“BEING IN THE CENTER OF THE PROJECTS”: URBAN EDUCATION, STRUCTURAL INEQUITIES, AND PROVISIONAL RESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT

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Public education in Baltimore City, Maryland faces many structural inequities, several of which are due to the lingering remnants of historical factors. Interviewing some of the educational staff members of Baltimore City Elementary School (BCES), I found that this specific school experiences health and environmental, socioeconomic, and educational inequalities. Conscious of these concerns, school leaders, teachers, and community members have resisted such injustices. Ultimately, the data yielded patterns of provisional resistance. While this resistance is empowering and meaningful, it remains a short-term fix, and fails to create long-term solutions to structural inequities. Provisional resistance is limited in its abilities to actually solve oppressions, and instead works as a Band-Aid to mask or cover the problem as a means of momentary survival. This form of resistance does not remove agency or power from marginalized groups of people, but instead refocuses accountability on outside forces, and calls for the dismantling of structures.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	African American Language
BCES	Baltimore City Elementary School
BITCH	Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity
BE	Black English
CRT	Critical Race Theory
LWC	Language of Wider Communication
PWI	Predominantly White Campus
WE	White English

Chapter 1: Introduction

"Sometimes I feel like, this school being in the center of the projects, I feel like we are always last on the totem poles to get anything. Even though we have the different programs, and are here to support our parents and our students. So we're not gonna get that, you know the rewards. We don't get the accolades. We're not getting our children recognized, or our staff recognized. Because we're here." – Mrs. Morgan Abel

Introduction

I come from the small, yet urban city of Erie, Pennsylvania. For the most part, I grew up fairly sheltered from the inequities of the world. My mom was a popular teacher in the city, and was always able to get me into either private or competitive K-12 schools. The schools were typically new, fully resourced, and offered much to its students. In my mind, this was the norm for every child in the country. This was my belief until I began working in a Baltimore City public school in 2013. Everything was vastly different from what I thought to be the norm of an elementary school. Many of the facilities were inoperable, broken, or nonexistent. The school did not have central air conditioning, consistently working heat, or many of the other basic requirements of a public institution. I think it is important to note that this school has a 99% Black student population, and it is very evident that if the racial demographics of this school were different, the structure of this school would also likely be vastly different.

Public education in Baltimore City, Maryland faces many structural inequities. Many of the facilities lack operational heating and cooling systems, which leave the schools freezing during the winter months (Larimer, 2018), and extremely hot during the summer (Richman, 2017). Because some of the schools contain water pipes covered in lead paint, the water sources supplied from these pipes are not fit for student consumption (Dennis, 2016). Further, many of the students are not able to experience specialty resource and fine arts classes such as gym, art, library/media, or music, as such opportunities are simply not affordable in school budgets

(Prudente, 2017). What seems to be basic necessities for student learning, are often services not able to be provided to Baltimore City students.

Many of the inequities within Baltimore City Public Schools are due, in part, to current and historical socioeconomic factors. Chapter 1 will be used to consider these dynamics and outline a plan for research. First, providing some background to Baltimore's socioeconomic decline, I will discuss deindustrialization and its social and economic effects on the city. Next, listing problems evident in Baltimore today, the impact of deindustrialization on urban education will be explored. Expanding, I will then explain the purpose of this research and why it is relevant and important work. Then presenting the methodologies used for this exploration, I will present why critical race theory and supporting paradigms are necessary approaches. Further, this chapter will provide the research questions that shape this study, as well as define integral terms used throughout this examination. Last, I will outline how this research is related to African American Studies and the study of Urban Education, while leaving space to introduce what is to come in Chapter 2.

Background to the Problem

Once a thriving region with a flourishing economy, Baltimore, Maryland was a place of opportunity. During the 1940s and early 1950s, the waterfront city operated as a leading port and industry which provided thousands of jobs to its residents (Levine, 2000). In addition to its thriving resources and employment opportunities, Baltimore city also had a decent system of education[1], which some claim to have been "among the nation's best" (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 413).

[1] I am using careful wording here, as I understand that similar to many school systems around the country, Baltimore public schooling was segregated, and continues to be segregated today. Often, the Black schools were underfunded and not as competitive as white schools.

Within decades however, the city's social economy crumbled. "Between 1950 and 1970, Baltimore lost 46,000 manufacturing jobs, or a third of its industrial base," and "between 1970 and 1995 Baltimore lost another 55,000 manufacturing jobs" (Levine, 2000, p. 125). This totaled a loss of roughly 75% of industrial employment within the area (Levine, 2000). It was during this post-war period, that Baltimore, along with other Midwestern and Northeastern economies, was experiencing deindustrialization.

Sometimes referred to as economic restructuring or disinvestment in manufacturing, the deindustrialization of major cities has essentially disrupted the social and economic system of many urban centers around the country (Nelson, 1998). According to Nelson (1998), deindustrialization has "manifested in a decline in manufacturing employment, and the increased employment in the services and information sector" (p. 202). As such, when industries downsized, residents were expected to either stay and survive underemployed, continue unemployed, or leave the area and find work elsewhere if they had the money and resources to do so. Hence, deindustrialization is "associated with increased unemployment, decreased standards of living and rising income disparities when the service industry fails to fully absorb displaced workers" (Nelson, 1998, p. 207). This is because industrial jobs, more often than not, provided families with full time work and salaries. The customer service sector, which replaced industrial careers, didn't often provide their employees with livable wages, nor were they able to supply enough jobs to meet the demand of unemployment.

This massive job loss, on top of a host of other sociopolitical and economic factors, such as the 1968 Baltimore riots (Baum, 2011), encouraged white[2] flight to Baltimore's surrounding

[2] I do not capitalize the "w" in white, as most white Americans can connect themselves to a national or ethnic identity, and often identify as such (Touré, 2011, p. vii). For example, many white Americans, even those who have lineage in the United States for generations, consider

suburbs. This meant that middle class white people left the cities for majority white suburbs and took their resources with them (Noguera, 2004). In part, this is because current and historical political structure "reinforces the common belief that the way to deal with urban problems is to run away from them—to cross city lines and protect oneself from the bad things going on elsewhere" (Frug, 2006, p. 219). Although the white middle class lived in the suburbs, they often still continued to work in the urban areas. Thereby, they benefitted from both the resources of the city and the suburbs (Vicino, 2008). This was extremely detrimental to Baltimore, as shrinking, rather than growing populations tend to lose the city resources and overall opportunity (Powell, 2009). In turn, impacted areas eventually become marginalized "no zones," where the economy suffers tremendously (Noguera, 2004). On the other hand, the suburbs began to thrive.

Dictated by the segregation of race and class, 20th Century suburbanization allowed the white middle class to create "bourgeois utopias" away from those that they found to be undesirable (Kruse & Sugrue, 2006, p. 3). Government sanctioned policies favored white suburban home ownership, and preferenced inner city project housing rentals for Blacks. African American containment in Baltimore included "a planned effort at ghetto renewal and economic revitalization" in order to "contain the 'threat' posed by the growing number of African Americans" (Hirsh, 2006, p. 43). Essentially, African Americans were confined to the "inner city" slums, and as the Black population grew, the slums were simply expanded just enough so

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themselves to be Jewish, German, Italian, etc. Because they do not have the similar history of Black Americans, who do not often have the same privilege of identifying with a national or ethnic group on account of chattel slavery, their identification of white is on account to the political creation of whiteness as power (Lipsitz, 1998). At the same token, I capitalize the "B" in Black to "reclaim the power of voice and identity" and to "emphasize its cultural and political connotations" (Amoah, 2013, p. 84). The "B" in Black will only be lower cased in instances where I am quoting and the original author prefers "black" over "Black."

they didn't disturb the suburban outskirts (Hirsh, 2006). Suburbanization created political, economic, and social competition where "opportunity hoarding" allowed an unequal access to goods and services to those allowed entry into the suburbs of Metropolitan America, as compared to those who are excluded from these spaces (Kruse & Sugrue, 2006, p. 6).

This is not to say that only the white middle class benefited from suburbs and fled inner cities. Although being middle class did not annul the fact that they were still Black, the Black middle class often preferred not to live in inner cities. "Of course, class was a spatial as well as social distinction. For the urban middle class, in particular, physical separation from poor and working-class blacks was an important emblem of class status" (Wise, 2006, p. 116). So much so, select Black families wanted to live amongst the higher elite, regardless of race, rather than be restricted to the rundown cities infested with "Negro trash" (Wise, 2006, p. 117). Similar to white suburbanites, many Blacks in the suburbs owned their homes and protected their properties with restrictive covenants to keep certain undesirables out (Sugrue, 1996). However, the remnants of many of these post-war, or "first-tier," suburbs are no longer attractive to new residents or investors today. "In many cases, these suburbs exhibit the very symptoms of decline that U.S. cities experienced some three decades ago" (Vicino, 2008, p. 6). Instead, the newer suburbs, or "outer suburbs," are much more attractive to contemporary buyers and investors.

Compared to the historical creation of suburbs, the current dynamics of "suburbia" have certainly changed. "The stereotypical view of the suburbs is that they are overwhelmingly White" and possess "largely conservative politics" (Jones-Correa, 2006, p. 183). This however is no longer entirely true because 2000 census data tells us that "31 percent of blacks, 44 percent of Latinos, and 51% of Asian Americans" live in the suburbs (Jones-Correa, 2006, p. 184). This shift now allows non-white middle class children to compete in quality education with white

children within the suburbs (Jones-Correa, 2006). Similar to the historical construction of suburbs though, children from working class and poor families, especially Black children, continue to be excluded from this competitive education. Because economic development, housing, and education are intrinsically linked (Wiley & Powell, 2006), we are able to see how urban education has been impacted by deindustrialization in Baltimore, Maryland.

Problem Statement

Deindustrialization is a significant factor of the current state of urban education because just as the social economy was stripped of its resources and opportunity, so were the schools (Orr, 1999). When metropolitan cities are largely segregated by race, those cities with a large minority or nonwhite population tend to exhibit large social, political, economic, and therefore educational disparities (Clotfelter, 1999). These urban areas, which once flourished with opportunity, are now areas of low opportunity, to which poor Blacks are ten times more likely than poor whites to live in (Powell, 2009). "High rates of crime and unemployment; concentrated neighborhood poverty; deteriorating housing stocks, schools, and social services; racial inequality; and the flight of the middle class to outlying suburbs" (Levine, 2000, p. 132), are all evident in Baltimore. In addition, drug abuse, abandoned homes, and health issues that "resemble those in Third World countries" (Levine, 2000, p. 124) plague urban neighborhoods within Baltimore city today. Although no one solution has revived Baltimore's socioeconomic climate, attempts have been made over the past few decades.

During the 1980s, Baltimore began attempts to revive its struggling economy by investing in harbor tourism and encouraging the white middle class to live in the gentrified area of downtown Baltimore (Levine, 2000). Conveniently, downtown Baltimore is geographically segregated from the city's majority Black residents of East and West Baltimore. Essentially, the

city was investing in ways to bring money back into the economy, and especially interested in appeasing the white middle class who could bring resources into the city (Levine, 1987). Focusing on tourism, public funds were invested in the Baltimore Convention Center, the Baltimore Inner Harbor, hotels, and downtown's sports stadiums. None of these projects however, seemed to yield profits into educational or social investment for the city's Black residents. "It is unclear, over the long run, whether the returns justify the investment, let alone whether Baltimore 'earns' enough from tourism to support expenditures for schooling, housing, or social services" (Levine, 2000, p. 136).

Even more recently, in 2008 the city began investing funds into the creation of a local casino, to which they promised would assist in educational funding for Baltimore city students. Since the casino's opening in 2011, Baltimore education has instead experienced budget cuts, as lawmakers have found loopholes "to take money that once went to schools and redirect it to pay salaries, fund roadwork and support other government programs and services" (Broadwater & Green, 2017). Consequently, Baltimore schools are receiving less money than they did before the casino's opening. Failing efforts of solutions only allows Baltimore's education system to suffer, especially as compared to other local education systems.

During the 2008-2009 academic school year, the state of Maryland had an 80.1% graduation rate, while Baltimore city schools, with a mere 56.4%, held the worse graduation rates in the state ("Maryland Equity Project," 2014). Although there have been increasing requirements for school and district accountability, attempts have not seemed promising (Stringfield & Yakimowski-Srebnick, 2005). In 2016 Baltimore's high school graduation rate increased to about 60%, but the city also experienced increased dropout rates that same year ("Baltimore City Public Schools," 2016). With roughly an 80% African American population,

and about a 65% low income population ("Baltimore City Public Schools," 2017), it is evident that poor Black students are affected the most under this system of education. The many challenges faced by Baltimore city schools and their students, have shaped the school to be a place where resistance is needed and very necessary.

From the perspective of a researcher, better understanding structural inequities at local levels and then connecting them to happenings at the national level, could lead to better understandings for dismantling such structures. Because quality education in America is linked to access and opportunity, as well as future stability and employment (Venkatesh, 2006), understanding the access that Blacks have to education should be of upmost importance within Black Studies (Woodson, 2006). In the corrective and solution oriented spirit of Black Studies, understanding some of the challenges of urban education could allow us to create solutions. Therefore, for dissertation studies, I am very interested in studying possible educational oppressions in Baltimore city, and examining if and how those oppressions are resisted.

Purpose of Study

Structural forces have created huge inequities to which Baltimore city students feel the burden. The students of these areas are often very cognizant of these educational inequities, as oppression does not unknowingly occur, but is normalized through structures (Lipsitz, 1998). Frequently, the individuals and groups of these spaces are often resilient and resist the oppressions that they do face. There is an abundance of research available that examines the role resistance has played in the school experiences of African American students. Little, however, is known about educational resistance in Baltimore city specifically. To better understand the needs of students and the school, the purpose of this research is to explore the historical and current state of public schooling, with particular attention to resisting or surviving educational injustices.

Research Questions

I was very interested in better understanding the city of Baltimore's current and historical socioeconomic climate, especially as it related to schooling. Further, I wanted to explore the possible realities and experiences of those within urban education, both in Baltimore and at the national level. Last, I wanted to investigate the ways in which schools have been used as spaces for educational resistance. To guide this research, I created the following questions:

1. What are some of the historical factors that have created inequitable education in Baltimore, Maryland?
2. What do students, teachers, and community members identify as the most significant challenges faced by Johnston Square Elementary School and its students?
3. How, if at all, have the school, students, teachers, and community worked to resist these inequities?

With these questions in mind, I hope to create a cohesive narrative, which will examine structural inequities and student experiences in Baltimore, in order to then connect them to national trends, which can hopefully lead to conversations centering solutions.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical perspective is the philosophy that informs a worldview of the research and the researcher (Crotty, 1998). This work will make use of critical race theory in order to shape the larger epistemology of this work.

Critical Race Theory. Because racism is permanently woven into the fabric of American institutions (Bell, 1992), it is impossible to study the educational conditions of Baltimore city without recognizing and understanding the dynamics of race. Therefore, a methodology that centers race would be necessary for this research. Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical

perspective that can explore the interconnected relationships of race and class in Baltimore, to the institutional and educational inequalities seen in Baltimore city schooling. According to Villenas and Deyhle (1999), "the lens of critical race theory (CRT) proves useful to understanding how the supremacy of 'Whiteness' and the subordination of people of color is created and maintained in the United States" (p. 414). CRT is a tool to "engage race as both the cause of and context for disparate and inequitable social and educational outcomes" (Lynn and Dixson, 2013, p. 1). Hence, CRT at its core centers race in order to better articulate systemic oppressions and injustices within society and society's institutions.

Definition of Terms

Scholarly research can be multifaceted, complex, and simply confusing. Often, this is because some terms can have contested meanings, and in turn can easily be misunderstood. Here, I hope to define the language of this research, especially verbiage that will be used often, in addition to terms that are often understood to have multiple meanings. These words include Urban Education, oppression, structural inequities, and resistance.

Urban Education. Determining what makes an education "urban," is not always crystal clear. Defining Urban Education can vary, as many scholars have contested exactly what makes an education "urban." Arguably, "urban" distinguishes a location in which the school is situated (Milner IV, 2012). That is, the urban school could be positioned in a large major city, or a city that is large but not necessarily a major city (Milner IV, 2012). "Urban" could also denote a suburban or rural area school that experiences challenges typically faced by schools within large major cities (Milner IV, 2012). In addition, although extremely problematic and politically incorrect, "urban" is often used to describe the student population (Anderson & Cross, 2013). Using "urban" as a code word, individuals or groups often are referring to the socioeconomic

status and race of the majority of the students (Anderson & Cross, 2013, p. 390). This is usually to assume a poor, Black, or largely minority population. For the purposes of this research though, "urban" will be used to denote the conditions of and/or challenges faced by a specific school, as well as the school's geographic location within an inner city. Such challenges include being largely underfunded and under resourced. "Urban" also considers the school being located within a majority Black area of inner city Baltimore, a populated major city.

Oppression. As a combination of prejudice, discrimination, and power, oppression functions to systematically exploit, control, and dominate (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012, p. 39). The nature of oppression includes the "need" to control money, knowledge, or any other source of power. Competition for resources, perceived difference, and the creation of in-group/out-group bias often encourage oppression (Alvarez & Kolker, 2001). "Race," for example, is an oppressive force, used to establish and maintain hierarchies, in order to provide some groups of people with power, and to keep others without (Herbes-Sommers, et al., 2003). For instance, whiteness is a socially created in-group, to which members benefit, while out-group members cannot compete nor benefit (Lipsitz, 1998). In other words, white is privileged, while color is oppressed (Wise, 2009). Oppressions are methodical, systematic, and structural. Interconnected, structural oppressions use race as a driving factor to work collectively against Black students and their education.

Structural Inequities. Because schools are merely one institution operating within the realm of a larger society, many of the society's social and economic disparities are also prevalent within its school systems (Carter & Welner, 2013). This includes, but is not limited to structural inequities such as structural and institutional racism. "Structural racism is both a description of the current state of racial hierarchy, along with the poverty it produces in our post-civil rights

society, and a strategy development tool" (Wiley & Powell, 2006, p. 69). It is multiple systems, both private and public that operate, in relationship with and to one another, to perpetuate racism, discrimination, and oppression. When this work speaks of structural inequities, it is referring specifically to those perpetual interworkings which function to marginalize, oppress, and discriminate against students of color.

Resistance. Although a combination of social, political, and economic factors have certainly disempowered many urban areas and schools, the people and students of these areas have not been left totally powerless. Common throughout the history of Black Americans is a theme of surviving in society by any means necessary. Resisting existing oppressions, oppressed people often use available agency to remain resilient through challenges that they face. Relative in nature, resistance provides and/or restores power (Weitz, 2001, p. 668), and this power provides control, agency, and allows for individual or collective self-determination (Ture, 1997). I am less interested in the validity or specification of one type or scale of resistance over another, and more interested in how participants are exhorting power, creating agency, and surviving structural inequities. With a particular focus on urban education, this research will explore various ways in which the school, community, and other affiliates have operated as sites of resistance, encouraged student resistance, or functioned to resist oppressions.

Significance to the Field

Similar to the study at hand, research unpacking structural inequities and resistance to historical oppressions is very significant to the field of African American Studies. From its early beginnings, African American studies was envisioned to be a liberatory study, specifically interested in the history and lived experiences of Black people (Karenga, 2009). Today, with a motive of social responsibility, African American Studies considers Black sociopolitical and

economic problems, and utilizes the discipline to research, write, educate, and spread awareness to the masses (Cha-Jua, 2000). As such, this writing hopes to create an understanding of socioeconomic realities of Black students in Baltimore. Descriptive, corrective, and prescriptive in nature, Black studies is committed to describing the problems experienced by Black communities, in order to then challenge and correct such inequalities (Marable, 2000). Further, Black studies aims to operate as a "communiversity," using academics and activism to unite the community and the university (Rogers, 2010). True to Black studies scholarship, the work for this research has a goal of creating solution oriented conversations to correct the educational injustices in Baltimore, Maryland.

Although not an official subfield of African American Studies, the study of Urban Education within Black Studies deserves much more attention. This subfield prepares future educators to work with diverse students and families, and provides a historical overview of education in the United States while placing urban education in a contemporary context. Like the research for this work, the study of Urban Education links present-day educational issues to our country's past history of racist socio-political and educational policies (Anderson, 2004). Because education is largely linked with housing and location, Urban Education studies housing patterns, districting, and past practices of housing discrimination. Also examined are racial achievement gaps, cultural deficit theories, school policies, and the use of standardized tests, which will all be discussed further in chapter 2.

Summary and Advanced Organizer

The drastic structural transformations caused by deindustrialization had severely negative impacts, and the effects continue to linger in many urban areas today (Berger, 2007). Especially evident in Baltimore, the contemporary challenges faced by urban education can be directly

linked to structural racism. These challenges however, do not go unnoticed by students or members of the school community, and this research plans to explore these realities. In order to do so, chapter 2 will review the available literature on structural inequities and educational resistance. Chapter 3 will outline the methods used for this research, as well as explain the research design, and introduce the participants. Qualitatively, chapter 4 will present the results of the research, by focusing on the most important findings. Last, chapter 5 will focus on the implications of the research conducted.

Chapter 2: Literature Review:
Structural Inequities in Education, and Educational Resistance
Historical through Contemporary

Inequities in Education

Exploring the existing literature, there is an established body of work that demonstrates that Black people have often faced structural barriers when it comes to their education. This is evident from a historical perspective, as Black Americans have been subjected to enslavement, Jim Crow, and other inequitable sociopolitical experiences that have certainly impacted their educational opportunities. Such inequities are not only prevalent in K-12 education, but also at the colligate level, and throughout the diaspora. The lingering effects of historical realities have greatly influenced educational structures today. These structures, although prevalent, are not the determining factors of Black education. African Americans have instead resisted and created their own narratives. This review will explore the historical experiences of Black American education, deficit theories, Black counterstories, and educational resistances.

Historical Inequities. Historically, African Americans have often been excluded from quality education and access to opportunity (Alexander, 2010). Before emancipation, and during enslavement, the education of Blacks was strictly prohibited by law. Resisting, the enslaved often found ways to self-educate by eavesdropping, teaching each other at night, attending African American created formal and informal schools, and tricking white people into teaching them (Williams, 2006). "Understanding how enslaved people learned not only illuminates the importance of literacy as an instrument of resistance and liberation, but also brings into view the clandestine tactics and strategies that enslaved people employed to gain some control over their own lives" (Williams, 2006, pp. 7-8). It would seem, Black resistance to educational oppressions has always been a tool of their liberation.

Following the Civil War, many newly emancipated African Americans were in search of an education that had for the most part been forbidden to them previously (Walker, 1996). Every possible route, however, was taken to ensure that Black people were less educated than whites. Not only was it forbidden for Black students to attend white schools, but they were often legally limited to a 7th grade, or a partial, education (Walker, 1996, p. 30). This was in part, because White people saw education as a way for Black people to challenge oppressive systems already in place. "The close timing of these antiliteracy laws often exposed the close association in white minds between black literacy and black resistance" (Williams, 2006, p. 13). For the United States, education was a means of freedom that was strictly limited to African Americans. This was not very successful, as such laws were commonly broken because Black people continued to resist and seek out an education.

In addition, it was illegal for Blacks to attend white schools, and although schools were racially segregated, they were nowhere close to being equal. Black schools have been historically underfunded and under resourced, particularly when compared to white schools, which have historically been fully funded and resourced (Kluger, 1975). For example, "Negro" schools were often one room buildings ranging in value from $1,800 to $2,100, while White schools were being funded for multiroom and multifloor faculties, and being allocated funding ranging from $9,000 to $22,118 (Walker, 1996, p. 18).

Because Black schools were severely underfunded Black education often depended on communal fundraising or donations to sustain. Anderson (1988) further elaborates on the inequality of "self-help" and double taxation. Self-help meant that Black communities needed to invest personal funds into their public education. This self-help led to double taxation because on top of the self-help, they were also being taxed for money that was supposed to be going toward

the education of their community. “Double taxation and collective social action enabled them to improve tremendously the material conditions of their educational system; on the other, this same process was unjust and oppressive, and their accommodation to double taxation helped extend them the power of their oppressors” (Anderson, 1988, p. 179). Double taxed, and relying on communal self-help, Black methods of resistance were simultaneously operating as oppressive factors (Anderson, 2004, pp. 8-10). Though historically these communities’ resistance to oppressions has often worked in their favor, it has also worked to their detriment.

During the era of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Socio-political and economic inequities racially segregated many cities around the country (Sugrue, 1996), and conveniently confined African Americans to inner cities (Hirsch, 2006). Federal housing policies, such as redlining, kept Black residents housed in specific areas of major cities, and therefore districted into segregated schools (Sugrue,1996). Similar to previous historical practices, the education provided to Black students was often poor and lacking resources. One national “solution” to desegregate schools was busing.

Busing was the practice of transporting students across districts and segregated neighborhoods in attempts to remedy a racial balance within segregated schools (Dimond, 2005). Ultimately busing failed. It largely lacked the national support of politicians, President Nixon, white parents and ant-integrationists/segregations who publically opposed the idea (Delmont, 2016). It is important to note though, although many Black leaders were in support of busing, some Black parents and students preferred a Black controlled and equal education, that did not necessarily have to come from busing. According to Delmont (2016):

> We want our schools in our neighborhood. We don’t want to go to no other neighborhood. But we want education, the kind we need in our neighborhood…

> We want to see all kinds of books. Black books. We want to be recognized. We don't want integration, we'll get that. We want education. And integration will not educate our Black children. Black books, more Black principals, some more Black people on the school board, a Black woman up there too (p. 168).

Seeking a quality education, rather than an integrated one, Black parents wanted a localized education that centered the needs and identities of their students. Such an education would not be soon realized though.

Socioeconomic Status and Inequitable Education. Post *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1970s the federal government began strictly enforcing desegregation laws (Tatum, 2007, p. 9). However, White flight, the mass exodus of middle class white families, allowed schools to be quickly resegregated once again (Tatum, 2007). "For students of color, the return to segregation means the likelihood of attending a school with limited resources" (Tatum, 2007, p. 14). With limited resources, students from poor families are less likely to be given the tools needed for academic success. This is because "children from higher social classes come to school with more skills and are more prepared to learn than children from lower classes" (Rothstein, 2004, p. 15). This does not mean that the more prepared students are smarter than their counterparts, but rather that students from the lower socioeconomic status have less access to resources, which in turn make them underprepared (Rothstein, 2004).

Although race and poverty are intricately linked (Wiley & Powell, 2006), research has further suggested that socioeconomic status can also impact academic achievement (Rothstein, 2004). Partly because the living environments of many areas of low socioeconomic status, are polluted and dangerously unhealthy. In Baltimore, for example, there are scores of lead in the water and soil, as well as very polluted air. For children, lead poisoning can cause hyperactivity

and night blindness, and can also have negative effects on an individual's motivation, concentration, and attention (Lowenstein, 1982). Because children have growing organs, when lead is ingested, they are likely to experience irreversible lifelong disabilities (Landrigan, Schechter, Lipton, Fahs, & Schwartz, 2002). Just as such, breathing in industrial polluted air (Bullard, 2001), can lead to asthma and other health related problems (Landrigan et al, 2002). Such health concerns and disabilities can surely have a negative impact on the academic success, or lackthereof, of the children within these urban areas. This is a reality that most children from middle class families never have to concern themselves with.

Similarly, students who come from middle class families and attend resourced schools, are more likely to gradate high school on a path to college. On the other hand, Children who attend schools that are underfunded are less likely to be college ready, as some schools lack the capability to encourage a college preparatory curriculum (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Those students from urban areas who do attend college, especially enrolled at predominately white campuses (PWIs), face racialized inequities similar to the experiences of students k-12. Some of the structural obstacles include, but are not limited to, "unwelcoming and 'chilly' campus environments that offer inadequate social support, social isolation, and racism and discrimination" (Strayhorn, 2010, p. 2). Such experiences can pose a threat to the success of Black students.

Collegiate Experiences. At such schools, Black students often experience race-related stressors such as incidences of racial discrimination and feelings of isolation (Neville, Heppner, Ji, & Thye, 2004). On these historically white campuses, many racial minorities feel the physical, emotional, and mental stress related to combating everyday racisms (Smith, 2008). That is, the cost of their education is often paid with psychosocial sacrifices (Chambers,

Huggins, Locke, & Fowler, 2014). These occurrences are not always overt however, as Black students frequently encounter "racial microaggressions, or unconscious and subtle forms of racism" (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 60). According to Davis et al. (2004), Black students have reported experiences of unfairness/sabotage/condescension (p. 437), isolation/connection (pp. 437-8), having to prove their worthiness (p. 439), and feelings of visibility/invisibility (pp. 439-40). Combined, these negative feelings and experiences often create challenges for Black students to matriculate and perform academically (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

The social milieu of PWIs could be particularly uncomfortable for some African American students today because of the lingering racism of historically white campuses. Just as America has a racist past, college campuses also have a long history of institutionalized racism and segregated campuses. It was not until the affirmative action era that PWIs even had a real interest in Black student recruitment (Tatum, 2007). Pre 1965, Black college students were for the most part unwelcomed on historically white campuses. This is evident in the experiences of Lloyd Gaines, whose sudden disappearance in 1939 was attributed to his murder, due to the simple fact that he wanted an education from a school that only serviced white students (Anderson, 2002).

This, however, is not to say that all Black experiences on college campuses are the same. Black students are not a monolith, and intersecting identities play a large part in student experiences (Smith & Moore, 2000; Porter & Maddox, 2014). According to Woldoff, Wiggins, and Washington (2011), Black students who are more accustomed to White spaces, as compared to Black students who are not, have less difficulty adjusting to the familiar environment of a predominately white institution (PWI). Therefore, differing students, even though of the same

race, could report vastly dissimilar campus experiences. Nonetheless, for many Black students, racialized experiences on college campuses are a common reality.

Continental and Colonial Experiences. Inequities in educational experiences, are not only evident in the United States, as the mistreatment of African Americans by the dominant society is not a unique Black experience. Continental Africans also have a history of racialized challenges when it comes to their education. During the 20th century, Europeans used colonialism to establish political, economic, and social control over many Black African countries and Black African peoples (Ndlovu-Garsheni, 2013). This involved the enslaving, mass killing, and psychological trauma of African people. Colonialism strictly enforced white supremacy, and preferred European practices and traditions over traditional African customs and cultures. A colonial education was no exemption.

In attempt to discredit African contributions to history, and therefore distorting the identity and consciousness of African peoples, many European historians have presented Africa as the "dark continent," a land with no real history or distinguished culture (Keto, 2001, p. 83). Exhibiting "total historical amnesia" when it comes to the influences and contributions of Ancient Egypt, or KM'T, these racist scholars have crafted a negative image of Africa, which indeed impacts the identity and self-perception of African peoples (Keto, 2001, p. 83). This, in part, permitted Westerners to imagine a "developed" Africa, from a Eurocentric lens, especially in terms of education. Hence, during the colonization of Africa, schools were created to mirror European styles of education. "Instead of allowing the schools to be based on cultural and traditional knowledge of the Africans, the colonial schools sought to 'destroy' the indigenous educational system in Africa and replace it by a system that did not encourage indigenous scientific activities, and indeed stopped such activities" (Raheem, Anamuah-Mensah, & Dei,

2014, p. 18). European colonialists would create oppressive educational programs, totally ignoring the individual realities of the society in which it the education was being crafted. This is important to note, as the subjugation of African descended people around the world further exemplifies the experiences of structural inequities faced by Black people at a global level.

Race and Racism in Education. Ultimately, the historical and contemporary treatment of Blacks in educational institutions is because of society's underlying racism. "Racism has historically been one of the most prominent American cultural frames and has played a major role in determining how whites perceive and act towards blacks" (Wilson, 2009, p. 15). Within education, racism happens at both individual and structural levels.

At the structural level, racist sociopolitical policies have negatively impacted Black education for decades (Kantor and Lowe, 2013). "Sanctioned in part by public policy (Burch, 2009, p. 19)," it has been proven that institutional racism is a practicing tradition in public schools. For example, some Chicago institutions were "connected with multiple forms of structurally and culturally rooted race and class subjugation and decades of educational inequity" (Lipman, 2003, p. 339). Research finds that racist policies such as Zero Tolerance and school probation actually work to police, criminalize, dehumanize, and undermine Black and Latino students (Lipman, 2003), even when such policies are supposedly "color-blind" (Brewer & Heitzeg, 2008). Neoliberalism, managerialism, and the belief in a need to control minority students are partly the cause (Lipman, 2011). An imagination crafted by the larger society, these are "students whose skin color or home language or way of dress or gender marks them as perceived threats to public safety" (Flessa, 2009, p. 336). Because these students are seen as criminals, they are then treated as such. Many students of color are no longer being educated, but are instead being incarcerated (Valles & Villalpando, 2013). Such information signifies that

schools throughout the nation, not just within Chicago, operate to systematically oppress Black and Brown students.

Race and privilege are indeed structural powers, but are also used to carry out harms in individual ways (Powell, 1999). This is important to understand because many white teachers work with Black students, and such powers are then translated into the classroom. McKenzie (2009) interviewed white teachers who worked in urban schools, and found that many White teachers criminalize, disrespect, humiliate, and exclude their students of color. McKenzie (2009) correlated theories of shame, narcissistic injury, violence, and her own personal experiences to conclude that emotionally abusive white female teachers will most likely have a negative impact on the emotional development of students of color. Many of these white teachers do not understand their power, do not recognize their privilege, and they do not recognize that they view Black students from theories of deficit (Delpit, 2006). There are, of course, teacher education practices that encourage self-reflection in order to understand and situate the complexities of race, power, and oppression within a multicultural education (McIntyre, 1997). And, it is this self-reflection, understanding of intersectional identities, and engaging in discourse with students, that could allow many white educators to provide a liberatory education. Although almost done in vain, most diversity trainings, and the similar, are not sufficient enough to transform the individual beliefs of such educators (Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

It is obvious, the educational system favors and privileges white students over non-white students. This is evident in the curriculum, in funding and money allocations, the resources available, the quality of teachers (experience and pay rates), and other structural links between schooling conditions and schooling outcomes (Valencia, 2010). Because schools with a non-white majority student population usually have a white centered curriculum, often have less

funding, usually have little resources in comparison to majority white schools, and have less experienced and lower paid teachers, they are therefore more prone to school failure. “School failure is the persistently, pervasively, and disproportionately low academic achievement among substantial proportion of low-SES students of color” (Valencia, 2010, p. 1). In other words, school failure is due to larger structural inequalities. Even still, instead of understanding the negative experiences of Black students as possible factors that prevent student success, deficit theories about the abilities of Black people continue to paint a dominant narrative.

Deficit Theories. Further stemming from racist historical practices, the treatment and realities of students in urban environments is often supported by theories of deficit. Deficit theories purport that “the student who fails in school does so because of his/her internal deficits or deficiencies,” and that “such deficits manifest, adherents allege, in limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of motivation to learn, and immoral behavior” (Valencia, 2010, pp. 6-7). In other words, it is often believed that Black students are “culturally deprived, anti-intellectual, and lacking proper goals, motivation, and values” (Khalifa, Jennings, Briscoe, Olesweski, & Abdi, 2013, p. 157). It is these master stories that create untruths of the supposed genetic and/or cultural deficiency of People of Color (Persell, 1981). Such theories perpetuate stereotypes of Black students, and continue to blame the student, rather than the damaging educational environment and structural inequalities for student performance (García & Guerra, 2004). Theories that illustrate Blacks as culturally deprived or incapable, are merely pseudoscience, created from racism and classism, and have little scientific basis (Foley, 1997). These beliefs are extremely dangerous as they blame Black students, rather than a lack of structural access to resources for success. Such dynamics are what often makes the standardized testing, the “achievement gap,” and “Standard English” problematic.

Standardized Testing. Many western forms of scientific study tend to reflect Eurocentric beliefs of knowledge, and standardized testing is no different. Because the tests are culturally limited, they therefore produce biased results to which Black students are often measured unfairly. It is no surprise then, that for the most part, Black students are not achieving in school (Simpkins & Simpkins, 1981, p. 212), and in general, African Americans underperform on all forms of assessment, even constructed response testing (Szpara and Wylie, 2007, p. 1). These assessments have been used for "blaming and embarrassing school children for low test scores instead of teaching and nourishing them" (Hilliard, 1991, p. 35). Inaccurately measuring academic achievement, standardized test scores are often used as evidence to purport the supposed "achievement gap."

The Achievement Gap. The achievement gap is a term used to describe the disparity in academic performance between racial groups. More often than not the achievement gap uses white students as a standard of measurement, in which racial minorities, especially those who are underperforming white students, are compared and contrasted to. "Rather it is to underscore the powerful historical, political, and social forces that have developed and sustained a narrative of black inferiority, which most recently has manifested itself in the form of an 'achievement gap,' successfully using data to racialize achievement" (Horsford & Grosland, 2013, pp. 153-154). The term "achievement gap" is extremely problematic in that it attempts to "normalize failure" (Noguera, 2008).

Further, the "achievement gap fails to take into account educational disparities and inequities both currently and historically (Chambers, 2009). For students of color, this includes the "routine denials of access to resources they would need to be academically successful" (Chambers, 2009, p. 422). In other words, the "achievement gap" implies that white students are

more academically successful than Black students, without actually considering the resources and opportunities that white students tend to be given over Black students. Not to mention, using white students as the standard of comparison implies an unearned "great heroism" on the behalf of white people and white students (Chambers, 2009). In fact, "the achievement gap is only an average of the performances of all children within large social class groupings" and "some children from lower social classes do out-perform typical middle-class children" (Rothstein, 2004, p. 61). This proves that success is not impossible for Black students, nor is it unattainable for students from working class families. In other words, "the achievement gap" is just a theory of deficit.

Instead of an "achievement gap," a receivement gap, an opportunity gap, and an educational debt have been preferred. "The more appropriate label, 'receivement gap,' refocuses attention where it is due—on the educational institutions, personnel and policies, tracking among them—that create, perpetuate, and exacerbate differences among these students" (Chambers, 2009, p.422). Because there is a clear difference in the receivement of educational resources, it seems almost obvious that those students who experience disparities will be less likely to perform as well as those who were prepared with the necessary resources and tools. Concurrently, there has been a historical gap in the opportunities available for minority students (Milner, 2012). Or in other words, there is an opportunity gap. Therefore, to compensate a legacy of structural inequalities, America owes Black Americans an educational debt which pays back historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral wrong doings (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This includes, but is not limited to, the long history of racism, and separate yet unequal public education.

African American Language. In addition to the achievement gap, language is also a factor to which Black students' capabilities have been measured. Emerging in the 19th Century, deficit theories attempted to rationalize that Blacks speak broken English due to their cultural and genetic deficiencies. Because Black communities throughout the Americas speak differently than their country's dominant white culture, the linguistic communications of Africanized English, Caribbean Patwah, Gullah, and other Creolized Languages were once used as "evidence" that Blacks were biologically inferior (MacNeil, 1986). Such racist perspectives defined, and continue to describe, Blacks as genetically defected, and further contrast them to Whites, who are directly or indirectly explained to be the ideal prototype. "This position posits that Africans in America were at most capable of imperfectly learning American English," because they are "inferior and uncivilized" (Lanehart, 2012, p. 1828). In reality however, African American Language (AAL) is not an inferior English, nor the result of a defected tongue, but it is rather an acquired cultural communication.

Just as U. S. communities continue to be divided among racial lines, so do the languages spoken within these communities (Smitherman, 2006, p. 5). Neither race, biology, nor genetics determine language, socialization however, does. Language is "not anatomically determined or a result of 'racial genetics.' Rather, such linguistic differences are 'learned speech characteristics'" (Smalls, 2004, p. 646). That is, language is acquired during life, not inherited before or during birth. AAL is not a cultural deficiency, but is a unique cultural marker, and a complex language.

Today, recognized by many terms, Ebonics, Black English (BE), African American Vernacular English, Spoken Soul, and AAL can be defined as a complex "style of speaking English words with Black flava—with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns" (Smitherman, 2006, p. 3). Usually spoken by Black people, but also spoken

by those who share intimate spaces with African Americans, AAL is a grammatical system that borrows some "Africanized" speaking patterns. According to Smitherman (2006), "AAL comes out of the experience of U.S. slave descendants," and "this shared Black experience has resulted in common speaking styles, systematic patterns of grammar, and common language practices in the Black community" (p. 3). Because the United States has a strong history of excluding African Americans from the dominant culture, African Americans consequently speak a language that is not spoken amongst those who have been included within America's dominant society.

Even still, White English (WE), or the language of wider communication (LWC), is continually used as a social marker to measure assumed intelligence. That is, society assumes that those who speak WE are more intelligible than those who speak BE or AAL. "WE reflects and reproduces the classism, racism, and sexism of the U. S. Linguistic correctness as a function of ruling class white male hegemony manifested in the historical development of WE, concomitant with capitalist formation in US history" (Smitherman, 2000b, p. 99). The dominant language of our society is preferred, adored, and used as a tool to measure Black obedience and worth. "White power uses White English as a calculated, political display of power to control and eliminate the powerless" (Jordan, p. 7). It is for that reason, that code switching has allowed some Blacks minimal social advancement.

Smitherman (2000b) provides supporting evidence that those students who are able to successfully articulate the LWC are the students who are most likely to succeed. Not because they are more intelligent however, but because of the stereotypes society places upon them. "Black psychologists seem to suggest that Black English speakers have language-based problems, and only those who master code-switching make it through the educational system

successfully," but they fail to acknowledge that this is largely due to those "myths and misconceptions about language and negative attitudes toward language diversity" harvested in our schools and in society (Smitherman, 2000b, pp. 140-141). Hence, Blacks in and/or from urban areas often face societal ridicule, become further marginalized, and in turn makes them the target of much discrimination.

Baugh (2003) goes on to explain that language is not only discriminated against, but certain language is actually adored. Another form of linguistic profiling, linguistic admiration prefers "linguistic attributes that we might feel are somehow lacking in ourselves" (Baugh, 2003, p. 164). In America, where European culture has shaped our corporate environment, many Americans feel a sense of adoration toward the French and British languages, because they perceive the white speakers of such languages to be "highly intelligent" (Baugh, 2003, p. 164). AAL, in contrast, is viewed with a sense of "shame" and "inferiority," but as previous research found, this is usually only true when the speakers of AAL are Black (Baugh, 2003, p. 167). Although it is often equated to intelligence, or lack thereof, language does not determine one's brainpower, humanity, worth, or one's deserving of respect.

Some Afrocentric thinkers are convinced that "the discussion of African languages has been about control, domination, and oppression," and "thus the character of the discussion has been dictated by those who had political and economic control over the lives of African people" (Blackshire-Belay, 1996, p. 16). This would mean that because AAL provides its speakers with identity, and a sense of community, the language cannot be encouraged by the dominant society which prefers to control the identity and "lives of African people." Africologists suggest that language use is power. A power that is often provided to some and excluded from others.

Considering the aforementioned deficit theories, it would seem that the students are not "at-risk," but rather the schools are (Valencia, 2010). Shifting the narrative from "at-risk students" to "at-risk schools," instead blames structural inequalities, rather than blaming individual students. "An anti-deficit perspective asserts that it is morally unacceptable and scientifically indefensible to hold students and their parents accountable for academic success, if schools are structured in such ways that thwart optimal learning" (Valencia, 2010, p. 117). Because "at-risk" often identifies similar populations as the supposed "culturally deficient," we must then question whether "at-risk" actually describes the individual student, or instead provides insight to a failing educational structure.

Countering Deficit Theories and Racism in Education

Alternatively, the strengths and assets of Black students, rather than supposed deficits, have been considered. This resistance often comes in the form of counterstories, which are used to resist dominant narratives and reclaim the stories of marginalized people (Johnson, 2016). Humanizing in nature, counterstories "foster the voices of marginalized identities," and therefore empower many oppressed groups (Johnson, 2016, p. 5).

Though there is a dominant historical narrative that Black people (Franklin, 1957) and Black institutions are "inherently bad, deficient, or lacking," historically, many Black schools have actually been beneficial to the education of Black students (Horsford, 2010, p. 298). Careful not to essentialize experiences, counter narratives prove that not all Black schools were under resourced, but rather thrived pre *Brown* (Horsford, 2010). This is not to argue that segregated schooling could not be not socially and emotionally oppressive to Black students, but rather to explore the possibility that the Black school could at the same time be created as an oppressive structure, yet still operate as a place to liberate the minds of Black students. In fact, the Black

school "represented a place to affirm black children culturally and prepare them educationally," and these "schools endeavored to teach African Americans how to negotiate their harsh and oppressive reality, even as they caught a glimpse of how to overcome second-class citizenship" (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2003, pp. 154-55). According to some narratives, African American education, though segregated could still positively meet the needs of their students. Even still, some segregated schools were indeed lacking.

For such institutions, many Black leaders fought hard for equal resources and schooling for Black students. The intent of *Brown*, "was to get equal opportunities and resources, not to merely get to sit next to White folks in school" (Horsford & McKenzie, 2008, p. 448). Their fight for equality was seen by some a success, and others a mistake. With desegregation, "these superintendents perceived the irony of getting 'what they fought for' while subsequently 'losing what they had'" (Horsford & McKenzie, 2008, p. 447). With desegregation came the closing of Black schools, the loss of opportunities for Black educators, damaged self-concept of Black students, and a false sense of opportunity for Black students (Horsford & McKenzie, 2008). Desegregation also demoted or displaced Black principals, teachers, and administration (Horsford & McKenzie, 2008), all of which were and are integral figures in Black education and for Black students.

Black leaders have always been necessary to the education of Black students. Although many Black schools were severely underfunded, Black principals still managed to make ends meet and somehow successfully fulfil their roles as leaders within the schools. Such leadership, entailed a variety of responsibilities, often differing from the expectations of their white counterparts. Historically and currently, Black principals have made use of a "color conscious perspective," consciously leading their schools with an understanding of the specific needs of

their students (Foster, 2005). That is, successful leadership styles of Black principals incorporate styles of leading that accommodate the learning and academic success of Black students. These frameworks and styles include interpersonal caring and institutional caring (Foster, 2005, p. 692), or the creation of fictive kinship and a collective identity (Foster, 2005, p. 694). Further, Black principals were expected to uplift the entire race, serve as role models for Black students, and not just be the head of their schools, but also the leaders of their entire communities (Tillman, 2004). According to Tillman (2004), "the Black principal represented the Black community; was regarded as the authority on educational, social, and economic issues; and was responsible for establishing the all-Black school as the cultural symbol of the Black community" (p. 102). The Black principal held a solid role for Black students in both the school and community.

Culturally Appropriate Intelligence Tests. It is estimated that 80% of Black Americans speak Black English (Simpkins Simpkins, 1981, p. 212), and "up to 90% of African Americans use aspects of AAL some of the time" (Szpara and Wylie, 2007, p. 19). Yet the language or culture of these people, are never included in standardized testing. Because of the biases presented in standardized testing, African American educators took it upon themselves to create culturally inclusive and appropriate testing strategies.

Taking a step toward educational equality, Williams (1972) created the Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity (BITCH). constructed to more accurately measure the intelligence of AAL speakers, and to counter the White cultural biases used in standardized American testing. The BITCH test utilized "expressions taken from the Black experience" and created culturally appropriate questions to test the intelligence of AAL speakers (Williams, 1972). Also favoring the cultural practices of African American students, the African American Language/U. S.

Ebonics Test was created as a culturally appropriate exam for speakers of AAL. Instead of a fixed test of all multiple choice questions, Smitherman (1975) incorporated open ended questions relevant to the sociolinguistic and cultural realities of Black students.

The realities experienced within urban education have been vast and complex. Historical injustices continue to shape contemporary inequities, and a narrative of supposed inferiority continues to linger in society today. Outlining the challenges faced by students within urban education is in no way to victimize any group of people. Removing agency from marginalized people would unfairly position the dominant group as powerful and the minority/subjugated group as powerless. I in fact argue the opposite. Reclaiming power and control, those who have been oppressed, tend to resist oppressions.

Contemporary Educational Resistance

Varying in scope and scale, and often overlapping, resistance can be physical, symbolic, individual, collective, large scale, or small scale (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Here I will outline a few of the many ways in which resistance has presented itself within educational settings, specifically within historical and contemporary Black educational experiences. I will especially focus on the resistance of school leaders and educators, the pedagogies of teachers, the activisms of students, community resistance, and the legal use of court rooms.

Educator and Leader Resistance. Teachers and school leaders are often resisting institutional inequities on behalf of their Black students. Historically this is apparent through teaching Black history to students, even though it was supposed to be excluded from the curriculum (Chafe, Gavins, & Korstad, 2003). As outlined by Tillman (2004), historically, Black leaders have used agency as empowerment to resist oppression by:

> (a) developing resources (acquiring money, materials, and other resources to ensure the success of the school), (b) performing extraordinary services (maneuvering district policies, introducing new curricula and activities, and instilling in Black children resiliency, self-reliance, self- respect, and racial pride), and (c) focusing on the school as the center of the community (transforming schools into the cultural symbol of the Black community) (p. 107).

Although Black principals held little power outside of the Black community or to make policy decisions, "Black principals worked within the existing power dynamics" to better their schools (Tillman, 2004, p. 109). These actions on behalf of leadership resisted institutional oppressions by using their power in the interest of Black students and Black education.

Today, teacher resistance is apparent in the implementation of multiple pedagogies and practices. "In culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers highlight culturally anchored sources of material and activities that 'capitalize on cultural learning styles'" (Murphy, 2010, p. 247). Resisting oppressive curriculums, culturally responsive pedagogy allows students to learn in styles that are familiar to their personal identities. Examples of culturally relevant teaching can include a multicultural education (Okoye-Johnson, 2011), centering race through an intersection of critical race theory and multicultural education (Jay, 2003), an anti-oppressive education (Kumashiro, 2000), or Afrocentric approaches (Asante, 1998). Historically and currently such instruction provides Black students with an important sense of identity and worth, and provides space for students to center learning about themselves, rather than from the margins.

Educational leaders of color also use their personal identities and experiences to provide a liberatory education for their students. These educational leaders, "as a result of historical and often shared oppressions, they tend to challenge assumptions about ways in which schools and

universities function, strategize, and operationalize teaching and learning in diverse societies" (Santamaría, 2014, p. 350). That is, who they are positions the educational leaders to influence the work that they do. This is done through critical conversations, academic discourse, leading by example, and servant leadership (Santamaría, 2014). These activisms on behalf of the teachers often provide students with the space and tools to advocate on behalf of their own educational endeavors.

Student Resistance. Another form of resistance can be seen in the creation of safe spaces, especially with the intent to challenge and unpack race and racism (Johnson, 2016). This form of resistance is evident with racially marginalized students who create spaces for themselves within hostile educational environments (Chambers & McCready, 2011). Such "spaces" can be sociospatial, performative, or political/institutional, all of which allow students to resist otherwise oppressive spaces and replace them with supportive ones (Chambers & McCready, 2011). Lewis and McKissic (2010) explain the emotional and mental stability provided to Black students on predominately white campuses who participate in the Black campus community, or Black spaces created on white campuses. Such students will use the "affirmation, understanding, and practical advice of other Black students" as tools of survival in spaces that they would have otherwise struggled in (Lewis & McKissic, 2010, p. 278).

Within schools, students seem to resist whenever their needs aren't met, and instead conform when their needs are met (Mirón & Lauria, 1998), regardless of what those needs might be. For instance, students might use their voice and racial identity to resist white hegemony, or a school power structure that does not conform to the values or realities of Black students (Mirón & Lauria, 1998). Intersectional, student resistance could also be gendered. Such is evident in Black girls' resilience to gendered school policies on style of dress (Evans-Winters, 2011).

"These gender-specific resilient strategies have worked to the advantage of the resilient students" who either survive school polices through resistance or accommodation (Evans-Winters, 2011, p. 133). Expanding on gendered strategies of resistance, Black boys will sometimes create a subculture within the school, in order to challenge the dominant culture of the school (Solomon, 1992). Here, "resistance should be seen as an expression of power relationships" (Solomon, 1992, p. 12), which can be a similar, yet different power struggle from the resistance exhibited by Black girls. It would seem that students often resist because the values or practices of the school do not align with the values of the student.

Educational resistance is not unique to Black experiences though. Many minority and Latinx students resist similar, yet different, and complex oppressions (Santiago, 2013; Santiago, 2016). In the cases of the 1968 East Los Angeles school walkouts and the 1993 UCLA student strikes, Chicana and Chicano students physically resisted inferior educational systems, with an intent to transform their learning environments (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). This form of resistance provided students with the power to control the quality of their education.

Community Resistance. Centering diverse values is something not traditionally practiced in schools. Schools often use cultural capital to "draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of society," to which students from higher social locations are privileged over those of lower social locations (Lareau, 1987, p. 74). Resisting this, students and communities can use their own cultural wealth to counter educational oppressions (Yosso, 2005). Hence, in resisting educational oppressions, communities of color can replace the structural use of white middle class cultural values with the preferences of their own.

Also seem within community resistance, mothers often resist oppressions by advocating on behalf of their children's education. This is helpful for students, because as both an emotional

outlet and a way to decrease stress, Black students rely heavily on family interactions and nurturance (Barnett, 2004). Black parents particularly, are often the motivators who mentor and sacrifice for their students (McGee and Spencer, 2015). The educational and community work of mothering reflects both resistance and activism (Naples, 1992). Mothering is what allows urban mothers to use their commitment and positionality as agency to choose the best education for their students (Cooper, 2005). "Mothering, radically defined, is the glad gifting of one's talents, ideas, intellect, and creativity to the universe without recompense" (Gumbs, Martens, & Williams, 2016, p. xv). Radical mothering is not simply a biological attachment, but rather the action of being deeply involved in investing in others (Gumbs, Martens, & Williams, 2016). Similarly used as a strategy of resisting, "motherwork," is exemplified when a Black mother refused to allow her children to be educated by white teachers who had no real interest or concern for the education of Black students, but was merely teaching as a stepping stone to further their personal careers and to resume build (Cooper, 2007). Simultaneously, the resistance of mothering and motherwork also counter dominant narratives that working class mothers are absent from their children's educational experiences (Cooper, 2007).

Court Cases and Policy Change. Motivated by the inequalities posed in standardized testing and other forms of educational neglect, dissatisfied parents and concerned representatives took their complaints to the courts and to school boards in order to resist oppressive school structures. *Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School Children Et. Al. v. Ann Arbor School District* and the Oakland, California School Board's 1996 Resolution on Ebonics, were very instrumental toward AAL gains in education. These examples were extremely significant because they brought the learning needs of AAL speaking students to the attention of the national public.

The *King* case gained national attention because it was "as much about mislabeling Black children 'intellectually handicapped,' finding them guilty of communication disorders, and failing to teach them to read as it was about 'Black English'" (Smitherman, 2015, p. 14). It was initially complained that the Ann Arbor School District and the state of Michigan had "inaccurately placed the children in learning disability and speech pathology classes; had suspended, disciplined, and repeatedly retained the children at grade level without taking into account their social, economic, and cultural differences; and had failed to overcome language barriers, thus preventing the children from learning to read and learning 'standard English'" (Smitherman, 2015, p. 16). Because AAL was viewed as a learning deficiency, rather than a cultural language, the school did nothing to accommodate cultural differences. Instead of taking a culturally appropriate route of instruction, and attempting to teach the students, the school instead flunked and/or placed students in special education classes, even though they were not special education learners. Eventually, the court found the Ann Arbor Public School in violation of the students' rights to an opportunity for an equal educational. To ensure more culturally appropriate educational practices, the judge ruled for a teacher training project in which the teachers could be educated on cultural and linguistic diversity (Smitherman, 2015, p. 17).

Almost two decades later, a similarly public controversy was raised in Oakland, California. Issued in December 1996, the California School Board's Resolution on Ebonics explains, called for Ebonics to be recognized as a legitimate system of language governed with rules (Smitherman, 2015). the 1996 Oakland Decision wanted to acknowledge Ebonics as an official language so that funding could be allocated to AAL speakers who required proper assessments for "Special Education and Gifted and Talented Education classes," (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 164), and in order "to improve the English language acquisition and

application skills of African-American students" (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 169). The Decision made in Oakland, was in sum, a Decision to provide the necessary resources to African American students in need.

Collegiate Educational Resistance. Resistance to structural inequities and experiences of inequalities does not only happen at the K-12 level. College students have also found ways to be resilient in the face of inequality, and survive in harmful academic spaces. Creating positive coping strategies, Black students often find resourceful ways to combat the negative experiences of college campuses. Such strategies include the creation of groups and interpersonal relationships, and enacting change through sociopolitical movements.

To cope with racilized experiences, Black students frequently create their own sub communities within larger White campuses. The creation of these positive peer group supports strongly influences academic success for Black students (Palmer, Maramba, & Dancy, 2011). It seems as though Black students find each other within majority white spaces, and create communities where they can continue to practice their cultural traditions, largely ignored by the dominant campus community (Feagin, & Sikes, 1995). Resisting, Black students will join Black Greek Lettered Organizations, which have a long history of connecting Black students to society, each other, and in the professional world. This membership "serves to integrate members into the wider campus community by providing them with a network of social support from which to negotiate the predominantly white environment" (McClure, 2006, p. 1051). These students will also purposely house themselves in majority Black dormitories, as "the presence of a reasonable number of 'same-race' peers provides role models and academic, social, and cultural support for these students – critical ingredients for a successful college experience" (Altbach, Lomotey, & Rivers, 2001, pp. 38-39). Hence, these interpersonal relationships resist structures, enhance

social experiences, and encourage academic success.

Additionally, physical resistance is usually found in large scale social movements or protest, and often requires individuals to use their bodies or other objects (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). This is evident in the Black Campus Movement of the 1960s in which Black college students collectively resisted white supremacist education, and instead protested for Black Studies departments around the country (Rogers, 2012). Black Studies was very radical in that it was not given to students, instead, student activism claimed Black studies (Rojas, 2007; Biondi, 2012; Rogers, 2012). Specifically, the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College led a physical strike, demanding a Black controlled Black Studies program that would allow for the student hiring of Black scholars to instruct their courses (Rojas, 2007; Biondi, 2012; Rogers, 2012). "The formation of hundreds of African American Studies programs on college campuses in the late 1960s and early 1970s meant more than a mere opportunity to engage in study about the history and literature of people of African descent; it represented a hard-won success story from the civil rights/Black Power era" (Rooks, 2006, p. 10).

Academic and Academy Resistance. Further combating the dominant narratives of the powerful and oppressive voices, academics and scholars often use the academy as a platform for promoting and encouraging educational resistance. This is evident specifically in the imagining of African American Studies as a field, the implementation of critical race theory in research, and the proposal of African-centered education and philosophies.

Because the study of African people has historically been devalued, emphasizing the study of Black people is a resistance to the dominant narrative. Coining "Africana studies," or the study of the Black race, W. E. B. Du Bois believed that this could be the field of study which "linked the intellectual and practical struggles of African peoples for liberation" (Karenga, 2009,

p. 47). An imagination into fruition, African American Studies programs around the country today serve as spaces for teaching, researching, and studying Black experiences both nationally and internationally, allowing space for both identity formation and restoration. A literal and academic space for resistance, Africana Studies is just one way that members of the academy have used their positions to counter oppressive narratives.

Often used as a means of educational protest (Stovall, 2005), it is argued that CRT is not just a theory, but also a movement. "The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 2). This would mean that critical race theorists are committed to revolutionary writing and knowledge production. "CRT is a theory, but it also operates as a 'weapon in struggle' by providing tools with which to address the concerns of African Americans in education" (Stovall, 2005, p. 198). For academics dedicated to social justice, CRT is used to resist the oppressive worldviews of the dominant society, and to provide voice to marginalized groups of people (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999), around the globe.

Attempting to decolonize the mind (Thiongo, 2005), many Indigenist African scholars have also resisted oppressive advances, and instead preferred developments which favored an education that mirrored the histories, cultures, and traditions of their people. An African-centered perspective establishes "Africa as the primary historical core area or center on which to build the narrative and to undertake the analysis of the experiences of peoples of African descent in Africa itself, Eurasia, the Americas, and elsewhere in the world" (Keto, 2001, p. 18). It combats Eurocentric hegemonies, to understand Africa, by centering African realities. Specific to Ethiopia, an anti-colonial educational would operate as a "reflection of spiritual life, a positive thought, and a synchronization of self with the universal," because "traditionally, spiritual

education has been the center of the Ethiopian universe and affected many aspects of individual, family, community, and institutional life" for Ethiopian people (Faris, 2014, p. 139). Such African philosophies and ethical theories supports unity, community, tradition, and cultural values (Onyewuenyi,1998).

Conclusion and Introduction to Chapter 3

Today, historic remnants continue to plague Black education. "Race and power converge to shape every aspect of life within academic institutions" (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008, p. 13). Historical, social, political, and educational structures continue to work collectively to oppress Black people and education. As evidenced in the multiples ways in which schools can be used as spaces of resistance, these challenges are often peacefully confronted. Interestingly though, much more literature is available on how the school community, rather than the students specifically, resist educational oppressions. This means that resistance is exhorted by school leaders, teachers, parents, and other community affiliates who are deeply invested in the quality education of urban education and the education of their students. From here, I would like to explore specifically the challenges faced by one Baltimore city school, and how educational oppressions are resisted by that school community. I see it as my social responsibility to not only do research, but to also create knowledge that can be used for both social transformation and community uplift, while simultaneously working in direct contact with and for the people.

Chapter 3: Methods

Understanding structures, their negative impact on communities, and how such groups respond to these oppressions requires an in depth analysis. Therefore, a qualitative research design was an appropriate approach for this investigation. Qualitative inquiry provides description, explores direct experience (Preissle, 2006), and allows "participants to explain phenomena on their own terms and in their own meaning" (McDougal III, 2014, p. 100). Essentially, it approaches research with an intent to gain deep insight, and provide rich data voiced through lived experiences. Qualitative inquiry allows the research to be critical "in an effort to not only understand the worldview of the researched, but to assist in changing it in some way" (Constable and Sipe, 1996, p. 154). A critical perspective "increases consciousness about injustices" (Patton, 2002, p. 268), in order to bring public awareness. With this critical qualitative research, I hoped to explore comprehensively, resistance to structural inequities while leaving space for discussions centering solutions.

In order to gain insight on how an East Baltimore community combats educational inequities, a case study was most appropriate. A case study is an "intensive examination of one phenomenon" (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele, 2012, p. 336), that delivers "a detailed description of the particularities and complexities" of one specific group or institution (McDougal III, 2014, p. 268). Appropriately, I have analyzed the resistance methods of Baltimore City Elementary School (BCES). This includes those methods of resistance, as exhibited by teachers, administration, parents, guardians, and all other affiliates and supporters of BCES. In this section I will introduce the participants and co-researchers of the study, review the sampling methods used for this research, discuss the instruments and materials utilized throughout this work, and outline the procedures and the overall research design used for this study.

Site Selection: Baltimore City Elementary School

Research conducted on resistance to structural oppression could essentially be done anywhere where oppressions exist, as populations of people survive such realities in many places throughout the country and around the world on a daily basis. As a purposive sample, I chose the community of Baltimore City Elementary School (BCES)[3] in Baltimore City, Maryland, specifically because of its location and demographics, as well as my access and proximity to the community. Commonly, the city of Baltimore is generalized as a city that lacks resources and money, especially when it comes to education. Unfortunately, BCES is not immune to these realities. Because of this, it was my assumption that BCES, a central city facility, experienced many of the same structural inequities faced by similar urban institutions throughout Baltimore, Maryland. Therefore, I purposely chose BCES because I believe that the people within this school are surviving, and therefore resisting the oppressions that they were likely facing. In addition, I also intentionally chose BCES school because I used to work in the school and with their students. As a former educator, I was able to build relationships with the teachers and leadership of the school, and with the given history and rapport, it was my assumption that the community would welcome me back to conduct research with the educational institution.

Located in East Baltimore, BCES is under the leadership of Principal Aubrey Blackmon and Dean of Students Morgan Abel. BCES employs roughly 17 certified teachers, 52% of whom

[3] This is a pseudonym created for a specific Baltimore City elementary school, in order to protect the identities of the school, faculty, and other participants. I chose the pseudonym Baltimore City Elementary because the experiences of this school are extremely comparable to the realities of many schools around Baltimore, Maryland. Therefore, using this pseudonym I want to bring awareness and highlight the inequities of the entire city school system by continually citing "Baltimore City Elementary School." Further, Baltimore is a very popular urban area, so naming the school after the city refocuses concerns to urban areas around the country, who face similar challenges.

hold advanced certificates (Maryland State Department of Education, 2016a). BCES services 360 students between pre-K and 5th grade (Maryland State Department of Education, 2016b). Of those 360 students, 97% are Black, and 2% are Hispanic/Latinx[4] (Great Schools, 2017). About 96% of BCES's students come from low income families/receive free or reduced lunch, and 23% of the students are identified as students with disabilities (Great Schools, 2017).

Recruitment Plan

To recruit participants from BCES, I contacted the Dean of Students, Mrs. Morgan Abel, both through phone and via email. Over the phone, Mrs. Abel gave me permission to come to BCES and interview some of the staff. She then instructed me to send her an email describing my research, and she would later forward the email to all BCES employees. Through email, I introduced myself to the BCES's faculty, discussed my interest in urban education, detailed the nature of my interviews, invited the educators to come and speak with me, and offered a $10 amazon gift card for all volunteer participants.

Participants

Principal Aubrey Blackmon. Employed as the leader of the elementary school, Mr. Aubrey Blackmon began his journey as both a principal, and principal of BCES six years ago. Principal Blackmon is an African American male, Baltimore native, and proud member of a historically Black Greek lettered and Divine Nine organization. He became involved in urban education after conversations from mentorship with older brothers and sisters from divine nine

[4] I understand that identity, language use, and naming is extremely important, political, and powerful. When it comes to the ethnic identity of students with backgrounds from Spanish speaking Latin American Countries, Baltimore City Public Schools identifies those Latina/o students as "Hispanic." This is also a popular identifier used throughout the state of Maryland. However, there are also areas outside of Maryland where a similar identity is also referred to as Latinx. Therefore, with respect to the multiple terms used, Latinx, Latino/a, and Hispanic will be used interchangeably and synonymously throughout this research.

fraternities and sororities, who convinced him that there is a need for Black men within the educational community. Mr. Blackmon sees it as one of his main duties to provide resources and access to opportunity for his students.

Dean of Students Morgan Abel. Working closely with parents, students, and the community for the past 3 years (as Dean of Students, but longer in other educational positions), Mrs. Morgan Abel has been working with children since she began studying early childhood education in high school. Mrs. Morgan is an African American woman who holds a college degree from a local historically Black university. She began her career at BCES as both a paraeducator and an after school mentor to a team of elementary school girls.

John Murray. A nine-year veteran educator, John Murray has been teaching kindergarten at BCES for almost a decade. Mr. Murray is a white male originally from York, Pa, who received his teaching credentials from an alternative certification program. Since college, John Murray has been working with children, navigating his service through summer programs, boy scouts, and after school programs. He seems very passionate about his teaching career within Urban Education, and prides himself on creating positive relationships with the parents and guardians of his students.

Jessica Palmer. Serving students who have emotional disabilities, Ms. Jessica Palmer is a special educator at BCES. She is also the after school program coordinator, working with the volunteers of the YMCA. Although she has been teaching for A decade, Ms. Palmer has been working at BCES for about 7 years. She is a white woman, recruited from a Michigan job fair, former Baltimore County educator, and is currently working toward becoming a behavioral analyst.

Alexis McKinley. A young white woman from Indiana, Ms. Alexis McKinley is a first grade teacher at BCES. Although she has previously worked as a substitute teacher in another state, she is a first year full-time classroom teacher, both in her career and at BCES. While Ms. McKinley has student taught in southern New York for one year, Baltimore has been a very different environment for her, and therefore many realities of city teaching have been new experiences for Ms. McKinley.

Data Collection

To explore possible answers for my research questions, I will make use of multiple data collection methods. This includes conducting observations, piloting interviews, collecting artifacts, documenting fieldnotes, and writing reflections. All listed are important techniques, possessing the ability to advance my data collection.

Observations. Observational data, can be especially helpful for documenting nonverbal cues, body language, and other communicative gestures that are not provided verbally (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Observations allow for the viewing of interactions, and witnessing happenings within natural environments free of contrived situations. Unfortunately, observations could also be intimidating for participants. Often, people who know that they are being watched, tend to take this into consideration, and therefore perform as if someone is watching. Nonetheless, I was still interested in observing classrooms, community events, school activities, school board meetings, and any spaces where conversations centered educational needs. During each observation I recorded fieldnotes, and wrote reflections of my experiences following site observations.

Interviews. From my experiences working within urban education, many of the teachers and leaders of the schools wear multiple hats. Outside of the job being extremely demanding

work, playing many roles and having multiple job titles and descriptions can be very time consuming. Because of this, I am made a choice to hold short semi-structured interviews, lasting no longer than 40 minutes. With semi-structured interviews "participants are free to respond to these open-ended questions as they wish, and the researcher may probe these questions" (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 1). Semi-structured interviews will allow the interaction to feel more like a conversation, and less of an interview. Further, with the flexibility of a semi structured interview, I was able to ask appropriate follow up questions during our discussions. With this decision, it was my hope that teachers and leaders would be more likely to participate, as the interviews would not have taken up too much of their time.

The goals of my 5 individual interviews were to understand how school leadership resists structural inequities. This included the principal, the dean of students, as well as three teachers and educators. Each interview consisted of four segments, in which each participant: 1.) Introduced themselves, their role within the school, and their motive for working in urban education; 2.) Discussed structural inequities that they have faced within their professional role in urban education; 3.) Explained how they have been able to overcome, and how they have not been able to overcome these challenges; and 4.) Explored how they could attack structural inequities within their school, given they had the unlimited resources to do so. Concluding the interviews, I thanked the participants for their participation with a $10 gift card. This card was provided to the participants at the completion of the interviews, regardless of whether they chose to answer each question or not.

The technology used for this research provided recorded data that I could both review and transcribe. An audio recorder allowed me to capture moments that were used to answer research questions, and later used during presentations of my research. This allowed me to record

moments, such as interviews, that I later transcribed for research. My laptop was useful for note taking, storing digital data, and transcribing data. Technology sometimes fails however. Therefore during my research, I always kept backup pen and pad on hand. The traditional writing utensil and paper allowed me to document occurrences, and in addition support the use of all forms of technology. This permitted me to take notes while recording interviews, or simultaneously writing while collecting audio or visual data digitally.

The materials used throughout this research served as organizers for my data collection process. I prepared three semi-structured interview protocols and scripts that guided all interviews conducted for this research. The scripts were read aloud to each interview participant, in order to make her or him aware of what to expect from our dialogue. The script reminded the participant of their voluntary participation, and made them aware that they were free to decline any questions without penalty. For my own guidance, reflection protocols were used as personal checklists and outlines for my research purposes. They assisted my understanding of the data that I've collected during each field visit, while also forcing me to always connect my research back to my research questions. Field note protocols were helpful for similarly reminding myself to constantly reflect back on my research questions, while simultaneously observing research environments. Essentially, field note protocols encouraged me to describe, in detail, everything that I observed. Examples of all protocols are available in the appendices.

Artifacts. Documents and records, or artifacts, were extremely vital to my data collection. "They are a rich source of information, contextually relevant and grounded in the contexts they represent" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 277). Printed and online resources were read at the site of collection, as well as saved to be later analyzed any time after the observations and/or interviews. I was especially interested in meeting minutes and agendas (both past and

present), flyers, announcements, and all other readily available tangible items. I was able to collect artifacts that helped me to track documented evidence of structural inequities and/or resistance to educational inequities at BCES and throughout Baltimore City Public Schools.

Fieldnotes. Notes that I took while in the field were helpful for recollecting in the moment happenings of observations and interviews, that might be otherwise been forgotten. Fieldnotes "serve the crucial role of connecting researchers and their subjects in the writing of an ethnographic report" (Wolfinger, 2002, p. 92). This is because fieldnotes are written records of all things observed within the field. There were many ways for me to take such fieldnotes. I prefer taking rough notes while in the midst of research, and then revisiting the notes in order to write a comprehensive narrative of my time in the field each visit. It is this process that allows me to make sense of my notes, while also recalling events observed while in the field.

Reflections. Reflective Journaling supported transparency and self-reflection (Ortlipp, 2008), by allowing the self to be a significant tool of the research (Sword, 1999). "The notion of a comprehensive reflective journal to the address the researcher's Self is critical in qualitative work due to the fact that the researcher is the research instrument" (Janesick, 1999, p. 506). Acting as a mechanism for research, reflective journaling provided vivid details of my experiences in the field and working with the participants, while also serving as data that could be further analyzed for qualitative purposes. Reflections were recorded after every encounter in the field.

Data Analysis. After data collection seemed to reach saturation, I began analyzing my data. Looking for reoccurring patterns of resistance, I coded the data into categories based on similarities and trends. What I found was patterns of health and environmental, socioeconomic, and educational resistance. From these patterns, I was able to continue chunking data into even

more specific themes and sets. That is, within health and environmental resistance, commonalities of resistance to lead, air conditioning, and heat arose. Similarly, within the cluster of socioeconomic resistances, I saw patterns of resistance toward student safety, and against traumatic experiences, unemployment, poverty, and social isolation. Last, the educational resistance data exhibited multiple themes of available resources, few qualified workers, and the working relationship between the school and the community. It is with these iterations I was able to then formulate the findings for this research.

Trustworthiness

The quality of this work is very important to me. To assure myself, readers, and participants that this research is valid, reliable, and transferable, I have taken multiple measures to ensure the credibility, dependability, and transferability of this exploration.

Credibility. Credibility makes sure that my own unexplored bias does not seep through the research, and instead allows the data to speak through multiple forms of checked sources (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). The credibility of this study has been confirmed with triangulation and member checking. Triangulation allowed me to constantly compare several sources of reference. In this instance, I have paralleled observations, interviews, and artifacts to confirm that information is true throughout each source and not contradicting. In addition, member checking has allowed me to further confirm that my data and findings are valid. Member checking is when "specific data items can be verified with other respondents or from other sources" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 273). For this measure, I have provided transcripts, notes, and my analyses to adult participants for their confirmation and feedback. They can then use the collected information to determine if it is reflective of their experiences and reality.

Dependability. To make sure that all of my interpretations and data collection for this research is dependable, I have considered multiple avenues to ensure the consistency of this work. "One idea for looking at the reliability of qualitative research is to ensure that the entire process of the research is made 'transparent' to readers of the research" (Sykes, 1991, p. 7). This includes being transparent via an audit trail, and practicing a code-recode strategy (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Dependability for this research has been practiced through descriptive explanations of the research process, and through coding and recoding data.

Transferability. Because my research is exploring, in part, the idea that structures certainly exist, it is imperative that my research also explores the possibility that structures are similarly resisted in regions and areas outside of Johnston Square. Or in other words, "external validity refers to how well conclusions can be generalized to a larger population" (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, p. 33). Checking the transferability of this work, I have compared the conclusions of this research to the research collected in urban areas across the nation. Similar to the structural inequities existing in Maryland, oppressions are being resisted in educational environments throughout the country.

Positionality

In reality researchers have varying personalities (Moser, 2008), see the word from certain perspectives, hold bias (Sword, 1999), and come to the field with their own baggage. All of these factors can impact how the researcher interacts with the participants (Moser, 2008), analyzes data, and determines the ultimate findings of the research (Sword, 1999). Understanding my position within the research is something that I am constantly attempting to understand, deconstruct, and critically reexamine. This includes who I am as a person, how I enter the field, and how I build relationships with participants within the field (Tieken, 2013). With this case

study, I am a researcher who shares some similar marginalized identities to those that I am researching. Comparable to some of the participants of this study, I am a Black woman who has in some ways experienced structural oppression, racism, and marginalization at some point in my educational experiences and everyday life.

Though our shared identities might have been equivalent in some manner, the power between us was certainly not. This research could have placed me in a position where the power between myself, as the researcher, and the participants, or those being researched, was vastly uneven (Merriam, et al., 2010). Taking account of this, "we must understand how we are positioned in relation to others," because "understanding positionality means understanding where you stand with respect to power" (Takacs, 2002, p. 169). Keeping power in mind throughout the duration of my research, I would like to ensure that the participants of this study are able to benefit from this research, just as much, if not more than I am. In other words, I have held myself, the researcher, accountable to the community that I am researching (Milner IV, 2007). To consider this, I have attempted to give as much of a voice to the participants as possible.

Chapter 4: Findings

Going into this research, I had every intention to focus on resistance as power, in order to provide a counter narrative for those experiencing educational inequities. Instead, once I began collecting data, transcribing, and coding, I began to notice trends of interconnected inequities, with no real one solution. So even if there is some resistance to one structural issue, there would be other underlining problems going ignored. This is not because the problems aren't unrecognized, but because there are multiple problems, with limited resources to actually combat such multi-layered structural issues. In other words, educational centers within urban areas are limited in their abilities to combat structural problems, therefore they resist what they can, when they can.

Ultimately I found patterns of provisional resistance. I see provisional resistance as a temporary mechanism to deal with in the moment issues. It is the way marginalized groups resist inequities that they cannot fully solve themselves, given the available resources that they have access to. Provisional resistance allows individuals and groups a means to continue their day to day activities, but does not guarantee any lasting results. While this resistance is empowering and meaningful, it remains a short-term resolution, and fails to create long-term solutions to structural inequities. Provisional resistance is limited in its abilities to actually solve oppressions, and instead works as a Band-Aid to mask or cover the problem as a means of momentary survival. No matter how much a group or individual resists in this manner, the actions will likely never result in a stable solution to structural inequity. This form of resistance does not remove agency or power from those marginalized groups of people, but instead refocuses accountability on outside forces, and calls for the dismantling of structures.

In this section, I hope to unpack some findings of provisional resistance within my research. First outlining some of the structural oppressions facing BCES, Baltimore city education, Baltimore city communities, and urban education in general, I will explain how such realities are detrimental to Black education. Next, discussing how individuals, groups, and communities have confronted these oppressions, I will expand upon how provisional resistance has helped to reduce, but not necessarily solve structural issues faced by educational communities. Then, uncovering some of the underlying problems of structural inequities, I hope to explain how much more than resistance is needed to create solutions for urban educational communities. Last, I will leave space to discuss implications for solutions to larger structural issues in Chapter 5. For better organization, this section will be organized in the following parts: Socio-economic injustices, educational inequalities, and health and environmental Inequities,

Socio-economic Injustices

BCES is located in an area of Baltimore that suffers from high crime and poverty. In fact, a simple google search of the community lead me to a Wikipedia page that described the area as the community in which "the neighborhood contains portions of the Baltimore City Correctional Facilities and its residents are mostly low income African American families. It has been used as a filming location on the HBO drama The Wire" (Johnston Square, Baltimore, 2017)[5]. This is important to note, as many Americans equate The Wire and Baltimore with poverty, crime, and drugs. Although an unfortunate illustration, it is the reality observed by many BCES students.

[5] While Wikipedia is not considered an academic source, it is a website where much of the general public receives their information and create assumptions with this acquired knowledge. Therefore, I thought it important to note because equating the community of BCES with a large prison system, and a popular television show about drug addicts and dealers can paint a larger picture for the dire needs of students within the area.

This is imperative to note, as the social and economic environment that surrounds the community of the school, can often illustrate the experiences faced by the students of the school and community. Some socio-economic inequities provisionally resisted by BCES are the safety of the students, traumatic experiences faced by students, high community unemployment, poverty stricken families, and the social isolation of the community.

Student Safety. Depending on the area, social environment can positively or negatively impact student learning (Crosby, 1999). Because BCES is located in an area with a fairly high crime rate, the students' everyday experiences often include threats to their personal, familial, and communal wellbeing. According to BCES educator Mr. Murray, safety is not just an issue for students, but the safety of children's parents can also affect the student.

> John Murray: The severe violence in the inner city they have to face. I have two students with deceased parents this year. I have half my class lives with, no I take that back, 2/3rds of my class lives with either a guardian or a non-parent. Guardian or single parent, I'm sorry. Guardian or single parent. So very few have, you know the traditional mother/father household. Very few. So that's an issue they face as well.

Stressful experiences, especially the death of a parent, can negatively impact the student and his or her learning (Vera, et. al, 2011). Not only could the student become parentless, but because the student has lost their parent(s) to violent or unsafe situations, they could now feel as if their own safety could be similarly compromised.

For students whose safety is threatened, the school can become a safe space for the children, as it acts as a barrier from outside dangers. In fact, students who are provided with safe environments tend to do better academically (Smith, 2011). Aware of these dynamics, BCES resists by pairing with the YMCA to offer an afterschool program for their students.

Morgan Abel: I feel like the safety of our students. We have a good after school program. That was funded to give them somewhere to go after school. Cause a lot of our children, they come to us. Especially me, "Mrs. Morgan, when I come home, I don't have anything to eat."

For BCES students, proper safety is not just a physical space. It entails engagement, extracurricular activities, homework help, as well as dinner and a snack. This program provides the kids with mentors, tutors, trusted adults, and peers with whom they feel safe and comfortable with. Like the students of BCES, students within high risk areas greatly benefit from access to programs after school. In fact, a Baltimore student who provided a personal testimony at a school board meeting stated that a peer and mentoring program implemented at his school is the reason that he has been safe and successful in school. "If I would've continued without being in this program, I would be probably dead right now," signifies that this student believes his environment to be unsafe, but was able to find safety within the confines of an academic program. Some safety issues however, cannot be guarded by the school or an after school program.

Proving to be a method of provisional resistance, the after school program does have some limitations, as it cannot protect students from all harm. Outside of the program, and outside of school in general, students who live in areas of high crime are still very likely to witness an unfortunate event at some point. For example, while serving as the school's attendance monitor, Mr. Murray became aware of a specific elementary school student who was often absent from school because this student witnessed a murder.

John Murray: Getting back to the severe violence, the deaths in the family occur quite frequently. I had a kid 3 years ago, who didn't come for weeks. I was the attendance

> monitor. Well, apparently he witnessed a murder, and they actually had to put him into witness protection. And he was relocated to North Carolina. So the severe violence, that they see in their communities is a real real issue as well.

Student safety is a serious concern for BCES. Unfortunately however, BCES will not always be able to ensure that their students are not in harm's way. With a chronic absence rate of 36% (Johnston Square Elementary School Profile, 2018), students who are constantly absent, could be due to a safety issue, or another issue out of the student's control.

Student safety is not just an issue for BCES school students. This is a huge concern for students throughout Baltimore City. Attending Baltimore City Public School Board meetings, I was able to gain insight on major safety concerns for students within the district. One of the first meetings I attended, on June 12, 2018, included a brief moment of silent for multiple students who have lost their lives. One high school student, who was described by the school board as "the epitome of a model student and athlete," and "every teacher's and coaches dream," lost his life to a gun shooting near a middle school sports field the city. He was an 11th grade, college bound, student athlete and team captain that seemed to be loved and respected by many (Campbell, 2018). Killed on a Saturday evening, there is no way any after school program, or other school funded activity could have prevented his death. Although this student was a high school student, I thought it important to note as this is the unfortunate reality for some Baltimore City students. If nothing is done to fix socioeconomic injustices within the city, similar deaths will continue.

A major duty of school is to ensure the safety of the students. But keeping students safe can be limited to the school's operating hours. After hours however, such as weekends and evenings, is when the students' safety is out of the hands of the school. These are the times that

students can especially fall victim to traumatic experiences. Although BCES can resist with after school programs and mentoring, this provisional resistance does not change the reality that the students live in areas where their safety is almost always being compromised. This is an unfortunate truth for the Baltimore high school teen who lost his life to a Saturday evening shooting.

Trauma and Violent Experiences Faced by Students. Many students within urban areas are subject to high stress (Zetlin, 1998). Going almost hand in hand with student safety, the trauma that the students encounter from violent experiences can also have a negative impact on academic outcomes. Such realities can force the student to have daily anxiety and fear (Towns, 1996).

> Morgan Abel: My motto is always that you have to educate the heart before you can educate the mind and the brain. So what I started noticing is children in traumatic, having a lot of traumatic experiences, parents being upset and angry. You know and they came to the school like a safe haven. So, that's what put me into the social work part of the school system. Social work is my passion, you know to socially help the community.

Coming to the school for assistance, students and parents who experience trauma outside of the school, can count on BCES as a safe place for support. This is because the school resists traumatic experiences with therapeutic services. Such assistance is not just for the students who are enrolled at the school, but is also provided to the staff, parents, and the surrounding community.

When not provided with coping mechanisms, students often show their pain through anger and/or behavioral issues (Towns, p. 388), which can negatively impact student learning. Programs implemented to prevent reactive behaviors can be extremely helpful for students and

the community alike (Tolan & McKay, 1996). Therefore, provided with the necessary resources, students who experience trauma and violence can still be resilient, successful, and overcome their experiences (Zetlin, 1998). Aware of this, BCES offers services to work with those students who have experienced, and who those who exhibit signs of experiencing trauma.

> Morgan Abel: But if we have children that are angry, or upset, or violent, or disrespectful. And they don't know why. And that's why we brought in therapy in the school. That's a major factor that we are using now. Because a lot of our children need that outlet. To be able to express themselves, to be able to say what's going on. They may be having difficulties at home, and to be able to talk to someone and say hey, "this is what's going on. I don't know how to cope with this. Can you help me with some strategies?" The therapist provides them those coping skills that they need to be successful. And then we work hand in hand with the therapists and our social worker, they give the teachers knowledge so they can be able to effectively support that child.

The therapy allows the student, or adult, an alternative outlet, a safe place to express themselves, and a means to learn helpful ways to deal with their experiences. These services also benefit the student by assisting the teachers, and other school staff, on how to effectively teach and work with students who might be suffering from previous or current traumatic experiences.

Although extremely helpful and necessary, this form of resistance can be viewed as a provisional method of resistance. This is because not much is being done to prevent the actual trauma from happening, therefore the traumatic experiences will continue to occur. Hence, treating the symptoms, not the problems, violence and crime will continue to plague students and the community with traumatic experiences.

> Aubrey Blackmon: I think the state of underlying or unknown depression. It's just normal. It's the trauma they face. Whether its violence in the neighborhoods, drugs in the community. People getting shot at, killed, those types of things. You know, walking past dead bodies on the way to school. That's normal to them. So it's just a constant state of trauma and anger and upsettness without being able to have the vehicles to express that. So the kids have to, you know we've tried to begin to teach them, and we're learning as adults how to better understand students that face this kind of high trauma.

There is no way for the school to prevent the actual problems, which in this case seem to be related to the area's high poverty and lack of opportunity. Because there is no way for the school to completely transform the socio-economic status and dynamic of the community, it is more realistic for BCES to instead provide support systems for students, staff, and community members who encounter such problems.

As discussed previously, preventing the trauma from happening is almost always out of the control of BCES. What they can do however, is provisionally resist by teaching the surviving students how to cope with their experiences. Coping with trauma is something that many students, not just students of BCES, struggle with, so the services are certainty crucial for individuals and families of the community. What is unfortunate though, is that these services are a temporary solution for an ongoing problem that they do not have the resources to combat. Instead of having the resources to transform the socioeconomic milieu, the school instead responds to the problems caused by the environment.

High Unemployment Rates within the Community. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Baltimore City has a 5% rate of unemployment (Baltimore Area Economic Summary, 2019). This number does not include those that are underemployed, as they are working yet still

living at or below the poverty level. This unemployment rate could be due to multiple factors. One issue could be that most employers, even within the minimum wage and service sector jobs, require applicants to at least possess a high school diploma, a general education development (GED), or a the equivalent. Some members of the community of BCES, possibly for structural reasons, do not have possession of either.

> Morgan Abel: So last year, I talked with the parents. A lot of our parents didn't graduate high school. Some of them dropped out of middle school, and you know 10th, 11th grade. And they want a higher education. Okay, we start a GED program, and we actually had the program here in the building. Parents can sign up, $20. And that supplied all their books and everything. And the instructor, 3 days/week. And, out of about 40 parents enrolling, I want to say 15 stayed with the program, and out of the 15, 3 got their GED. And we're going to try and do the same thing next year.

Resisting the high rates of unemployment amongst the BCES community, BCES offers a step toward employment. Partnering with a local community college, BCES has created an extremely affordable program for adults to obtain their GED. This program could help individuals become more marketable while looking for jobs, or allow them to begin application processes for higher education.

Additional to the GED program, BCES also encourages job placement and employment by allowing community members to gain on the job work experience at BCES. Funded by the Major's Office of Employment Development (MOED), the school is able to provide temporary employment to a limited number of individuals seeking work.

> Morgan Abel: Yes, I'm on that as well. So that's with the mayor's office of employment development. We have a contract with MOED. We do a background, once they're cleared

> they get IDs, they come out. I have them actually being classroom assistants, they're actually in the cafeteria being the cafeteria monitor. On the outside of the playground being the recess coach. If I need them in the office, they can help Ms. Porsha, our secretary. They are in the program for 6 months. At the end of the program, we actually hire a person. And we actually hired our person already for next school year. Sometimes they don't get hired, it depends just on the district, and if they have a position. This young lady, she is coming in as an office assistant. You know, to work in the office. She finished high school. She is starting Capella University in the fall, so she wants to take education.

This opportunity is great for about one school year, however it does not promise any real job security. BCES is able to offer what they can to help employ the community, but this method of resistance is provisional in nature, as nothing is being done to combat the structural issues as to why such a large number of the community is unemployed and undereducated. Without treating the structural problem of unemployment, the community will continue to suffer from high rates of under or unemployed residents.

Because BCES is treating the symptoms, not the actual issue, much more is needed to fully support the parents and community of BCES. Here, the principal discusses some possible solutions:

> Aubrey Blackmon: Of course there is always a lack of resources. Not necessarily money, but services, and supports. A lot of these parents need services, they need. Well we started for the first time this year. We started a GED class, because most of our parents aren't high school educated. We have job training programs here, where parents can come and get some work experience. Because they need to work. The problem is

> economic. And so, Imma be nice and say 80% of my parents don't work. . . And most of these parents are living for survival, and so therefore the kids are living for survival.

As Mr. Blackmon explained, the underlying issue revolves around economic inequities, that are ultimately out of the control of BCES. Therefore, any method of resistance exerted on behalf of BCES will likely not be able to produce any long term, generational, or cyclical results.

Provisionally resisting unemployment, the school can offer a certificate program, job training and experience, and temporary employment. However, this does not do much to create long term solutions for preventing high rates of unemployment within the community or the city of Baltimore in general. Unless something is done structurally, to ensure that the adults of the community are career ready, there can be no permanent solution for a matter such as this.

Poverty Stricken Families. Likely linked to the rates of underemployment and unemployment, poverty is a concern within the community of BCES. To fight against poverty BCES offers many services and assistance to its students and families. One of which includes, providing students with their school uniforms, and a school washer and dryer to keep the uniforms clean.

> Morgan Abel: We provide children with uniforms. We have washer machine and Dryer upstairs. We thought about the program because a lot of our children weren't getting their clothes washed. We thought about if we bring in a washer and a dryer, and then we can wash the clothes upstairs for them.

Being able to provide the students with clean clothes is integral for student attendance, self-esteem, and general hygiene. Without the washer and dryer, many students may not come to school because they are unable to acquire clean school clothes otherwise.

One limitation that BCES is constantly facing, is that they are can only be of assistance during school hours and during academic years. To combat this, they have attempted to operate certain services year-round, including during the summer break.

> Morgan Abel: Even during the summer, I'm reaching out to the community, "hey, what do you need from us?" What do you want? What stuff can do differently?" Just so we can build that partnership. We stop the food pantry during the summer. A lot of our parents told me "Mrs. Howard, we didn't have food last summer." So now, I'm going to come in. Don't ask me how Imma get the stuff of the pallet. I haven't figured that out yet, but Imma have my volunteers. Just so they can get food.

Resisting poverty, BCES provides a food pantry, available for all members of the community, regardless of whether they have students at the school or not. Many residents rely on the weekly pantry for groceries for their families. Hence, when BCES was unable to provide the food pantry during previous summers, some families went without.

A major issue that BCES encounters, especially when attempting to serve their students, is that the student population is often changing. Because of the dynamics of the community (high poverty, the neighborhood is not very safe for families, etc), many of the families are constantly moving into, and then quickly moving out of the neighborhood. Some families spend as little as less than a school year living in the area.

> John Murray: Another issue we face here is transientness with our students. We have the highest Transient population in the entire city. So an example of that would be struggling paying rent. Struggling housing vouchers and using that process. I currently have 23 students in my class, but I've had 37 different students on my roll this year. So I've had almost 50% of my class come and go throughout the year. There's no stability then for

these students growing up. That's a big issue they face with stability growing up as well. Just in their home lives.

Because of this, students are very likely to enroll, and then unenroll at BCES once their family leaves the community. With these patterns, it becomes difficult to serve students and families, and to measure whether the services provided are actually beneficial.

This method of resistance is provisional, as BCES is not fully resourced to attack the structures that create poverty with Baltimore City and within the community of BCES. Instead treating the symptoms of poverty, BCES resists by providing services that are likely to help families that require financial assistance. This works so long as the school is open and able to provide services to the community, and as long as the families stay in the community. Unfortunately however, many people within this community come and go, and are not likely to benefit from school resources in the long term.

Social Isolation of the Community. In general, resources and opportunity are very often scarce in inner cities. If there are available resources for children, the resources tend to be inadequate or run down facilities (McLaughlin & Irby, 1994). This is unfair to the children of these neighborhoods, as they deserve access to the same opportunities as students living in areas where there is a high value of opportunity. Isolated from resources and opportunity, the school often becomes the only or the main source of access for students.

Aubrey Blackmon: There's no opportunities in this neighborhood. There's nothing in this neighborhood but the school. And so, if you live right here, there's nothing. There are, for the kids that live in the community a little bit further away, that still come here. There's a, it's called a UA house, Under Armor has a rec center that's further down. My students come from 2 different communities. So I have a community that is right here. That is

> within the immediate block or two, Four blocks of this neighborhood. And then there's another community that comes from about a mile away. They come and they get bussed here. And so, the kids in this direct community, there is nothing. There is nothing here but the school, and so, we try to become a resource for them.

Resisting, BCES becomes a resource for students. Resourced recreational centers and afterschool programs can be "urban sanctuaries," which "transforms their discretionary hours into resources and opportunities for growth and hope" for their kids (McLaughlin & Irby, 1994, p. 301). Outside of the YMCA afterschool program, the school also provides science clubs, and has partnerships with Reading partners and other groups that can bring opportunity to the school's students (Johnston Square Elementary School, 2019).

The school not only brings opportunity to its students, but BCES and its staff work daily to provide resources to the parents. The parents live in the same social isolation as the students, so it can be hard for them to have access to basic resources such as internet and computers, which can connect them to opportunity and resources that may be available outside of their communities. Because most of the teachers have computers and internet access in their classrooms, the teachers can easily allow parents access to school computers for job searching, housing, or any other necessities.

> John Murray: So really those relationships, goes a long way. Almost everything's relationship building. But also being there for them. I've had parents that don't know how to use a computer, that come to my room. But I help them walk them through it to get housing vouchers. I've had parents that come in my room to access email or to send resumes. Like being there for them, to help them with the stuff, and feel like they can trust you. Goes a long way. Because you have to have the parents in order to handle, in

order to do anything. Like everything starts with the parents. So that's the big thing. But also, the longer I go knowing different service providers, and having structures in place, that can give them help if they need it, or at least direct them to the right place to get the help, matters a lot too.

Operating as a resource themselves, compiling resources for parents and families, and/or providing parents access to resources, teachers work to resist the social isolation that the families in the community live in. Although certainly helpful for the community, this resistance does have some limitations. The teachers can only operate as a resource during school hours, and this also does not take away the fact the neighborhood offers no real social mobility or advancement, activities, or productive facilities to its residents.

Driving through the community of BCES, I immediately recognized the way that the community was isolated from more economically prosperous areas of the city. What I saw was blocks of dilapidated and uninhabitable homes, abandoned buildings, inoperable businesses, and what seemed to be homeless people on the streets. This concerned me, as the neighborhood did not seem to offer much of anything to its residents.

Leah Gaines (interviewer): Also, so as I was driving here. Specifically, I think I was coming off of Conway. I noticed Blocks of neighborhoods, of homes, that look like they have been abandoned and boarded up. Is that a norm for students?

Aubrey Blackmon: Yes. Between those houses that are boarded up, there's houses boarded up further down Biddle street. There's boarded up project houses. Yes, that's a normal thing for them to see.

Leah Gaines (interviewer): How do you think that impacts their norm? Meaning, you said that there are limited opportunities in the neighborhood. Also, to be surrounded by homes

that might have been abandoned or neglected. How do you think that might impact students?

Aubrey Blackmon: I mean its normal to them.

This may be the norm for students, but it should not be. The condition of this neighborhood is in complete contrast to many neighborhoods throughout Maryland. Most middle class neighborhoods offer quality facilities, such as libraries with computer access, restaurants with free Wi-Fi, and at the minimum homes that are inhabitable.

BCES has certainly found creative ways to provisionally resist the social isolation of its community. These methods, although beneficial, do not alter the structure or dynamics of the actual community. Because the school has no resources to transform the abandoned buildings and homes, they instead offer to share the resources that they do have with the larger community. Offering internet, computer access, after school programming, and other activities, BCES is able to provide temporary services to support the community in need.

Educational Inequalities

In part due to the lingering effects of socioeconomic inequities, BCES experiences many educational inequalities. This can range from access and building structure, to relationships and rapport. All however, directly or indirectly impact the quality of education provided for the students. Some of the educational Inequities resisted at BCES include resources available, quality staff that are trained to work with BCES students, and the relationships between the school and the home.

The Availability of Resources. In general, BCES, similar to schools in urban areas around the country, started off severely under resourced. This is especially true when it comes to

funds and budgeting for student rewards and extracurricular activities. Such events typically have to be funded by the teachers themselves.

> John Murray: don't get me wrong, we have to spend our own money on a lot of these things. We don't just have money coming out of our ears. Especially these special events, special days. Like, we have lollipop day where the teachers have to go buy lollipops. We have doughnut day where the teachers have to go buy donuts. So it's the little things, But things like that add up. Especially when you want to do activities with your class and do different things. But that's really not even a big deal for me.

Although spending personal funds on student activities doesn't seem to bother Mr. Murray, who often funds special events for his students, this may not be a realistic practice for teachers who cannot afford to spend their money as generously. Overall however, many of the faculty of BCES pride themselves on being able to personally provide resources for their students, when such resources are not available through the school's budget or other methods of funding.

Resisting the limited resources available to their building, Mr. Blackmon became a resource for the school and for the students. Doing so, he found outside grants, volunteers, and other means to provide new paint and technology for the school and the students.

> Aubrey Blackmon: But my overall role is to provide resources and opportunities for the kids. And provide professional development and training for the adults to make the kids' lives better. Is essentially what my role is. That comes down in the different ways. So for here for example, when I started here 6 years ago, there was no internet, there was no after school program, there was no technology. It was no anything. It was just 4 walls, and like a prison. One of the things that I've done over the past couple of years. We've gotten the building painted, we're now one-to-one iPad devices. And put resources and access to these

children. Because they don't have access. They don't leave the 6 blocks of this neighborhood. They don't do anything outside of this neighborhood. So trying to provide access and opportunities is the essential focus, and I feel the primary role of my job.

Provisionally resisting, and going above and beyond for his students, the principal of BCES is able to creatively produce opportunities and resources. Although these changes have been necessary and much needed, Mr. Blackmon is very aware that some changes are totally out of his control. What he can, and has done though, is provide opportunity where he can. This includes bringing technology to the school, creating after-school programs for students, and providing new coats of paint to the walls yearly/every other year.

Interviewing the principal of BCES, I was also able to gain some insight on challenges that the school has faced, overcome, and have unfortunately not overcome yet. Mr. Blackmon was especially helpful with information on monetary resources and funding, or lack thereof.

Aubrey Blackmon: So if I had the resources, the first thing would be air conditioning. Air conditioning, central air units, fix the windows. Fix the water so we won't have to have water bottles and coolers all the time. Those are some of the structural things. If we had air conditioning, working heat systems, I think that would relieve a lot of the stress and pressures and things of that nature for the kids. Some modern furniture, those types of things. That would be helpful. Yes, basic stuff. That you would go into public or private school and see.

Unable to transform the building's infrastructure, Mr. Blackmon knows that the limited resources available to his school cannot make all of the meaningful changes needed for the students. Instead, he has done what he could do, provided the limited resources available. What is still needed though, are long term changes to the infrastructure of the building, some of which have

been discussed throughout the findings of this research. This includes, but is not limited to the installation of central air, operable heating, and changing the water pipes so that the water is not contaminated with high levels of lead.

Although he and the staff of BCES have been able to resist in many ways, their attempts have ultimately been provisional. The principal of BCES has been able to advocate for the school with outside grant money, volunteers, and other tangible means. At the same time though, these opportunities only go so far, as they are limited in their means to produce lasting changes for the building and its students.

The Employment of Qualified Workers. The employment of highly qualified workers in urban schools seems to be a challenge for a number of reasons. As discussed in the previous section, BCES is fairly under resourced when it comes to extra funds for anything additional to even the basic necessities to run a school.

> John Murray: The bigger deal is the human capital element. Okay, you have teachers, well who watches the kids in cafeteria and make sure you have smooth program there? okay you have teachers, well then who are the people that run recess? Okay you have teachers, well if we have meetings we have to go to for IEPs, or testing kids, or doing different things, who watches kids during that time? Okay, we have teachers, but who is running the office so you can run those extra programs and do those extra things? Okay you have teachers, who's pulling the kids out for the extra tutoring services? Okay you have teachers, who are people that you can push in the classroom to provide differentiated instruction for those kids that are lower, that need to make up those giant word gaps, those giant learning gaps. So that's one of our biggest challenges is not just

> having funding for the teachers, but having funding for those things. We have iPads, we have computers. At least here, at our school.

Within many resource limited educational institutions, the staff often wear multiple hats. This means that the educational staff are officially hired as teachers, but often work unofficially as unpaid mentors, counselors, mediators, and parental figures. Even though many teachers carry the responsibilities of multiple job descriptions, many schools remain under staffed. Although many positions are available, schools often do not have the resources to pay for the extra staff members.

Filling the gap with volunteers, BCES allows parent and community members to come into the school and work as unpaid resource staff. Although this can alleviate some of the workload of the teachers, many of the volunteers do not tend to be highly qualified educators.

> John Murray: Our biggest thing is having money for those extra people positions. And not just a parent or not just a volunteer. Having someone qualified to do meaningful activities and meaningful interactions with those students. That is one the biggest resources that we need. That's the biggest shortage that I see. Is having the ability to bring in qualified adults to help bridge all of our learning gaps we have.

Parent volunteers can be of great use to the school, as they often use their cultural wealth to support the school's goals (Christianakis, 2011), as Black culture is enormously valuable and transformative (Yosso, 2005). But often these parents are not trained professionals. So while they are an adult who can assist, the help is not licensed or certified. This is not to say that a certification makes one qualified, as even certified professionals are not always or necessarily highly qualified (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). But there is a problem when urban

Institutions often receive underqualified educators, in comparison to many white and middle class institutions that tend to have more qualified staff.

Further, interviewing BCES teachers provided this research with challenges that are faced within the classroom, which could be school or community related. According to the interviews, what seems to be needed is dedicated instructional and resource staff.

> John Murray: More support staff. That's the biggest thing. Having someone a hundred percent dedicated to attendance. Having someone 100% dedicated to Social Services. Having a hundred percent school psychologist. And having those people be able to, honestly probably be out in the community almost more than in the school. And really attack those problems because that's when you start getting more ownership, and doing better holding the parents accountable. Because you're not able to do as consistently without those parents and those things.

This is not to discredit volunteer, part-time, or any other form of resource instructors. In fact, I was once an underprepared reading specialist at BCES. Hired through a third party nonprofit educational organization, I worked with BCES as a part-time resource instructor to help students k-5 with their reading goals. Initially I was employed because only 16% of the students were reading at or above their reading level. This means that I was there to help work to get the remaining 84% to the reading level of their peer group. Although I was trained to work with, test, and track the students through an online software program, I was certainly never prepared to work with diverse students from varying socioeconomic statuses and life experiences. Understanding the specific needs of Baltimore City students, outside of the reading program should have been emphasized in my training, but it was not. I was also never available at the full length of the school day, as I was only there for roughly 50-75% of the day.

It does not seem unrealistic that an elementary school needs and deserves to have a staff of fully dedicated instructors. The additional hands on deck could alleviate some of the load carried by teachers, and in turn allow them to better serve their students, and add to an overall quality education for the school and the community. Instead, BCES, and many other urban schools, employ teachers to hold multiple positions, and fill in needed areas of help with volunteers and untrained part-time workers.

The Relationship Between the School and the Community. In many educational communities, there is a definite need for community and school engagement. This keeps the families of the students in the loop with the educational needs of their children, while also keeping the school up to date with home experiences that might impact student learning in school. Not having this communication could negatively impact the education of the students.

> John Murray: The biggest challenges we have here a lot of it is the home-school connection. and having enough people resources. Honestly, having enough paper is never really a problem, having the ink's not really a problem, getting the things for the kids isn't a problem.

There could be many reasons why there is a disparity between the communication and relationship between the school and the community. A lot of the research suggests however, that teachers within urban areas are likely to only stay for 2- 5 years (Smith & Smith, 2006). This results in a high turnover rate of inexperienced professionals constantly coming and leaving the classroom (Smith & Smith, 2006). Such dynamics could prevent genuine and long lasting relationships between the school and the students' homes and/or community.

Regardless of the reasoning, positive relationships between the student's home life and school life could encourage positive educational outcomes for both the students and the school.

What would be needed is a relationship that is mutually beneficial and reciprocated by both parties.

> John Murray: So I would say our biggest challenges is establishing meaningful relationships with parents, so that they can give the kids what they need, where they need it. Because I think a lot of parents want to, but they don't understand. And then finding a way to the parents that don't care, to reach them, or give their kids the services they need.

Although Mr. Murray has the point of view of a teacher who has attempted to reach out to parents, there could be a second perspective available. Another issue could be that the staff of the school are not often members of the community, but rather commuters/visitors into the community (Schutz, 2006). Teachers who are often coming from a middle class background, enter into urban and working class areas and generally feel unsafe and believe the communities to be dysfunctional (Smith & Smith, 2006), and therefore often look at the parents of these communities from perspectives of deficit. Such feelings and beliefs could lead some members of the educational community to make negative assumptions about parents. Although this may or may not be the reality of BCES, it is certainly common for many urban schools across the country.

At BCES, there are a few teachers that have been with the school for multiple years. While working within the school, these educators have attempted to create and maintain genuine and lasting relationships with the students' families and support systems. This in turn can create the much needed connections with the community that the school serves.

> John Murray: The biggest way is establishing meaningful relationships with parents and showing them you're honestly here for the kids. I don't mean this as myself, but I mean if you're gonna reach these kids and these families and you have to go above and beyond,

> and show them you're really here for the students. You have to praise the kids for what they're doing well. But then also if they aren't doing as well, you have to share it with their parents as well. You have to be 100% honest with the parents. A lot of people aren't real with the parents. They sugar coat things. Or sometimes I think people sometimes look down on the parents, don't talk to them like they're people, or do it the right way sometimes. You have to create that meaningful relationship with them.

According to an annual survey taken by students, staff, and parents, BCES holds a 75.6% school connectedness index (Johnston Square Elementary School Profile, 2018). "The School Connectedness Index measures the extent to which students and staff feel they belong at the school, that parents feel welcome, that staff and parents work closely to meet students' needs, and that the administration is responsive to parent and staff concerns" (Johnston Square Elementary School Profile, 2018). While a 75.6% index reflects that more than half of the BCES community feels that they are welcomed and that they belong, there is still a significant percentage of individuals who feel that more can be done. Some suggestions to do so, as provided by Mr. Murray include BCES staff proving themselves to be supportive of the students, and always being transparent and honest when it comes to communicating with the parents and families in the students' lives.

A healthy connection between the school and the community is most certainly helpful for educating the whole child. Aware of this need, BCES has made some attempts to support a positive relationship between the school and the community. These attempts have certainly been provisional, as they do not attack structural issues that cause a disconnect between the school and the community. Some aspects to consider for long term communal relationships would include ways to attack structural issues as to why there is a high turnover rate for urban educators, and

why the parents and families do not feel comfortable and accepted within the urban schools that serve their students and their communities.

Health and Environmental Inequities

Not only can exposure to health and environmental inequities be highly racialized, but the willingness to invest resources and money into fixing toxic issues can be dependent on the race and socioeconomic status of the people affected (Hamilton, 1995). Urban areas, with high minority populations, are especially exposed to environmental racism and unhealthy elements, which often go unnoticed by the larger society. Schools within these areas, such as BCES, often resist these inequities, but do not have the resources for long term solutions. Instead, BCES staff and students provisionally resist issues with student lead poisoning, lack of air conditioning, and inoperable heating.

Lead Poisoning of Children. In many older cities across the country, lead poisoning is a serious, incurable, yet preventable concern (Nicholson, Schwirian, & Schwirian, 2010). Toxic to people, lead can be found in food, dust, soil, paint, water, and other sources and materials (Lin-Fu, 1992). In Baltimore City specifically, lead is a continuing problem, especially in the paint and water of older buildings. BCES is not immune to this issue.

> Jessica Palmer: We can't drink out of our water fountains, we're lucky if we have a cold water cooler for the kids to drink out of on a daily basis. I mean those are a lot of the issues that we have. They're just not, the school buildings are not structurally appropriate for a learning environment.

Because lead poisoning is a common occurrence in Baltimore, the city has taken multiple measures to battle this endemic since the 1930s (Fee, 1990). This includes, but is not limited to the Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention Committee in 1956 (Baltimore Finds Lead Poisoning,

1971). This program, which seems to have undergone several name changes since the 50s, "tested new methods in health education, free diagnostic testing, housing inspection, paint labeling, and lead abatement" (Fee, 1990, p. 570). This, and similar programs, have advocated prevention and early testing, though thousands of children continue to be diagnosed with high levels of lead yearly (Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, 2013).

According to the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (2013) any children living in homes built before 1950 are "at-risk" for lead poisoning. Latrobe Homes (Latrobe Homes, 2019b), the public housing apartments where most of BCES' students live, was built in 1941 (Latrobe Homes, 2019a).

> Alexis McKinley: We also have issues with kids that have lead poisoning. And stuff like that from the pipes in the homes that are around us. So we have a lot of those things. . . It causes some mental disabilities, and it causes some behavioral stuff, and some processing issues.

At BCES, students are unable to drink from the school water fountains because the pipes that carry the water are painted with lead paint. The lead from the paint coated pipes contaminates the water, and when consumed, the water can cause lead poisoning to children and adults. This is most dangerous for children, whose bodies and organs are still growing, and can then experience irreversible lifetime damage. "Childhood lead poisoning is a serious problem that can result in brain damage, learning disabilities, poor school performance, and attention and behavioral problems" (Nicholson, Schwirian, & Schwirian, 2010, p. 179). In severe cases, lead poisoning can cause mental retardation (Brown et al., 1994). This preventable illness is something that some BCES students battle with.

BCES is aware that their fountains carry lead contaminated water. To resist this inequity, the city provides the school with portable water jugs. Typically, the water jugs are available in the hallways, at or near the out of service water fountains which are still attached to the school buildings. In BCES specifically, I saw noticed one jug per each of the two floors of the school. These two jugs are what replaced the multiple water fountains throughout the halls, and every classroom of the building. Although the water jugs are helpful, they are certainly not foolproof. These jugs empty quickly, and are limited in supply. Instead of a solution to the lead water problem, the city instead provides a temporary measure for in the moment survival.

> Alexis McKinley: So, off of what you just said we cannot use the drinking fountains in the school, because of lead poisoning. Again, their homes around here have that, so the kids already have that issue. We have water coolers in the hallways but they're not always changed because we can't, a lot of us teachers can't physically put them on, or can't fix them in the middle of a class. We need someone to come and flip them over kind of thing.

Even though the school substitutes drinking fountains with water jugs, the students' homes do not often have an alternative water source. This measure is extremely problematic, as students are probably consuming lead poisoned water outside of school, and on a daily basis. This consumption is likely to lead to high blood lead levels, which can have a negative impact on the child's ability to do well academically, and in their future endeavors.

Because BCES' method of resistance to the lead water is limited, I see this measure as a provisional resistance. It would seem like an equitable solution would be to instead invest in changing the lead painted pipes throughout Baltimore's schools and inner-city housing. BCES

does not have the resources to change the infrastructure of their school or their community, so they suffice with water jugs, even though such efforts are not ideal.

Lack of Air Conditioned Classrooms. In addition to the limited water supply, not having air conditioning for students during Maryland summers does cause problems for the students. Because BCES lacks central air, the teachers often count on teacher purchased fans, and school windows to cool down their classrooms.

> Alexis McKinley: Just getting a drink of water, which then makes issues because we don't have air conditioning, and the kids are hot. We have limited air flow because our windows only open a little.

BCES's windows were manufactured to only crack open partially. This window design does not allow much of any cool air into the classrooms. Without water and air conditioning, the summer months can be extremely uncomfortable for BCES students and staff. This is problematic, as environmental factors, such as classroom air quality, can impact student performance (Lackney, 1997).

Another flawed aspect of BCES's older construction, the school ultimately lacks air conditioning because the building is not technologically equipped to house such a system. The wiring throughout the building is so outdated that it cannot support a centralized air system. Outside of the lack of monetary resources to update the school, the building will just not allow for the proper renovations.

> John Murray: So we were originally on the building plan to get a brand new building here. This school. Then we got bumped back from the third year to the fifth year. Then they sliced off the last two years. So we're just not getting a new building. Now the state has promised, cause we don't have air conditioning in this school, we have it limited in

some rooms, but the majority of the school is not air conditioned. So then the issue was they told us that the whole reason we were to get it, is our wiring is so bad here, that they can't handle the air conditioners. But the state just passed law, that I believe next year every school Baltimore city and Baltimore County need air conditioning. So it remains to be seen, how our school with so bad with our wiring, that they had to build us a new school. But then they wouldn't, but now we're supposed to be in air conditioning. So I'm not really sure how that's gonna happen to play out. Because we were told it was impossible, but the law says we have to have it by next year. So that's a big one.

According to the 21st Century School Building Plan website, there are multiple Baltimore city Public Schools receiving a new building, however, BCES is not one of the listed schools (Baltimore 21st Century Schools, 2019). This, along with multiple teacher statements, leads me to assume that BCES will not be one of the remodeled buildings, even though it is clear that their outdated school inadequately serves its students. This is unfortunate, as I only spent minimal time in the building doing research, but experienced the uncomfortable remnants of not having flowing air throughout the rooms. During my interviews, my body, hair, and clothing were all wet from sweat.

Outside of fans and windows, when the temperature is too hot, the schools do have the authority to close the building until the weather cools down. This decision is typically made by the principal, but can also be made by the school district. This measure is usually the last option, as closing the school is likely to be detrimental to student learning.

Morgan Abel: I would say yes. Like you mentioned, we do have issues with the heating, and with the air. As you can tell right now, there is no air on in here. They gave principals now the option, where you can close your building. But a lot of our children are not on

> grade level, so we closing the buildings, and missing out on a day of education.… This year it hasn't been extremely hot, so we've been fine this school year. Last school year when it was extremely hot, and we will send the children home, and schools will close.

Although standardized and statewide testing do not accurately measure individual student knowledge and academic accomplishment, both forms of examination are used to gauge performance level in Baltimore City, and throughout the state of Maryland in general. The 2017 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) determined that of the 163 third, fourth, and fifth grade BCES students tested, only 7% passed or exceeded the Mathematics expectations, while 3% passed or exceeded the English Language Arts expectations (Johnston Square Elementary School Profile, 2018). So when Mrs. Morgan expresses her concern about closing the school, she is well in her right to consider what is at stake when the school closes for even a day.

Opening windows, making use of teacher purchased fans, and closing the school when it becomes too hot in the school, is BCES' way of resisting a structural inequity. Although this temporary method can negatively impact an already struggling student body performance, these seem to the most reasonable and realistic "solutions," given their limited resources. Because the school is not physically capable of providing central air for its students, and BCES will not be receiving a 21st century makeover, the school remains extremely hot during the summer months.

Inoperable Heating T**hroughout the School**. Additional to issues with cooling, BCES sometimes experiences issues with their heating during the winter months. Although I cannot locate an exact date that the elementary school was built, the larger community housing the school began development in 1903 (Johnston Square, Baltimore, MD, 2019). Therefore, I believe it safe to assume that the Elementary school was built sometime between the early and mid-

1900s. Over a century in age, the older buildings of this community are likely to experience some broken, inoperable, and/or out of service technologies. Although BCES has heating throughout the school, sometimes the furnace does give the school some problems.

> Alexis McKinley: This winter we had to close school a couple days because there was no heat. So we do have those issues. I would say also structurally just like buildings are old, and they've not been maintained a lot. Some of the lockers are pulling out of the walls when the kids go to close them. I don't think there is anything else structurally.

Not having heat can certainly impact classroom learning environments, as the students' basic needs of warmth and comfort are not being met. With this in mind, I think it realistic to assume that any person would struggle to learn in a freezing cold classroom.

Unfortunately similar to their experiences with air conditioning, there is usually no quick, and sustainable fix available for their heating. To address this issue, the students and faculty easily resist by wearing their hats and coats throughout the school day.

> Jessica Palmer: Every day. We have the same issues with the heating and the cooling. We had a couple days this year, where my classroom was freezing cold. To where we were all wearing jackets, and gloves, and scarves.

I imagine that trying to write with gloves on, or sitting in a cold room for the school day might be an uncomfortable learning environment. Not only that, but this form of resistance has provisional limitations. This option assumes that the students own, and come to school with winter appropriate hats, gloves, coats, and clothing. Without these items, students would be exposed to the cold temperatures, even inside the building. A provisional method, coats and hats can only do so much for the students and staff of BCES.

Without actually fixing the heat, the school and the city can only allow the school to operate within limits. On days when the temperature is below levels, or it is unrealistically cold, either the principal or the district will determine it necessary to close the building until the weather becomes more bearable. From the experiences of Ms. McKinley, closing the school however, proves to continue a cycle of problems every academic year.

> Alexis McKinley: I'd say for like heat, heating we just put the coats on, some of the kids had gloves. Then we would cancel school for the day or whatever. Which is why we're going to school through the end of June, which then we don't have air.

After multiple school closings due to the broken heat, the district will require an extended school year to make up the missed days. This means that students will be required to attend school into the summer, when the weather is very likely to be hot, as Maryland is a state that often experiences harsh summers. As discussed previously, BCES does not have air conditioning so similar to the previous academic year, the school will be even more uncomfortable for the students during the summertime, as compared to the cold classrooms that they experience during the winter.

A provisional method of resisting, wearing hats and coats during the school day can temporarily keep the students warm when the building's heat isn't working. Further, the school can close on days that the city experiences extreme and harsh weather, unbearable even with winter clothing on. Neither of these approaches are a realistic solution to the problem however. Instead, such practices merely work around the problem, and further work against the equitable education of BCES students.

Conclusion. Although resistance is empowering and important, I think we would be doing a huge disservice to subjugated groups, such as those educational centers in inner cities, to ignore the necessity for solutions, because the need is noticeably there. When considering the way that BCES has been able to resist oppressions, Ms. Palmer recognizes that some inequities faced are ultimately out of the control of her, and the school's ability.

> Jessica Palmer: I mean, I can't say that I've overcome the challenges because we face them every single day. And I can't change the [unintelligible] (water?), or the school buildings.

Doing what they can for the moment, provisional resistance is important for survival within oppressive circumstances, however it is almost always unsustainable. The school simply does not have the budget to fix the problems faced by its entire community. This is unfortunate, as the staff, students, and school do want and deserve a fully operational building, and other educational, social, and economic equities.

Ultimately, the educational staff of BCES are aware of what they need, however they do not possess the means to acquire all necessities.

> Jessica Palmer: I had the resources that would make sure that every classroom is the proper learning environment when it comes to heating and cooling. I mean luckily enough here, we have the materials that we need all that. It has a lot to just do with the building itself. I wish I could do anything about that, but I don't have millions of dollars to do so.

Although much of the BCES community would be willing to make the changes that could be maintained long term, it is questionable whether or not it is actually their responsibility. What seems to be needed is a combination of the commitment of local and national government and

funds. It would seem that we as a nation, at the bare minimum, owe the students of BCES, and other schools in urban areas around the country, an equitable education and equal access to opportunity.

Chapter 5: Implications and Conclusion

Historically, America has worked to create a structurally inequitable education for Black students (Alexander, 2010). This is evident in the practice of legally forbidding enslaved Africans to be educated (Walker, 1996), Jim Crow separate yet unequal schooling (Kluger, 1975), failed desegregation attempts (Delmont, 2016), and today's resegregated public schooling (McNeal, 2009). Combatting this, Black Americans have often used schools and education as a means of resisting such oppression. Self-help and the double tax allowed Black communities to fund their own education (Anderson, 1988), while legal battles in the courtroom hoped for an equal education (Kluger, 1975). Structural oppression, and resistance to inequities are evident at the national and local level.

In Baltimore specifically, the lingering effects of deindustrialization (Berger, 2007), and white flight (Levine, 2000), have maintained a racially segregated, and inequitable educational system for the city's Black students. The city, which has lost much of its resources, now houses many schools that would be considered unacceptable for students in most middle class areas, yet are somehow seen as acceptable for students within urban cities. Although Baltimore has attempted to revive its local economy with the inner harbor, the Baltimore Convention Center, downtown sports arenas (Levine, 2000), the creation of Horseshoe Casino (Broadwater & Green, 2017), and other tourist attractions, most attempts have not been completely successful in creating impactful revenue for Baltimore City Publics Schools. Because of such failed attempts, the Black students, who are largely served within Baltimore City Schools, reap the consequences. Baltimore City Elementary School (BCES) is just one facility that experiences these realities.

Some of the most significant challenges identified by the BCES community include the school's lead poisoned water, lack of air conditioning, and inoperable heating system. All of which

can negatively impact the student's health or comfortability while in school. In addition, and often interconnected, threats to student safety, traumatic experiences, residential unemployment, neighborhood poverty, and the area's socially isolated location, are also very concerning for the community of BCES. These unmistakable inequities can directly or indirectly impact the student's learning experiences. Further, the lack of available resources, few qualified resource staff, and the relationships between the school and the community are also challenges faced by the school. These issues, faced by the school can linger into the quality of education for the students.

Resisting, BCES found many ways to confront structural issues that they have encountered. Large, portable water jugs, although not sustainable, provide an alternative clean water option for the school. Also, closing the school on days of extreme inclement weather, allows the school to avoid issues with the malfunctioning or nonexistent cooling and heating. Additionally, creating safe spaces within the school, providing the students with coping skills, and offering the entire BCES community counseling services, BCES temporarily resists some socioeconomic inequities faced by the students and their families. Other socioeconomic issues have been resisted with the creation of job opportunities for unemployed residents, school food pantries to supply foodstuff for the community, and resources brought into the school and made available to the community. None of these methods however, are complete solutions.

Although the challenges have been combated, they are ultimately unsustainable and will not create long term solutions for the students, community, or school. The water jugs require the use of cups, which are sometimes but not always, available to students. Closing the schools because the school is unable to control the temperature inside of the school, only means that the students will either miss a day of education, or have to make up the day during the summer when they will continue to face comparable issues. Social services provided by the school are only available

during the school day and academic year, although some of the most crucial times of need are outside of these timeframes. Even more, the job opportunities provided by the school are temporary positions, typically not lasting for longer than an academic year. Although attempts are helpful in the moment, they are not likely permanent solutions, as structural inequities are typically hard approach because there is no one easy answer to these issues. It is evident that more is needed and more is owed to our students within urban educational systems.

Limitations

With this research, I wanted to explore some ways that urban institutions experience and resist inequity. Keeping this goal in mind, this research is not all encompassing and does not consider every challenge faced by urban education or by BCES, neither historical nor contemporarily. Instead, it focuses on specific inequities that have been evident and resisted by one Baltimore City educational community. In addition, every method of resistance has not been unpacked. Instead, I focused on where the data led me. In this case, the information collected led me directly to provisional resistance. I hope this work will continue the conversations around the needs of urban communities and urban schools, so I want to be transparent about where my research is limited and can therefore be expanded upon with future studies.

I conducted many interviews and observations for this research, and in turn was able to collect an abundance of valuable data. Even such, I originally wanted to pilot interviews and focus groups with some of the students of BCES. Initially I wanted to work with the all-girls after school mentoring group that I've had some interactions with in the past. I believed that conducting interviews with these girls would have given me insight on the most important challenges faced by BCES and urban education, from the perspectives of the students themselves. The girls could have given me some perspectives of how, if at all, the program helps

them to conquer structural inequities within and outside of the school. Unfortunately, the group has been dismantled, and no longer exists at the school. Because of this, I was not able to interview the girls group. Although this is something that is limited within this research, it does leave room for future research to consider that avenue of data collection.

Much of this research reflects data collected from school leadership. For this dissertation, I specifically interviewed three teachers, the principal, and the dean of students. Therefore, I was only able to gain the perspective of those who are responsible for the school's quality of education. Although there are certainly benefits to this, there are also some limitations. These are the people that hold a lot of responsibility when it comes to student testing, grades, academic progress, etc. While they do not have much control of what goes on outside of school, they are largely responsible for what goes on inside the school. Keeping this in mind, I did not receive much feedback on where the school leadership might, if at all, be lacking. Because of this, this research could be lacking the insight from students, parents, or other community members who might have dissimilar opinions and experiences, or who might believe that some structural issues could be on account of the school leadership.

This limitation is also on account of my own inability to hold teachers and principals accountable. I did not include any questions in my interviews that specifically asked the educators how they could be a part of the problem. Because of this, I did not encourage anyone to reflect on how they themselves could be actively engaging in oppressive behaviors. I understand that there are no perfect versions of leadership or educators, and all teachers should be held responsible for where they can fall short in their practices and beliefs. Part of this is because I understand that outside structures are also very real, and no matter how great the school instructors are, there will always be issues that their students face, that are totally out of

the control of the teachers. Another issue though could have been my own personal bias. Although I do not know the teachers personally, I do have a professional relationship with the school and the school's leadership. This could have led me to assume that there was little that the teachers and the school wouldn't do for the students, therefore I crafted interview questions around oppressions that are not related to school or teacher doing.

In light of the aforementioned limitations, I did attend many Baltimore City Public School Board meetings with the intention of gaining the insight of the community, parents, and students. This is limited, as I was only able to observe the concerns of those who were actually given the platform and time to approach the board. Those community members and parents who were not able to attend meetings, or were not given time to approach the board with their concerns, went unheard. I did attempt to conduct interviews with people who attended the meetings, however after multiple attempts, communication was ultimately lost as the individuals seemed uninterested in participating. This is not to blame anyone who was contacted, as they had no liability to respond to any of my attempts.

Last, this research is a case study. This means that my focus is on a specific school within a specific area of Baltimore City, Maryland. Although much of what is experienced at BCES, can be generalized to the wider realities of schools within urban education around the country, I did not conduct any interviews or observations in any other city or state. Instead, I connected what I gathered from this research and triangulated it with research already completed in the field, in order to make connections to national trends. In the future however, I would like to expand upon this research by conducting similar case studies in different areas in order to create a larger narrative of educational inequity and community resistance. This would allow me to create a body of work that examines patterns of injustice nationally and possibly internationally.

Implications for Application

Even with the limitations of this study, there are still implications to be made. Interconnected and often overlapping problems, systemic oppression is cyclical and there is no one solution to problems facing urban education. Many issues can be temporarily resisted by local school and community members, but such "solutions" are merely provisional corrections to larger structural problems. Such methods of resistance are ultimately ineffective because provisional resistance treats symptoms of the problems, rather than the actual issues. Sustainable solutions however, are much more complicated.

Critical Race Theory (CRT), although provides us with a perspective to understand how race and inequity are interconnected, does not easily offer many solutions to such structural issues. "While CRT offers us a strong lens to identify institutional racism it does not offer remedies, and instead promotes bleak and pessimistic views of potential change" (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p. 219). This would mean that CRT operates to explain the problems of society, but does not necessarily offer solutions for such complex institutional problems. Simply put, CRT does not have the answers to social and educational injustices, and instead it can only serve to explain that racial injustices do indeed exist. Arguably, this is CRT's greatest weakness.

CRT however, does offer some conversations revolving around suggestions moving forward. Some of the tenets of CRT imply the causes and concerns of inequities. Some of these notions include the social construction of race, racial realism, intersectionality, interest convergence, and storytelling. First, CRT emphasizes that race is socially constructed, and therefore "represents a state of mind," rather than a biological fact (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 19). It is this social construction of race that has been used as a "mechanism for creating hierarchy and an ideology of White supremacy" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 39). Although race is

not "real," racism certainly is. Understanding that racism is real, permanent, and ultimately indestructible is a critical understanding of CRT (Brown & Jackson, 2013).

Further, CRT recognizes that marginalization is not only experienced upon the identities of race and class, but also through the intersection of identities. CRT acknowledges the "need to take account of multiple identities when considering how to restructure the social world" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 20). Specific to this research, CRT allows me to understand how race, class, and other marginalized identities allow Baltimore City students to experience and resist certain oppressions. Last, CRT operates to tell stories of racism and to convey counter-narratives (Brown & Jackson, 2013). This counter-storytelling deconstructs the master narrative, and illustrates "what life looks like from below" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, p. 30). Hence, CRT allows the researcher to understand the dynamics of race and the marginalization of inner city students of color, and simultaneously allowing for the telling of their experiences from a subaltern perspective.

With these tenets, we are able to suggest some implications for solutions. I hope to use the tenets of CRT to provide some discourse that centers possible ways to, at best create solutions for marginalized groups, and at minimum expand upon methods to continue resisting inequities. Further, the data for this work can imply many assumptions for policies and decisions, classroom teaching and learning, and existing philosophies. Here, I will discuss some implications for research, practice, and theory.

Implications for Research. Black Studies is a liberatory field with an agenda of social justice and community service (Rogers, 2010). It seeks to be descriptive, prescriptive, and corrective (Marable, 2000). As such, this research vividly describes the lived experiences of the BCES community, in order to prescribe the injustices faced, with hopes of correcting the wrong

doings experienced by BCES. Although provisionally resisted, the health and environmental inequities, socio-economic injustices, and educational inequalities encountered by BCES continue to go unsolved. Because all of these issues either directly or indirectly impact educational outcomes for Black students, solutions for this group is imperative. What this research tells ultimately tells us is that much more is needed for urban education.

First, unhealthy environments are not likely to breed successful students. This is especially true if the environment can physically make students sick and/or uncomfortable. Educational environments that are conducive to lead poisoning, and extremely hot or extremely cold temperatures require some form of intervention. When it comes to health and environmental Inequities, what BCES, and many other urban educational facilities, require is funding for either new buildings, or enough financial resources to change their lead carrying water pipes, install central air conditioning, and fix/replace their outdated broilers.

Additionally, many of the socioeconomic injustices experiences by BCES, and other urban centers would require mass structural changes. Not just the schools, but also the communities supporting the schools must be safe spaces for student learning (Smith, 2011). Also, to assist with behavioral, emotional, or other issues stemming from traumatic and violent experiences, students must be taught how to cope and redirect (Towns, 1996). Even more productive, schools and communities could implement programs to prevent the behaviors from happening at all (Tolan & McKay, 1996). Last, jobs that provide livable wages would need to be brought back to urban areas in order to create structural solutions for unemployment and poverty. With such opportunities, companies would find incentives for investing resources and businesses within these areas, which would in turn discourage the social isolation of the marginalized communities.

Finally, underserved students deserve an equitable education, regardless of neighborhood, socioeconomic status, or race. Unfortunately, the educational conditions of schools similar to BCES, prove that this is not yet a reality for many Black students. Although this is not limited to equitable resources, quality instructors, and the significant and meaningful relationships between their school and their community or home, these are some minimal necessities required in urban schools. All of these solutions however, require monetary resources. Without money, it is not likely that any lasting structural changes can be made.

Implications for Theory and Practice. Much the work offered here is able to add to an existing body of CRT, both in theory and practice. Building on the research that is already available, this paper recognizes that resistance is a much needed and necessary method of survival. Ultimately however, provisional resistance is an unsustainable tactic for marginalized groups. Therefore, this research calls for a dismantling of structures in order to provide an equitable education for BCES students. Engaging with CRT, this research challenges CRT's ability to practice solutions for underserved populations through racial realism and interest convergence.

CRT emphasizes that not only has race been socially constructed, but racial realism, and the meaning that we apply to race is also real. In addition, intersectional identities such as race and class further impact the way that individuals and groups experience life. Understanding this and observing the commonalities of the educational experiences of many minority students from poor or working class families, it is realistic to imply that these issues are unique to students of color who are from areas of low socioeconomic status. Placing the race and class at the center of the understanding of health and environmental issues, could help us to move conversations toward solutions for impacted communities. This is extremely relevant, as it is obvious that if

BCES was a majority white serving institution, or located within a middle class community, they would likely never experience any of the inequities that they face today, especially when it comes to the lead-filled water.

According to CRT, it is only likely for minorities to receive equity, if the majority somehow benefits from the equity. The interest convergence principle states that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites" (Bell, 1980, p. 523). This means that the dominant group is often interested in the betterment of themselves, and will entertain racial justice only when they have something to gain. When it comes to educating Black students, everyone can benefit and positively gain from it. Therefore, creating healthy environments in which Black students can academically flourish, seems to be enough of a reason for urban students to obtain the local and federal finances required for new and improved buildings.

Specifically when it comes to lead poisoning, students with the lifelong irreversible effects of the condition are not as likely to be productive citizens, as compared to their unaffected counterparts. "In addition to previously known physical and behavioral problems, recent research has shown links between childhood lead poisoning and violence, crime, and gang activities" (Nicholson, Schwirian, & Schwirian, 2010, p. 179). This would mean that students who ingest high levels of lead could be more of a burden to society, rather than an asset. Preventing students from acquiring high levels of lead in their blood would therefore benefit all of society, both the students who need the funding for their education, as well as the dominant society who would benefit from a more productive citizen, who is ideally providing positive attributes to the larger society.

I want to make it clear however, that I do not believe that Black students should have to prove that their educational needs are beneficial to white people in order to receive the necessary funding for their education. Although equity and environmental justice should be considered in urban planning (Collin, Beatley, & Harris, 1995), I do understand that CRT's interest convergence requires an explanation that a solution to injustice must somehow benefit the dominant culture, just as much, if not more than it benefits the marginalized group. Therefore, if America is not willing to do what is morally right, it would seem that they could be interested in what makes financial, social, and political sense. This would mean, that in order to produce career ready, educationally sound students, they must first be provided with a healthy environment to learn in. To make this a reality, money would first have to be invested into urban education.

Outside of money, CRT does offer some insight. In cases where the community does not have access to large amounts of money or resources, they can and have used their power of voice to resist injustice. Counter-story telling allows marginalized groups to provide alternative narratives in order to advocate for their own educational justice. While dominant stories often paint Baltimore as a place unworthy of investment, this work has created space for BCES to advocate on behalf of their students, and for an equitable education. Throughout the findings of this research, multiple BCES leaders explained that due to structural issues, their school is under resourced and full of inequities. This contrasts a dominant narrative that attempts to paint Baltimore City education as a problem of the students, rather than a problem of

Resistance can be cultural, symbolic, individual, and small scale (Weitz, 2001). Although resistance is not likely to provide solutions that require monetary investments, what it can do is provide agency to marginalized groups, and temporarily alter the power dynamics that place the

minority group as subjugated, and the dominant group as authoritative. Resisting with counterstories allows BCES to change the narrative, and tell their own stories from their perspectives and with their needs in mind.

Similar to the solutions for other structural issues, funding would be needed to improve educational inequities. Money is needed to provide students with educational resources. Also, larger budgets are required to hire highly qualified instructional staff and trained resource workers, who are committed to the students and their needs. Further, schools need to be able to make meaningful school-to-community engagements (Schultz, 2006), and financial resources are required to invest in creating mechanisms for such plans. Without money, it is very unlikely to see long term solutions to any educational inequities faced by urban education.

Considering that Black education has historically experienced inequities, schools that serve Black students have, and continue to, be a site of resistance. Reflecting on CRT for implications for solutions and/or resistance, transformational resistance could be a reality for BCES' educational inequities. Both liberatory and demonstrative of resilience, transformational resistance is a race conscious framework that seeks to better understand "resistance strategies that attempt to counteract the conditions and results of ineffective educational practices" (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 310). Advocating on their own behalf, students and their support systems could transform the way that their education is provided to them. Similar to other students who successfully encouraged change, BCES could resist in ways that allow them to demand the resources that are needed for their education.

Directions for Future Research

This dissertation is but a segment of the needed discussion revolving around inequities in education. Much more research is needed to continue to work towards solutions for marginalized

students. Given the limitations of this study, there are many opportunities for future works to continue, expand upon, or strengthen the current findings offered through this submission. Some direction for future studies includes incorporating multiple perspectives, engaging other marginalized populations, explore case studies in multiple cities, and/or consider quantitative approaches.

First, future research must involve varying perspectives from participants. This can be done by additionally interviewing students, parents, and other community members outside of just school leadership. These populations could provide discussions around if structures within the school's control similarly operate to oppress students, just as outside structures do. If this were to be the case, future research could also consider how school officials could also work to resist their own participation in structural injustices. This rounded discussion of inequities could lead to solutions for not just structures that are out of the school's control, but also solutions for structures that the school does have some power over.

Additionally, I see it important to consider the education of similarly marginalized groups, but geographically located outside the confines of urban education. What I mean by this is that I have found that there are many rural educational systems that serve majority Black and working class and poor communities that similarly experience health and environmental, socioeconomic, and educational injustices. Just as Black students from a Baltimore City elementary school face lead poisoned water, poverty stricken residential neighborhoods, and limited available resources, there are also Black students in rural Georgia who have comparable realities. The research provided does not aim to exclude or ignore such students, but instead realizes that inequity is definitely there. It is my hope that future studies can engage this

demographic, as well as the students with similar experiences in other areas outside of urban education.

Even within the study of urban education, future research could collect data from multiple cities, school districts, states, or schools. The qualitative case study provided, largely focuses on the inequities and resistances of one Baltimore City school. It would be helpful to include and combine the similar methods of varying populations, in order to make a stronger argument that the needs for urban education are similar nationally. This could be done with multiple case studies, and/or a quantitative study that considers nationally, or internationally collected data.

Conclusion

I understand that my views can be interpreted as pessimistic at times, especially when it comes to realistic solutions for the challenges faced by urban education, Black students, students of color, educational facilities within areas that serve students from families of low socioeconomic status, and other subjugated groups. However, it is hard for me to imagine real solutions to all structural issues faced by marginalized groups. There is a popular saying of "If it aint one thing, it's another," and this seems to be the reality for urban education. Even if one structural issue is fixed, there will be a host of additional issues that still need to be addressed. This is why provisional resistance seems to be one realistic way for BCES to deal with challenges that they face.

Some large structural issues that negatively impact urban education include: socioeconomic inequities, social inequities, and educational inequities. This is not to assume that these issues are all encompassing problems, but are instead major structural issues that are evident throughout my research. Although this research focuses on the conditions of BCES, the experiences of inequities discussed throughout are evident in many urban areas across the

country. Systemic inequalities within education can be seen in New Orleans (Frazier-Anderson, 2008), Chicago (Lipman, 2003), Detroit (Sugrue, 1996), Los Angeles (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001), and other public schools in centrally located cities. Likewise, the provisional resistance exhibited by BCES, is similarly practiced by under resourced schools and communities who use what little they have to temporarily survive their environments.

Although resistance to structures can be empowering for marginalized groups, most resistance methods of these groups are limited to temporary repairs instead of long term solutions for structural inequities. CRT only affords opportunities to understand class and "race as both the cause and context for" injustice (Lynn & Dixson, 2013, p. 1), but urban students deserve solutions to the structural inequities that they experience. Ultimately, "if the urban schools are to offer their population of minority children access to the American dream, a powerful political force must move into the educational arena to represent their cause. The alternative is complete failure and the destruction of urban schools" (Crosby, 1999, p. 303). Therefore, we owe Black and urban students a historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006). These debts should be paid back to our students as a means to make up for the centuries of educational inequities that they have been subjected to. We should measure how much is being invested into our students and we should create opportunities for students who need it most (Chambers, 2009). I hope that this writing can add to an already existing discussion around solutions for our students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Recruitment Email
Sent on 5/30/2018 and 6/4/2018

Hello,

My name is Leah Gaines and I am a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University working on dissertation research revolving around structural inequalities within urban education and resistance to those inequities. Ultimately, it is my hope that this work will create conversations around the needs of students, and specifically encourage solutions to problems faced by urban education.

To help with my project, I am very interested in interviewing some of JSE's teachers, staff, and faculty members. All participants will receive a $10 Amazon or Starbucks gift card (your choice).

If you are willing to participate, I will be at JSE on Tuesday, June 5th, and Wednesday June 6th throughout the workday in either the parent room or the school library. You can stop by at any time. The interview is very informal, and I am simply hoping to discuss your experiences, perspectives, and thoughts. I appreciate your time!

Thank you for your consideration,
Leah Gaines
Doctoral Candidate
African American and African Studies
Michigan State University

APPENDIX B:

OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES OF SCHOOL

Observational Field Notes of School

Observation points/Questions	Drawing of Observation and Notes
What does the outside/structure of the building look like? How could these outside structures possibly be a challenge for learning? Are any steps being taken to correct or resist?	Sketch of environment
What does the inside of the school look like? How could the inside of the school pose as a challenge for student learning? Are any steps being taken to correct or resist?	
How operable are the facilities within the building? Do any of the facilities pose a challenge for student learning?	Notes:

Are any steps being taken to correct or resist?	

APPENDIX C:

REFLECTION PROTOCOL

Reflection Protocol

General Reflection/Reflection of Research Questions
General Reflection:
Reflecting on challenges faced by JSE, were any evident today? Reflecting on educational resistance, were any forms of resistance evident today?

APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Protocol Script, Principal

Notes to self:

- Turn on audio recorder before beginning
- Allow participant to give consent before continuing interview

Good afternoon (morning),

My name is Leah Gaines and I am currently conducting research on the resistance to inequities within educational communities. I am particularly interested in inequities evident within Baltimore City education, and especially those inequities faced by the community of Johnston Square Elementary School (JSE). To facilitate the interview, I have created an interview protocol that contains 4 major segments:

1. First, I will ask you to tell me a bit about yourself and your role as principal of JSE.
2. Next, I will ask you to reflect on some of the challenges you face while doing your job.
3. Then, I will ask you to elaborate on how, if at all you have overcome those challenges.
4. Last, I will ask you to tell me what could be done for your school if you had the resources to do so.

In all, our interview will last approximately 30-40 mins. As discussed previously, you do have the opportunity to create or be given a pseudonym in order to protect your identity. All information collected will be used for my research only, and if you choose to use a pseudonym, all information will be used under that pseudonym. It is important for me to note that your participation with this interview is totally voluntary, therefore you are able to stop at any time. You can refuse to answer any question at any time, or skip questions that you do not feel comfortable responding to.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. Can you verbally confirm that you allow me permission to record this discussion?

Also, if at any time you would like me to stop recording, please let me know and I will gladly pause the device. Do you have any questions for me?

Okay, thank you. We will begin this interview.

Interview Protocol, Principal

In this first segment of the interview, I will be asking you several questions about yourself.

1.) Mr. B, can you tell me about your role as principal of Johnston Square Elementary School?

2.) How long have you been a both a principal, and a principal at Johnston Square?

3.) What brought you to your profession, specifically working within urban education?

Thank you for your responses. This brings us to the second segment, which is concerned with challenges within urban education.

1.) First let me ask you to talk about some of the most significant challenges you face in your job.

Thank you for that response. I now want to ask some specific questions about the challenges you face. Specifically, I am interested in your thoughts about challenges that are structural in nature. Let me give a brief explanation. Structural inequities can be caused by multiple systems that operate to perpetuate racism, discrimination, and oppression. They can marginalize, oppress, and discriminate against students of color. Structural inequities are usually created by factors outside of the schools, but can negatively affect the learning environments within schools. For example, in Flint Michigan the students of a largely Black city are faced with lead in their drinking water. Also, in urban schools across the country, many facilities lack funding, air conditioning in the summer months, and heat during the winter months. Not having drinkable water, or proper cooling or heating units within the school are structural inequities, which are not often seen within majority white schools, but often seen in majority Black schools. Such structural inequities faced by Black students can negatively impact their learning.

2.) Considering your work, have you experienced any structural challenges while doing your job?

Okay, thank you. We are now on to the third segment.

1.) You mentioned multiple structural challenges that you have experienced within your position in urban education. Have you been able to overcome any of those challenges?
2.) How were you able to overcome those challenges?/Why have you not been able to overcome those challenges?

This is the fourth and final segment of the interview.

1. If you had the resources to do so, what else could be done to combat structural inequities within your school?

Thank you, this concludes our discussion. I appreciate you taking your time to participate in this interview. As a small token of my gratitude, I would like to offer you a $10 gift card. Again, thank you for your time.

Interview Protocol Script, Dean of Students

Notes to self:

- Turn on audio recorder before beginning
- Allow participant to give consent before continuing interview

Good afternoon (morning),

My name is Leah Gaines and I am currently conducting research on the resistance to inequities within educational communities. I am particularly interested in inequities evident within Baltimore City education, and especially those inequities faced by the community of Johnston Square Elementary School (JSE). To facilitate the interview, I have created an interview protocol that contains 4 major segments:

1.) First, I will ask you to tell me a bit about yourself and your role as Dean of students here at JSE.
2.) Next, I will ask you to reflect on some of the challenges you face while doing your job.
3.) Last, I will ask you to elaborate on how, if at all you have overcome those challenges.
4.) Last, I will ask you to tell me what could be done for your school if you had the resources to do so.

In all, our interview will last approximately 30-40 mins. As discussed previously, you do have the opportunity to create or be given a pseudonym in order to protect your identity. All information collected will be used for my research only, and if you choose to use a pseudonym, all information will be used under that pseudonym. It is important for me to note that your participation with this interview is totally voluntary, therefore you are able to stop at any time. You can refuse to answer any question at any time, or skip questions that you do not feel comfortable responding to.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. Can you verbally confirm that you allow me permission to record this discussion?

Also, if at any time you would like me to stop recording, please let me know and I will gladly pause the device. Do you have any questions for me?

Okay, thank you. We will begin this interview.

Interview Protocol, Dean of Students

In this first segment of the interview, I will be asking you several questions about yourself.

1.) Mrs. T, can you tell me about your role as dean of students of Johnston Square Elementary School?

2.) How long have you been the Dean of Students at Johnston Square?

3.) What brought you to your profession, specifically working within urban education?

Thank you for your responses. This brings us to the second segment, which is concerned with challenges within urban education.

1) First let me ask you to talk about some of the most significant challenges you face in your job.

Thank you for that response. I now want to ask some specific questions about the challenges you face. Specifically, I am interested in your thoughts about challenges that are structural in nature. Let me give a brief explanation. Structural inequities can be caused by multiple systems that operate to perpetuate racism, discrimination, and oppression. They can marginalize, oppress, and discriminate against students of color. Structural inequities are usually created by factors outside of the schools, but can negatively affect the learning environments within schools. For example, in Flint Michigan the students of a largely Black city are faced with lead in their drinking water. Also, in urban schools across the country, many facilities lack funding, air conditioning in the summer months, and heat during the winter months. Not having drinkable water, or proper cooling or heating units within the school are structural inequities, which are not often seen within majority white schools, but often seen in majority Black schools. Such structural inequities faced by Black students can negatively impact their learning.

2) Considering your work, have you experienced any structural challenges while doing your job?

Okay, thank you. We are now on to the third segment.

1.) You mentioned multiple structural challenges that you have experienced within your position in urban education. Have you been able to overcome any of those challenges?
2.) How were you able to overcome those challenges?/Why have you not been able to overcome those challenges?

This is the fourth and final segment of the interview.

1. If you had the resources to do so, what else could be done to combat structural inequities within your school?

Thank you, this concludes our discussion. I appreciate you taking your time to participate in this interview. As a small token of my gratitude, I would like to offer you a $10 gift card. Again, thank you for your time.

Interview Protocol Script, Teacher/Paraeducator/Educator

Notes to self:
- Turn on audio recorder before beginning
- Allow participant to give consent before continuing interview

Good afternoon (morning),

My name is Leah Gaines and I am currently conducting research on the resistance to inequities within educational communities. I am particularly interested in inequities evident within Baltimore City education, and especially those inequities faced by the community of Johnston Square Elementary School (JSE). To facilitate the interview, I have created an interview protocol that contains 4 major segments:

1.) First, I will ask you to tell me a bit about yourself and your role as an educator at JSE.
2.) Next, I will ask you to reflect on some of the challenges you face while doing our job.
3.) Last, I will ask you to elaborate on how, if at all you have overcome those challenges.
4.) Last, I will ask you to tell me what could be done for your school if you had the resources to do so.

In all, our interview will last approximately 30-40 mins. As discussed previously, you do have the opportunity to create or be given a pseudonym in order to protect your identity. All information collected will be used for my research only, and if you choose to use a pseudonym, all information will be used under that pseudonym. It is important for me to note that your participation with this interview is totally voluntary, therefore you are able to stop at any time. You can refuse to answer any question at any time, or skip questions that you do not feel comfortable responding to.

With your permission, I would like to audio record this interview. Can you verbally confirm that you allow me permission to record this discussion?

Also, if at any time you would like me to stop recording, please let me know and I will gladly pause the device. Do you have any questions for me?

Okay, thank you. We will begin this interview.

Interview Protocol, Teacher

In this first segment of the interview, I will be asking you several questions about yourself.

1.) Can you tell me about your role as an educator of Johnston Square Elementary School?

2.) How long have you been a both an educator, and an educator at Johnston Square?

3.) What brought you to your profession, specifically working within urban education?

Thank you for your responses. This brings us to the second segment, which is concerned with challenges within urban education.

1) First let me ask you to talk about some of the most significant challenges you face in your job.

Thank you for that response. I now want to ask some specific questions about the challenges you face. Specifically, I am interested in your thoughts about challenges that are structural in nature. Let me give a brief explanation. Structural inequities can be caused by multiple systems that operate to perpetuate racism, discrimination, and oppression. They can marginalize, oppress, and discriminate against students of color. Structural inequities are usually created by factors outside of the schools, but can negatively affect the learning environments within schools. For example, in Flint Michigan the students of a largely Black city are faced with lead in their drinking water. Also, in urban schools across the country, many facilities lack funding, air conditioning in the summer months, and heat during the winter months. Not having drinkable water, or proper cooling or heating units within the school are structural inequities, which are not often seen within majority white schools, but often seen in majority Black schools. Such structural inequities faced by Black students can negatively impact their learning.

2) Considering your work, have you experienced any structural challenges while doing your job?

Okay, thank you. We are now on to the third segment.

1.) You mentioned multiple structural challenges that you have experienced within your position in urban education. Have you been able to overcome any of those challenges?
2.) How were you able to overcome those challenges?/Why have you not been able to overcome those challenges?

This is the fourth and final segment of the interview.

1. If you had the resources to do so, what else could be done to combat structural inequities within your school?

Thank you, this concludes our discussion. I appreciate you taking your time to participate in this interview. As a small token of my gratitude, I would like to offer you a $10 gift card. Again, thank you for your time.

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