to share back with you all, and I'll share this part with you now, cause you asked, but when there was the mandate to desegregate schools [M: Mhm] um, what happened and it definitely happened here in Tacoma is they closed a lot of schools that were 90 percent, 100 percent black. Because it was like, well, you know, we want peo-we want our schools to mix, so let's close these schools so people <u>have</u> to mix. But at these schools, I don't know if this was the case in Tacoma, my sense was it was – who was teaching at those schools? Black teachers, black principals. So when they closed the schools, so while students got to move, not – a lot of teachers lost their jobs. And so historically, we think like desegregation was this great time because we mixed. [inaudible] For the first time. So a lot of white people think that desegregate – and a lot of black people too probably- think that desegregation was 100 percent positive. And I think, one thing I've learned as I've grown up and started to see and understand racism much later in life than you- um, is that like, things are more – are not always just good and bad.

M: Mhm.

AU: Like even things that are pretty good still can be really harmful in how they were carried out or why they were carried out. Just like when I asked you, to see what you would say about like, “how do you think it was when people went and banged on her door and called Ms. Steven a racist?” I don’t think it’s like- it was like good or it was bad. It’s-it’s complicated.

M: Yeaaah.

AU: You know? Like, so this is just real talk, me saying this. Not like, me as the researcher. But I think that’s how I do research, it’s not, I have the answers or you have the answers. But, we figure a lot of this out together. And for me, that I’m really led by you all. Uh, but, yeah, in general, I think it’s a big problem, and that’s something I think about. Like I want to go back and be a teacher, but I’m also kind of part of the problem, cause there’s a lot of white women teachers but I’m interested, I have a lot of friends who went back and are trying to study like teacher preparation,

M: Mhm.

AU: Like how are teachers trained? Because if we’re going to have a lot of white teachers, let’s make sure that people are thinking like a Ms. Starr.

M: Mhm.

AU: Um, but also, how do we encourage more teachers of color to consider teaching ccuase teaching doesn’t pay a lot and so people are like, “look, my family doesn’t have a lot of wealth, why would I become a teacher?”

M: Mhm.

AU: I need to go pursue this and like take care of my family

M: Yeah.

AU: So it’s just, it’s so big and that’s something I think as you get older, right, you think about, like okay. I get overwhelmed if I think about all the things wrong.

M: Mhm

AU: But, like, where do I want to plug in? And let me work really hard in this area. Because I know-I know Mariah is going to work over here and Alexandra is going to work here and Sanjay is going to be doing this- and so if we’re all like hitting our own nitch, someday-like the wall’s gotta fall, some point. I don’t know. It gives me hope. But, yeah. Any other questions I can answer? Or try.

M: No?

AU: Okay, I’m glad you asked.

[tape ends]

B.5 Group meeting agendas

B.5.1 Group Meeting One

July 3rd, 3:30-5:00 PM
Initial Meeting with Participant-Researchers

Intro

- 3 truths and a lie

Hook

- Protection of Research Subjects
    - Abuse of power
        - Nazi experiments
        - Tuskegee experiments
    - 3 principles of Research on Human Subjects
        - Respect for peoples. Informed Consent.
        - Justice
        - Beneficience. Benefits must outweigh potential harm.
- Young People leading movements
    - Gun control
    - Chicago 8 against democratic party
    - Black Panther Party

Why I'm Here

-

Why are YOU here?

-

Consent Forms. Review agreements.

- Others to add. Especially for our time all together?

Scheduling

- Setting up 1:1 interview times

B.5.2 Group Meeting Two

Youth Interviews: Group Analysis

August 6, 2018

Dinner and Ice-breaker (30 minutes)

Research Update

Norm-setting

Analysis

- Process Intro
- Process Activity

Final “Ahas”

Next Steps

B.5.2a Group Meeting Two Shared Analysis Packet

Youth Interviews: Group Analysis

My Question: How does the history of Tacoma's desegregation connect to the reality for students of color today? → What is the reality of students of color around race in today's schools?

Themes that stood out in initial analysis:

1) Words used to describe race.
2) One racist teacher?
3) Racial make-up of [Tacoma Middle School]
4) How you define segregation
5) Initial thinking of integration
6) Ideas of equality
7) White students treated differently, or not
8) Ideas for change
9) …

➔ What do you want to focus on?
➔ Any theme not here that you want to add or ask about?
➔ Choose 3

<u>Thematic Analysis Overview:</u>

1. Getting familiar with the data (our interviews!)

2. Generate Initial Codes (lots of colorful pens…)

3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes **
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

B.5.2b Group Meeting Two - Theme 1

Words used to describe race

"Black people, like, dark-skins,"

"She's not black but she's of darker skin tone. She's not white. And, me, I'm not white either. I'm caramel."

"And they were like, you have to be physically black to say it or some type of shade of black to say it."

"Some, there's some teachers out there that just like their skin color, like its especially white people but like they'll talk about other skin colors and it'll offend the other skin colors"

"But all-everyone's everything its' just a different skin color and how they talk."

"I mean, like most of them like just bounce around. Like advisory, it's mostly white people. And second period, it's mostly people of color. And third period, it's kind of, I guess mostly people of color. Fourth period, I don't really know. It's like 50 or something like that. Fifth period it's mostly colored people and sixth period it's mostly colored people"

"Like black, white, Mexican all types, different"

"It feels good. Cause there'd be like Mexicans, or Cambodians, black people but we're all kind of the same shades. And so, it kind of feels good and, yeah."

****

How do you determine what race someone is? Who counts as people of color?

- "There's an Asian teacher. Does that count? I don't know."
- "It's weird, some people. I don't get it. People believe when I say I'm part white but they don't believe me when I say I'm part Asian.

  > Why do you think that is?

  I don't know. I really like- I really wonder why.

  >My sense would be that it's just not as common. Especially out here, black and white, there are lot of people who are multiracial and biracial that way, but if you probably looked overall like Black and Asian combination

  But like they would believe M. or M. if like they said like they were black and Asian, but like nobody really believes me until I actually have to prove to them that my parents are Asian.

B.5.2c Group Meeting Two - Theme 2

<u>One racist teacher?</u>

- 5/5 students mentioned science teacher Ms. Steven
- Youth mentioned being sent or seeing someone sent out of class for same actions white students doing (tapping, talking about race or teacher thinking they're not doing work, not listening)
- 3 out of 5 youth did not talk about other examples of negative experiences related to school and other teachers.
    - →**Was Ms. Steven the problem? Will negative experiences for students of color go away since she is not returning?**
- Other examples of negative experiences related to race
    - 1 student talks of teacher telling them they're not going to succeed but not tied to race from their perspective
    - 1 student mentions another example of J.L teacher treating them differently (worse) because of race

My history teacher, Ms. Steven, she's really racist and there's like an account of times that I have like hardcore evidence.

And like, people are telling me about a teacher at [Tacoma middle school]. I think that someone in our group was talking about. But like they're telling me that she's racist and stuff. But I've never had a teacher that's racist. Um, all teach-I think-every teacher I've had has respected, has respected everyone's color. I think that's a good thing 'cause we don't want people that don't, that disresspect peoples color 'cause that's just mean.

/It was like//It was just like shocking. Cause everybody was talking about like she's racist. And I never really believed that but I didn't really believe that she was racist. I just like, feel like, she doesn't like, see like what people feel like when she-when she, like, does that to them. Like what they might feel

like Ms. Steven, my history teacher, like she'll pick on all the black people in the class and I didn't really like that cause like she picked on me too. And my friends. And she will-she will always mess with our class just to go to the office or ISS and that was the reason why it was because it was kind of bad.

And, with my history class we had a white teacher and, like, with one of my experiences, like let's say, a white boy or a white girl was talking and like we were – us people of color were sitting by them – we would be the ones getting yelled at. And like if we tried to tell her that we weren't talking, she would like send us out of the classroom. And [pause] like that happens very often in that class. And I've gotten in trouble in that class for like no reason but – that's one of my experiences and, yeah.

*

Yes. I had a teacher…and one time I had to go to the bathroom. And like class was about to ring in two minutes but I had to go super bad cause I had been holding it all period. And like this white girl she asked to go to the bathroom and he just automatically let her go, so I just left class.

B.5.2d Group Meeting Two - Theme 3

Racial make-up of Tacoma Middle School

Student Perceptions of students of color (SOC)	Student perceptions of staff/leadership of color	Actuals 2016-2017 WA State Report Card
1: 97% students of color (SOC)	1. "only 2 black staff" – then remembers AP	SOC = 57.2% White = 42.7%
2: 60% students of color, 40% white	2. About 10 black staff (includes lunch lady)	Teachers: POC: 15% White: 85%
3: 35 other POC, 40% black (70% POC) 30% white	3.60% white, 35% black	1 black teacher
4: 80% SOC, 20% white	4. 4 black staff, includes security	

- 3/5 youth mentioned first black teacher was in elementary school. But was only black teacher have had, not including subs
- "I've mostly not seen like any African American teachers in [Tacoma middle school]. But I have seen like all, I've seen a lot of white teachers."

When asked about the difference between students of color and staff of color:

- "Mmm, that's kind of disappointing. Cause like it's mostly white teachers with black students and that to me seems about a lot of racism. But at the same time most of the white teachers aren't all racist. But, yeah."

B.5.2e Group Meeting Two - Theme 4

Examples of segregation and integration

How segregation described	We think segregation is
being separated by race. Treated differently. Uh [pause]. Yeah. Kind of like segregation.	
racist stuff happening to black people.	
there's just like black and white people. Or like just white and colored people, then they would be segregated, like all white people in this room, and all colored people in this room. …Or like the whites get more privilege than the blacks do. And like the colored people would have a dirty bathroom and like the whites would have a clean bathroom	
Segregation to me is like black people get separated. White people get separated. Asian people get separated. [pause] Indian people get separated. All these like races get separated. And they're all like these groups okay. If you're in the city and there's segregation in that city. They did like they did back in the old days. Whites only. Coloreds only.	
it's kind of similar to the fifth step of genocide in my opinion. It's kind of separating people by race or separating people in general but especially by race. Um, and maybe sometimes treating the minority as you know not human or lesser than human.	

How segregation described	
Ms. Steven's class. But everything else was good. Do you see, uh, any sort of separation like that at [Tacoma Middle School]? In classes, or, in //sports*?/	A little bit. 'cause like, especially at school sometimes there might be segregation. 'cause like people say that [Tacoma Middle School] is an only blac-a black person only school. There's more black people there than white. Or there's an even amount of black people and white people but there's mostly white people. I kind of think that's segregation 'cause you never know. Just because it's in the ghetto, doesn't mean it is ghetto. There are some schools out there that aren't ghetto, but they're in the ghetto. It just happens, okay.
MH: : Um, [pause] with teachers having favorites, yes. And, teachers yelling at students, yes. Uh, and, yeah. AU: And when you say having favorites, yelling at students, that feels like segregation because, how? M: Because, like, either the teacher's yelling at a black group and then with favorites it will be the white kids and, yeah.	
Ms. Steven. And like, um, I remember J. and A., they were like talking in class. And she told them like to stop talking. And they're like, "How come all the kids in the back are white and they're talking and they don't ever get in trouble?" And she's like, "can you stop make your theories or you can go the office." And so they just went to the office because, like, you know.	No, but I've seen something similar to it but I think she was just. Again, Ms. Steven, oh my gosh. And so, she tries to justify by, "I'm separating you guys by your last name." No. Is she bad at the alphabet? Like, no. Most of the darker kids would have to sit way up front where she could see them really close. And [inaudible] black kids would have to sit at the back like it was in the 50s or less than that, I don't know. And, so I'm just like: "But she's sitting them in the front so she could keep an eye on them, I'm guessing.

B.5.2f Group Meeting Two - Theme 5

- 5/5 students said they hadn't heard the word integration before or maybe had heard it but didn't know what it meant.

How integration described	We think integration is
The opposite of segregation?... But being all mixed in a group, having the same rights and stuff. I don't know.	
Like instead of se- it would be in- so maybe like instead of separating, it would be like, you know, mixing. I guess.	
Um, like, not segregation, like not segregation all the way but a little segregation. Like not too much.	
The opposite of segregation? Because I know "inter" or, you know, stuff like that. It kind of means like you know inte-grate, or mix.	

How integration described	
Being more diverse, you know. Um, try to justify diversity. Cause like a lot of people are like [changes voice] diversity is a conspiracy. Yeah. I don't understand. Cause I know a lot of people who will favor a certain a teacher because they favor them and sometimes that teacher favors a certain race and so that certain race likes her back and they're like "Yay." Yeah.	"Hold on, we're segregated. Integrate!" And I was like, "Oh, yay! That's a big word!" All the kids were like, "What does that mean?" And all the 8th graders started moving because I'm assuming they knew what that meant, or like older kids at least, not just 8th graders. And they were just sort of moving. And you know, the sixth graders were like, "Oh yeah I know what that word means. And they started moving because other kids were moving. And, you know, one of the leaders, A. was like, "No, mix colors! You're segregated! Mix colors." "Oh, okay we get that." So, I think that's kind of forced integrity- integration.
It's actually a mixture. (context – [Tacoma Middle School] a mixture.	Like, biracial relationships? > What do you mean by that? Like, you know, like white and black friends. > Okay, yeah, so having relationships across race. Yeah. I've seen a lot of it. There's a lot of, like, you know, mixes of race relationships at our school. So. > Where do you see that? Um, like, you know, like, in the cafeteria, in the office, my friends. //Just anywhere/ >Among students or staff or- ? Students and staff.

B.5.2f.1 Group Meeting Two - Theme 5 continued

Oh, I remember like with the Black Lives Matter protest there was like, there wasn't just black people or just colored people there was white people too.	Um, well like different classes have a lot of different races. And a lot of like groups of people who hang out are of different races. And like a lot of– not all staff hang out with the same race. But, you know like, like they're still friends with different people of race. But they're closer with people of the same race.
Cause like some people are like cool with each other [inaudible] … Like, they're cool with each other, like when they get mad, just talk it out. And then just be friends again.	It feels good. Cause there'd be like Mexicans, or Cambodians, black people but we're all kind of the same shades. And so, it kind of feels good and, yeah. > Mhm. Are there ever white people in integrated spaces or are they more integrated around people of color? //Mhm/. It's more integrated around people of color but at the same time there'd still be like white people at that table. But, yeah.

"Understanding the difference between **desegregation** and **integration** is one key.

"A lot of people use the words interchangeably," Teitel says, noting that the distinction is critical to student experience and achievement. A school may technically be desegregated, meaning students of different races and ethnicities show up to the same building every day, but, "just because diverse students are there, it doesn't mean they are getting access to the same experience, and it doesn't mean, necessarily, that they're actually getting positive experiences," Teitel says.

Teitel and his colleagues believe that to achieve true equity, schools must aim beyond desegregation and work toward true integration. To be integrated, schools have to meet the needs of everyone who attends them." – Lee Teitel, faculty director for the RIDES (Reimagining Integration Diverse and Equitable Schools) project

B.5.2g Group Meeting Two - Theme 6

Equality

"But I treat [my friends] all equally. I don't separate them, if I'm hanging out with all of them, I treated them equally."

" 'cause like I have a Big Brother, like the Big Brother, Big Sister program. And the interview, they're like, "Do you want someone who's gay, straight, lesbian. What skin col- I said, "I honestly don't care what they are. Unles-eve-if they're just a human being, they can be a human being."

"I've mostly not seen like any African American teachers in [Tacoma Middle School]. But I have seen like all, I've seen a lot of white teachers. And then, so why? I don't need a black teacher just to be like, "Oh yeah it's [Tacoma Middle School], I have a black teacher." I will have any skin color teacher, it just-they just have to teach well and be nice and chill. I don't want a teacher that yells at you //all the time./"

"I feel like it works. Cause like except like, like the - there's good teachers so like just don't care about color. Like some of them just treat everyone the same way."

"Yeah. She's my favorite because, um, she treats everybody equally."

"I would say, more black teachers, more black staff, just more people of color around the school. But at the same time, it all be equal."

B.5.2h Group Meeting Two – Theme 7

White Students treated differently

> Do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school then students of color? No, not really. > Why is that? 'cause I think all the kids equally 'cause I had-I had-had a ton of white people in like my classes.	Like – that was the only class that was bad, that was the only bad class I had. But, yeah. [Ms. Steven] >Mhm. Mhm. ..Do you ever feel that white students have a different experience at school than students of color? Mm, [Shakes head side to side] > No? No.
Um, like they would get better grades like [pause] mmm, yeah, they'd get better grades or they'll be like the smart person in the class. They'd get to do everything. They'd get to grade papers. Get to take down stuff from the wall. And then, with the black students, we'd be doing work, like we would do school work, sitting down. Or, if we were done with something, we'd just sit there. Or we'd get another piece of paper. But with the white students, they'd be like taking things down from the walls, they'd be helping the teacher, grading papers and stuff. But yeah. > Is this just something you feel like will be, "This is just gon be the case of the next seven years plus?" //Yeah./ Yeah, I feel like it wont' really change. Cause that's how it is in reality now, nowadays. But, yeah. > Yeah. What do you do- like how do you keep moving forward and uh- like give a care, right? //If it feels like well, nothing's going to change/ /Like,// if it's just like that, I just go on about my day or. Sometimes I feel emotional or I go cry to Ms. Starr or something and she'll try to cheer me up. Stuff like that. That's how I move on. And like not care. Cause, that's just how it is.	And so, I've never been treated differently or of lesser equality than other people. So I, when it came to middle school and I was like, okay, everyone is going to know I'm smart or I'm cool. No one's going to treat me different or less. When that teacher, Ms. Steven, kind of put me down I was like [makes motion of balloon deflating.] And another thing is I have really good grade in that class. And, um, uh, she, there's a hundred percent club and I try so hard to get exceeding on tall of my things just a little bit so I can hold it against her just in case she tries to say I don't have good grades. And I'd just be like, "actually…" And so, I work really hard on all of my projects in that class. And I do put a lot of color and a lot of work she doesn't have to ask for. I do put it on there. When I see this kid who has an A minus, and it seems like a very minor difference, but if he's white, you know, she's like "Oh, okay" you know K., you have the best grades in this class I'm like [purses lips, makes sour face.] It really makes me, it puts me down a little. I don't like feeling inferior

B.5.2i Group Meeting Two - Theme 8

Ideas for change

➔ but maybe a program for kids who have like for two days us kids who have been suspended and it's like mandatory for like them to go to this other school and they're all in separate classrooms with like separate teachers because like hopefully there aren't like a lot of kids who are getting like mass suspended. So there should be enough teachers like one per kid so they're not socializing with other kids and doing maybe what they were doing about why they got suspended- fighting or selling drugs or stuff.

➔ Having, getting an actual like education teacher, you know. Not just someone to cover the ISS room. And getting a teacher of color. Of dark-skin, not, you know, light-skin. Not any of that. Just like, a true [says softer volume: not true, everyone's true] a dark-skin to cover a classroom. Hopefully Ms. Steven's to you know, heal those who are wounded. And, so that, you know, the kids feel comfortable talking to someone other than Ms. Starr. You know, someone who black kids can relate to and they're like the teacher's like, "yeah, I understand, I had to go through that as a kid, too. Teachers were rude back in my day and stuff." So, like an old – or young—I don't' care. Old or young black teacher, I think, would be easier. I think that would make the experience better and that would change the perspective of a lot of kids at the school.

- Mhm, mhm. Did you say that, to clarify, for the ISS room or just in general?

Just in general. Not just to cover the ISS room. Add a little bit of diversity to the teachers, at least. I mean, they're all white, come on.

- Why do you think that is?

I don't know

➔ I would [pause] mix up more of the classrooms then having a ton of white people in there.

- Is that how they are now?

I mean, it's kind of an even match. But, like, put a couple more black people in there. Or just like go through the names and see what like race they are. And just like put a couple Mexican people, Asian people and all that. In like a couple classrooms and then do that for all of them. And then if all like one race is already full of one classroom and then put some other people. Just keep mixing it around, make it new. An, keep tryin.

- Why?

'cause I want people to see that there's more capable of others and not just to be like, 'Oh yeah, I already know black people are doing stuff." I want them to see which ones are goo- which ones you know and which ones you don't know. 'cause you could see someone who looks mean and tough, but then they could actually be a nice person.

➔ I guess like I would like make more black teaches. I don' know why. I just feel like uncomfortable. Cause like most-All of them are white, I've never seen a black teacher at [Tacoma Middle School] before. So like, yeah, and we're also like, make them feel like all of their voices

B.5.2i.1 Group Meeting Two - Theme 8 Continued

can be heard. I know that all voices are going to be heard. But I want to like make a little box like for every grade. And they can put like recommendations for what they can change about the school. Yeah.

➔ Um, I would say, more black teachers, more black staff, just more people of color around the school. But at the same time, it all be equal. So that we all experience the same thing. But that would, that would never happen cause, of course, black people they experience racism but at the same time white people, they don't, they don't experience white people-I mean they don't experience racism, they experience, um, forgot the word [pause]. It's like, not-not racism but at the same time, there'll be somebody actually giving a point or they'll be rude to a white person but at the same time its not racism.

…Yeah, that's what it's called! Uh! Yes, discriminate. They would just-they just experience discrimination. Like not racism but discrimination.

- Um, what would you hope would change or be accomplished with kind of this goal of having more black staff and just people of color around the school?

…Um, there'd be at least not as much racism as there is now. And I feel like there'd be more black people being happy at the-at the end of school or [pause] just [pause] better.

B.5.3 Group Meeting Three

Youth Interviews: Group Analysis

August 8, 2018

Food and Ice-breaker (30 minutes)

Norms

- Don't "out" the person (guessing, saying, eye contact, noises)

Confidentiality (get consent before sharing)

- Honesty – own up if you made a mistake
- Respect peoples boundaries
    - Keep hands to self, respect others belongings
- Don't bash anyone for what they shared
- Be curious – ask questions to understand someone's perspective
- Stay focused!
- Step up, step back when speaking

Using Our Notebooks

- July 3 – Why Research
- August 6 – Interview Theme Analysis
- August 8 – Analysis & History of Desegregation

Revisit Shared Analysis: Assumptions People Make About Race (20 min)

- Read together and write responses

History: Article review (30 min)

- Find 1 article about race/desegregation
- Read it and take a picture
- Take notes to report out

History Learning (30 min)

- T-chart notes – notes and/or visuals on one side, questions/reactions on other side

Final "Ahas"

Next Meetings

B.5.4 Group Meeting Four

Youth Interviews: What Now?

August 24, 2018

Food and Ice-breaker (20 minutes)

Norms

- Don't "out" the person (guessing, saying, eye contact, noises)
- Confidentiality (get consent before sharing)
- Honesty – own up if you made a mistake
- Respect people's boundaries
    - Keep hands to self, respect others belongings
- Don't bash anyone for what they shared
- Be curious – ask questions to understand someone's perspective
- Stay focused!
- Step up, step back when speaking

Using Our Notebooks

- What have I learned in taking part this summer? (About myself? About others' experiences? About the history of desegregation in Tacoma?
- What do I still want to know?
- How do I want to do that?

Set-Up Next Meetings

B.6 YPAR: Thematic Concept Maps

Revised Concept Map: Main Themes and Sub-Themes after Meta-Analysis from Full Dataset

Main Themes	Sub Themes
Positive experiences around race	● Friend groups homogenous or mixed ● Grappling with issues ● Talked about in informal spaces ● Allies at march, both teachers and students ● Equity-focused elective class ● Cultural learning
Negative experiences around race	● **White student favoritism/differential treatment by race** ● Talking about race = "racist" ● **One racist teacher?** ● Race dismissed ● Race taken lightly/joking ● Race as stereotype
Talking about race	● N-word/Black card ● People of color ● "Melanin buddies" ● **"Race assumption"** ● Neutral - not really talked about
Systemic understandings	● White privilege/White guilt ● Need to talk about race ● Code-switch ● Police shootings ● **Ideas for change:** Increase number of Black teachers/teachers of color ● Lack of Black staff linked to racism
Equity v. Equality	● **Ideas of equality/idealism** ● "just refer to me as human" ● Sense of justice ● "But at the same time all be equal" ● "Balanced" ● Equal, no distinction by race/treating everyone the same ● Redemption story

Note: Boldface sub-themes represent themes I selected for analysis in Chapter 3, Findings and Analysis