

ADDRESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN MARGINALIZED BIPOC POPULATIONS

A thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of  
Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology

By

Elizabeth Harley Bryan

Director: Dr. Lori Unruh  
Professor of Psychology  
Psychology Department

Committee Members: Dr. Ethan Schilling, Psychology  
Dr. Adrienne Stuckey, School of Teaching and Learning

February 2022

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my mentor, Dr. Lori Unruh, for your unwavering support and encouragement. Your sincerity, extensive experience, and knowledge have deeply inspired me. I cannot thank you enough for all your time, edits, and collaboration as I have navigated the School Psychology program and completed my research. I have gained so much during this process, and I hope to maintain the curiosity and dedication that you have fostered and supported in me as I continue to pursue my passion for serving the children and teachers in the Asheville Community.

In addition to Dr. Unruh, I want to thank my thesis committee in its entirety: Dr. Ethan Schilling and Dr. Adrienne Stuckey. Your insightful comments, challenging questions, and helpful suggestions have continued to facilitate my interest in and understanding of education, psychology, and systems change to better support and serve the minoritized BIPOC population.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Community and Home Factors Connected to the Achievement Gap .....	3
Socioeconomic Status (SES) .....	4
Race/Ethnicity, and Segregation .....	6
School Factors Connected to the Achievement Gap .....	7
Teacher Bias .....	7
Lack of Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Teaching .....	9
School Climate and Student Engagement .....	10
Addressing the Achievement Gap .....	12
Teacher Training .....	12
Culturally Relevant Curriculum .....	14
Improving School Climate .....	16
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	18
HYPOTHESIS .....	19
METHODS .....	22
Participants .....	22
Materials .....	23
Teacher Surveys .....	23
Student survey .....	24
Procedures .....	24
ANALYSIS .....	28
Teacher Prior Knowledge .....	28
Research Question 1 .....	29
Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP) Beliefs .....	30
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Beliefs .....	31
Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) Beliefs .....	32
Research Question 2 .....	32
Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP) Comfort .....	33
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Confidence .....	33
Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) Confidence .....	34
Research Question 3 .....	35
Types of Engagement .....	36
Examples of Engagement .....	37
Research Question 4 .....	38
Types of Academic Gains .....	39
Examples of Academic Gains .....	40
Research Question 5 .....	41
Research Question 6 .....	42
Research Question 7 .....	43
Perceived Academic Ease and Ability in Reading .....	43
Perceived Academic Ease and Ability in Math .....	44

Research Questions 8 and 9 .....	45
Data Cleaning Rules .....	45
STAR Early Literacy Results .....	47
STAR Reading Results .....	47
STAR Math Results .....	48
DISCUSSION .....	50
Limitations and Future Directions .....	50
Teacher Growth .....	51
Teacher Perceptions of Student Engagement and Academic Growth .....	52
Student Participation, Self-Concept, and Academic Growth .....	53
Student Participation .....	53
Student Self-Concept .....	54
Student Academic Growth .....	54
Final Conclusions .....	55
REFERENES .....	56
APPENDIX A- Teacher Training Survey .....	60
APPENDIX B- Teacher Survey on Student Engagement and Academic Achievement .....	61
APPENDIX C- Student Survey on Engagement and Academic Achievement .....	62

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Teacher Ratings of Identity Importance .....	31
Figure 2 Teacher ratings of importance by category pre- and post-program .....	32
Figure 3 Teacher Rating of Comfort and Confidence by Category Pre- and Post-program .....	35
Figure 4 Teacher Ratings of Perceived Student Engagement .....	36
Figure 5 Engagement Across Practices .....	37
Figure 6 Teacher Ratings of Perceived Academic Gains .....	39
Figure 7 Teacher Perceived Gains in Math and Reading by Week .....	40
Figure 8 Student Ratings of Participation Across Practices .....	42
Figure 9 Student Ratings of Academic Ease and Academic Ability .....	44
Figure 10 Clean STAR Assessment Tests .....	46
Figure 11 STAR Assessment Tests Removed .....	46
Figure 12 STAR Assessment Average Weeks of Growth .....	48
Figure 13 Average Weeks of Growth for Students Below Grade Level .....	49

## ABSTRACT

### ADDRESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN MARGANILIZED BIPOC POPULATIONS

Elizabeth Harley Bryan, B.A.

Western Carolina University (February, 2022)

Director: Lori Unruh

There is a significant achievement gap between marginalized minority students and their white peers. The achievement gap is well-documented, and it is theorized that both home and school factors contribute to the problem. This study aimed to see if targeted teacher training in Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and culturally responsive literature has positive outcomes on student engagement and academic achievement in a 6-week summer academic and enrichment program in Asheville, NC.

To test the hypothesis that the provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the practices of ABP, SEL, and CRL during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in significant academic gains in the student population, the STAR academic assessment was be given at the beginning and end of the 6-week program. In addition, the teachers took a survey before their training and at the conclusion of the summer program to assess their knowledge and comfort with these three practices during the training. A Teacher Implementation Survey was also used to assess weekly implementation of ABP, SEL, and CRL. which was reviewed in a weekly meeting with the researcher. Finally, a student survey was used to assess the student's perception of their own engagement and academic success.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a clearly documented history of Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States performing poorly in our public school system. When compared to the non-BIPOC population, districts that serve this marginalized population have high dropout rates and low scores in reading and math proficiency. This phenomenon, which has been called the achievement gap, has been perpetuated by opportunity and resource gaps that impact this demographic of the population. The achievement gap has been well researched with evidence through variables such as grades, class selection, standardized test scores, dropout rates, and other measures of academic success, and there is a stark disparity in academic performance between various groups of students (Ansell, 2004). Student groups identified in these studies have included, racial and ethnic minorities, English language learners, students with disabilities, boys and girls, and students from low-income families.

One of the earliest research reports on achievement discrepancies was the Coleman Report. This report was mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and was further encouraged by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that was passed by Congress in 1965 to support the allocation of funds to underserved populations. This 700-page document, published in 1966, was an effort on the part of the Department of Education to measure the inequities and differences between white and Black schools that were evident but rarely discussed. This report was also known as the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (EEOS) and was comprised of a national sample that included almost 600,000 students and 66,000 teachers in more than 4,000 schools (Hill, 2017). The results were startling. It was discovered that in both math and reading the average 12<sup>th</sup> grade Black student placed at the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile of the score distribution. This

meant that 87 percent of white students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade scored higher than the average Black 12<sup>th</sup> grader (Hanushek, 2019).

Although these disparities were highlighted in the EEO report, it has taken years for scholars and policy makers to agree upon where to focus their attention to close this gap and create more equitable educational environments. Many of these efforts have been misguided, underfunded, or mismanaged and have not targeted the root of the problem. Books and other financial resources were the focus immediately following the report, even though this focus had not been shown to have a significant impact in the Coleman Report (Hill, 2017). In addition, many states worked to change their funding policies to try to achieve more funding equity among districts. The Federal Head Start program was also implemented to offer early education opportunities for low-income families.

With the 1990's and early 2000's came the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which hoped to hold the Federal Government accountable by requiring schools and districts to disaggregate student test scores by student characteristics and demographics. This would help districts more easily compare groups and hold schools accountable for student performance (Hanushek, 2019). The NCLB was updated in 2015 by President Obama and re-named the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which offered support to schools where one third or more of the student population was not graduating and where traditionally underserved populations demonstrated low performance. It required schools to report what action was being taken to support these students but also gave schools the autonomy to determine appropriate supports and interventions (Act E. S. S., 2015).



More than 50 years after the Coleman report was written, it was documented by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that Black and Hispanic students continue to trail their white peers by two or three times in math and reading proficiency which indicates a difference of almost two grade levels. Further, reported in 2016 by the NCES is that white students continue to lead in high school completion and average advantages in the double digits for four-year college attendance (Hill, 2017). This review of the literature explores home and community factors (low socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and segregation practices such as low-income housing and redlining) as well as school factors (teacher bias, lack of culturally relevant curriculum/diverse literature, and school climate/engagement) impacting the marginalized BIPOC population to better understand and address the achievement gap.

Throughout this review, the term that will be used to describe the population being researched is Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Other terms that have been used to describe this demographic of our population include but are not limited to marginalized population, minority population, and culturally linguistically and ethnically diverse (CLED) population. After consultation and consideration, the researcher will consistently use the term BIPOC.

### **Community and Home Factors Connected to the Achievement Gap**

Research has shown that there are several home and community factors connected to the achievement gap in the BIPOC population. Explored in this review are socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, and segregation.

## **Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

As reported by Stanford's sociologist Sean Reardon, “Rich Americans and poor Americans are living, learning, and raising children in increasingly separate and unequal worlds.” (Hanushek et al., 2019, para. 2). There is a large and growing lower class population that struggles to consistently support itself as reflected by one’s Socioeconomic Status (SES). This is often referred to as Low Income Economically Marginalized (LIEM). It was reported in 2020 that 10.5% of all Americans live below the United States Government established “poverty line,” which is roughly \$22,000 for a family of 3 and \$25,000 for a family of 4. Of this 10.5%, 18.8% of Blacks and 15.7% of Hispanics fall into this category while 7.3% of Non-Hispanic white Americans are living below the poverty line (Bureau, n.d.).

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) living under economic oppression can influence almost all aspects of a person’s health and wellbeing (APA, 2019.) There is a high risk of not meeting developmental milestones and increased physical and mental health concerns. Further, living under economic oppression is associated with greater mortality rates with a 14 year difference between populations with the highest and lowest incomes. Much of this is the result of difficulties getting and maintaining connections to health care providers due to financial stressors. Finally, this population often suffers from increased mental health symptoms and disorders due to the lack of opportunity for engaging in healthy and balanced behaviors to manage daily stressors.

In one study that focused on the association between child poverty, brain development, and academic achievement, evidence showed that as much as 20% of poverty-associated achievement deficits may be a result of slow development of the frontal and temporal lobes, as

well as the hippocampus maturing at a delayed rate (Hair et al., 2015). This slower maturation is associated with poor nutrition, toxic stress, and exposure to environmental toxins such as lead and pesticides.

One of the most devastating outcomes for LIEM students and families is the impact that their financial status can have on academic performance and self-efficacy in the classroom. Although many LIEM students have positive relationships with the adults in their lives which can support their meeting developmental milestones, in many cases their environment may not be conducive to learning early school-related language and skills (Bowman et. al., 2018). This can impact their early school experience which can have lasting effects. Academic achievement has a direct influence on a students' access to career options, and poor academic performance can lead to unreliable work, economic instability, and pose barriers to advancement. In the LIEM community, generational poverty perpetuates a cycle that contributes to the Achievement Gap and the advancement of this community.

It is of most importance to note that LIEM status is a “systems” problem. This community, which is largely BIPOC), has been marginalized for decades and very little has been done to change the system to enfranchise and lift this community out of poverty so that they can move forward with equal opportunity. Policies and practices like trickle-down economics (tax breaks for large business and the rich), unfair hiring practices, the mass incarceration of our Black population, and imposing more severe punishments and fees for populations that cannot afford it (Whitney, 2018) keep this population in a position where they cannot reach economic equality. In other words, the system is failing this community and the impact on children is perpetuating the achievement gap.

## **Race/Ethnicity, and Segregation**

The role that race and ethnicity play in the academic achievement gap cannot be underestimated. Since the time of slavery, generations of BIPOC people have been impacted by the implementation of “legal” and illegal measures like Jim Crow, unequal health care, housing and land disparities, employment opportunities, and voting inequalities. This systemic racism is evident and present for students from an early age, and it would be foolish to think that this does not have an impact on the BIPOC community (Bowman et al., 2018).

Some believe that integration has also played a role in the widening achievement gap for the BIPOC community. During the time of segregation, researchers and educators thought that Black children might achieve at higher levels when they attended schools with white middle-class children; while it is still true today that schools in white neighborhoods often have more resources, this view did not consider the impact that integration would have on Black children, their communities, the educational system, and most importantly the positive aspects of Black schools. The impact was huge, and the 38,000 Black teachers in the South and border states who lost their jobs after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 led to Black students losing teachers and mentors who knew them on a personal level and had a true understanding of their communities, cultural identities, and individual situations. Many believe that this was when the Black community lost their voice in education (Lutz, 2017).

While schools are integrated today, housing and land access continue to be racially divided. In the 1930’s, shortly after of the Great Depression, the U.S. government started a program to help provide suburban housing for white middle-class and lower-middle-class families. At the same time, they refused loans to people of color and segregated the Black

community into urban housing projects. This racist and discriminatory practice, called redlining, has shaped American housing policy, and its impacts are still felt today (Gross, 2017). The inequalities in housing that were set up by the government in the 30's are still intact and continue to impact school funding which directly impacts students access to resources which widens the achievement gap.

### **School Factors Connected to the Achievement Gap**

Several school factors are also reportedly connected to the achievement gap. Included in this review are teacher bias, a lack of culturally responsive curriculum and teaching methods, and school climate and engagement.

#### **Teacher Bias**

There is a longstanding history of teachers participating in the mistreatment and misunderstanding of students of color in the United States, and these practices continue to play a significant role in contributing to the achievement gap in BIPOC students. Although teacher bias is not always defined by explicit behaviors or action, the presence of implicit bias and unconscious cultural narratives can be felt in classrooms (Puncher & Markowitz, 2015). BIPOC students will very likely have a white teacher as 80% to 90% of current teachers and teachers in training are white (Miller & Harris, 2018). Further, it is estimated by the US Department of Education that by 2060 white students will only account for 35% of the student population (Miller & Harris, 2018). As the student population becomes more diverse, there is the strong possibility that the disconnect between white teachers and BIPOC students will grow.

Critical race theory (CRT) was explored as an idea in the 1960's and 1970's, and officially organized in 1989. At its roots is the idea that the opportunity/resource gap is fueled by

racial inequality which is a social, economic, and legal construct designed to maintain the white interest and strengthen concrete systemic racism (Ladosn-Billings & Tate, 2016). Within CRT the role of whiteness is heavily explored and understanding this role can be of great importance to teachers who are working to explore their biases. There are many ways that a teacher's whiteness can show up in the classroom, and deficit-based thinking and lowering academic standards are both common. Deficit-based thinking is an institutional cultural narrative defined by focusing on a perceived problem rather than potential or assets. This biased lens is often used with students of color and lower social class when a teacher makes assumptions about family engagement or the support and prioritization of their child's education (Puncher & Markowitz, 2015).

Teacher bias can also lead to the practice of lowering academic standards in the classroom. This was explored by Ford and Grantham (2003), and they found that when white see learning differences (such as being slower in reading or math) in BIPOC students, they lower their standards and expectations by shortening assignments, giving less challenging work, and diluting curriculum. One can conclude that this practice undermines the BIPOC student leading to an academic disadvantage. This notion can be linked to the Stereotype Threat Theory which states that Black students will underperform on standardized tests because they worry that they will confirm the untrue and biased stereotype that they are intellectually inferior (Whaley, 2018).

The biases that are held by teachers and the educational institutions that they work in are detrimental to BIPOC students. Equally detrimental, is the biased construct of being a “white savior” also known as “white Messiah syndrome” which can also lead to deficit-based thinking (Miller & Harris, 2018). This construct involves a white teacher engaging in behaviors and beliefs where they falsely think they are helping “suffering” BIPOC students. Many teachers go

into teaching to change lives. Many assume that there are good and bad lives, and that bad lives need to be changed. To close the achievement gap, these beliefs will need to be challenged and new systems and patterns of thinking will need to replace them through in-depth teacher training about diversity as well as student and community assets. Through this lens, a more culturally relevant and responsive curriculum can be introduced.

### **Lack of Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Teaching**

The idea of multicultural education has long been incorporated into our curriculum and is often presented through exposure to food, songs, folktales, and dances. This superficially touches upon the culture of a group of people and tends to ignore the true history and assets or tensions that are present (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). In contrast, culturally responsive education and teaching practices are defined by engagement in critical thinking and discussions around race and culture. It is believed that without asking challenging questions about culture and encouraging dialogue rooted in truth and identity, there will not be a shift from multicultural education to culturally responsive education. Given the current demographic of the teacher work force, white educators are charged with supporting this change, and without this effort, it will be an impossible task to redefine how we work with our BIPOC students and families (Miller & Harris, 2018).

Acknowledgement of culture and identity is critical for learning to take place and for curriculum to shift, and colorblindness is another roadblock for BIPOC students. There are many white teachers who are uncomfortable with acknowledging any differences between them and their students particularly when it comes to race and ethnicity. There is an idea that if you do not see color then you are treating everyone the same, but according to education theorist, Gloria Ladson-Billings, “the teacher is saying that she is dismissing one of the most salient features of

the child's identity and that she does not account for it in her curricular planning or instruction" (2018, para. 3). It is further hypothesized that in urban settings in particular, colorblindness and the pressure to adhere to the norms being taught in white education is the very thing that incites socioemotional violence upon the BIPOC community. Christopher Emden, author of *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Ya'll Too* poignantly states that "one's spirit is broken as a result of the constant pressure to adhere to a structure that runs counter to one's world view" (2017, p. 152).

With white middle to upper-class culture being the dominant culture in the United States, today's curriculum closely aligns with the values, ideals, and norms with which it is associated (Hoffman, 2018). The implications of this are far reaching and highly damaging to the BIPOC student population. The ideals of this culture often undermine many other groups who have their own valid and meaningful ideals, which translates into student development and curriculum in various ways. One of the most damaging messages that our students of color receive is that they are valued in school and in society only if they adhere to the American mainstream, which is essentially white, and that they must give up parts of their identity and parts of their culture to be accepted. This includes giving up characteristics of speech and appearance, values, and preferences (Delpit, 2012) so that they can be valued.

### **School Climate and Student Engagement**

School climate is shaped by the experience of students, parents, and faculty and staff. Climate is reflected in the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching practices, and organizational structures that are present in a school or district. It has been said that you can feel a school's climate upon entering the front door, and that it not only influences student's



social, emotional, and academic functioning but is a strong indicator of student and school success (Thapa, et al., 2013). Although the Every Student Succeeds Act requires that states include an indicator of school quality and student success as well as measures of student and teacher engagement, attendance, and climate and safety, not every school fares well with these reports (Act E. S. S., 2015).

Access to resources such as funding for student/parent programs and teacher training greatly impact a school's climate and ability to meet the needs of their community. Programming that is underfunded, such as clubs and sports, might also be less appealing to students, impacting participation. When these programs are well funded and present, however, they contribute to a students' sense of belonging to their school community and in the end enhances school climate (Wilson, 1996). In contrast to their affluent counterparts, schools with a largely BIPOC population are often in underfunded areas which have been impacted by redlining. They often do not have access to adequate educational and recreational resources causing their school climate to suffer. Common resource discrepancies include inexperienced or undertrained teachers, insufficient academic materials, deficient health education courses, and a lack of after school recreational activities, all of which may increase negative school perceptions (Kerpelman et al., 2008). In addition, economically disadvantaged schools frequently feel the pressure to concentrate on standardized test scores to maintain the little funding that they receive which leaves little time and energy for the above-mentioned important programs.

School engagement can be defined as a school having strong relationships and connections with students, teachers, families, and the broader community while student engagement is the students' active involvement in, and commitment to, academic and social activities in their school (Li & Lerner, 2013). Both are critical to learning, and are directly

related to academic achievement, peer acceptance, emotional well-being, and the incidence of behavior problems (Finn & Zimmer, 2012).

When looking at school climate and the impact it can have on engagement it has long been reported that compared to their white peers, Black students experience much higher rates of discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions as do their Hispanic and Native American peers. Minor disciplinary infractions that these students are removed for include arriving late to class and dress code violations such as wearing hats. These experiences directly relate to student engagement and school climate as it is virtually impossible to feel welcome or empowered to learn in an environment where you are disproportionately disciplined, and certain aspects of your culture are not valued. Despite these present concerns about the disparities in engagement, discipline, and academic performance between BIPOC students and their white peers, old systems have stayed in place and few models have been developed or tested to see if we can see gains in student engagement or disciplinary equity (Bottiani et al., 2017).

### **Addressing the Achievement Gap**

Addressing the achievement gap has been an area of focus and a priority for many districts, schools, and educators. Practices that will be reviewed in this section include teacher training, culturally relevant curriculum, and improving school climate.

#### **Teacher Training**

Critical awareness, also known as critical consciousness, should be the cornerstone of teacher training programs. This practice involves giving pre-service teachers the opportunity to examine the history of BIPOC students as well as looking at how current curriculum and practices validate and perpetuate discriminatory power structures (Lopez, 2017). It also involves

self-interrogation and reflection into personal biases. Miller & Harris (2018) strongly emphasize the importance of white teachers being curious and stepping out of their comfort zones by engaging in professional development that provides an opportunity to examine identity, personal beliefs, and biases. They also state the importance of listening to BIPOC students and creating space for them to share their stories and validate and celebrate each unique world view. Learning to become a white ally is also a top priority for teachers who want to affect changes in the educational system. This involves not only acknowledging but rejecting white privilege, actively working to dismantle and change long standing racist systems and speaking out when there is injustice.

Training teachers in the methods of culturally responsive instruction (CRI) can also be a powerful tool to aid in educational reform. At the core of this method is teacher-reflection and recognizing/validating student identity. The characteristics of CRI include having high expectations of all students, building relationships with family and community, reshaping the curriculum, interactive teaching and facilitating, awareness of student participation, and intentional grouping (Othman, 2018). In a study done with pre-service teachers at The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, 47 participants engaged in a 13-week class aimed at integrating diversity studies and CRI. The purpose of the study was to help students gain a deeper understanding of issues related to identity, bias, and diversity as well as how to align teaching practices with CRI and create lesson plans accordingly. The results of the study showed that the course had a significant effect on the degree to which the participants were able to articulate challenges and success related to diversity and on their ability to create lesson plans based on the CRI model (Othman, 2018).

Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP) is another method characterized by viewing the student's culture as a strength rather than a deficiency and focusing on identity development that will encourage positive academic and achievement outcomes. Important components of ABP include teacher expectations, cultural knowledge and content, the role of language, and student's ethnic and academic identity (Lopez, 2017). Explicit training in these and similar methodologies for current and pre-service educators is imperative for the well-being and advancement of BIPOC students. To look at the interrelationship between teachers' ABP beliefs and behaviors and students' identity and achievement a study was conducted in southern Arizona. The study population consisted of 568 students and teachers in grades 3-5 across 6 schools, and all students involved in the study identified as Hispanic. Analysis showed that a teacher's critical awareness drives their expectations of their students which results in higher achievement. Further, the teachers' awareness and expectations were directly linked to their behaviors which were related to how students identified in terms of ethnicity and achievement (Lopez, 2017).

### **Culturally Relevant Curriculum**

Creating culturally relevant curriculum goes hand in hand with CRI, and an important piece of making curriculum relevant is supporting minority students in seeing their own relevance through the curriculum they are exposed to. According to Cohen et. al. (2006), adding affirmations and value reflection into a classroom's daily curriculum can have a significant impact on student achievement as well as lessen the impacts of negative stereotype. Their study, involving 119 Black students, showed a reduction in the racial achievement gap by 40% in the first study, and in a follow-up study 2 years later, the GPA of the same students went up an average of .24 points. The low performing group was particularly impacted with an average

improvement in GPA of .41 points and a reduction in remediation rates from 18% to 5% (Cohen et al., 2006).

There have been several smaller studies related to the importance of curriculum and literature that includes all voices, images, and interests. One such study is A Deep Roots: Civil Rights class that was implemented in an urban high school setting where 75% the 800 students qualified for free and reduced lunch, 20% qualified for homeless services, and almost all were BIPOC (Peterson, 2014). The Deep Roots Civil Rights class consisted of 11 students of mixed race and included 105-minute lessons once a week during an elective block. In the sessions, they explored historical documents, poetry, films, and songs and engaged in discussion and written reflection about the material they were covering. In addition, they collaborated to fundraise \$5000 to take a 6-day field trip to historical landmarks in the heart of the Civil Rights Movement like Selma, Atlanta, Montgomery, and Birmingham. The students participating in this course reported transformation and engagement at home and at school through feeling empowered to talk about topics related to race and identity as well as confidence in being more active in their communities. There was also 100% enrollment in post-secondary education among the participants in this elective experience.

It has long been theorized that a curriculum that is focused on BIPOC students seeing themselves in literature is paramount. More research in this area is needed, however, there are many theories and opinions. Author Eric Valesquez wrote, “Once children see themselves represented in books, their existence is validated, and they feel that they are part of the world” (Parkway & Alameda, 2016, para. 1). This aligns with the view of Colby & Lyon (2004) who expand upon this idea by adding that multicultural literature enables and encourages understanding and connection in classrooms and can be the doorway for critical thinking, open

and honest dialogue, engagement, understanding, and crossing cultural borders. In one small study involving approximately 100 pre-service early literacy teachers, it was apparent how profound the impact was on their learning and connection with statements such as, “As an African American child in the classroom I rarely saw African Americans, or any other minorities depicted as normal people... it was very hard to relate to the books that we had to read... sometimes it would feel like I was out of place.” (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 25),

### **Improving School Climate**

There are many ways to aid in improving school climate and eliminating disparities in school discipline. One of the most effective is offering students opportunities to explore, learn from, and develop social emotional skills. This can be done through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiatives that are student-driven. Once these skills are learned, students can take actions to correct their behavior. Of utmost importance is educators being cognizant of their own social emotional competencies, as well as recognizing that SEL expectations are often rooted in a white value system and culturally diverse forms of emotional expression should be explored and valued (Gregory et. al., 2017).

One systematic, evidence-based approach for SEL is the RULER approach (Brackett et. al, 2019) which is often implemented during a classroom morning meeting. One of the cornerstones of this approach is developing classroom norms that recognize and synthesize all student voices. This is an elaborate process that takes place during structured classroom meetings called the classroom charter. This is a necessary action in navigating diverse cultural norms and implementing effective SEL. The creation of a classroom charter (or promise) as well as explicit instruction is recognizing emotions of self and others, understanding the emotions and what

caused them, labeling the emotion with appropriate vocabulary, expressing the feelings in a way that is appropriate for social and cultural contexts, and regulating emotions by using strategies that help the student stay calm is the backbone of the RULER approach. There is 15 years of research backing the RULER approach in both urban and suburban/rural schools and it has been found that when done with fidelity and with the support of administrators, teachers, and families it can have a significant impact on personal and school outcomes in the areas of academic performance and school climate (Brackett et. al, 2019).

One example of research backing the RULER approach is a study that took place in three elementary schools on Long Island, New York. Fifth and sixth graders of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds (58.6% White, 21.6% Hispanic, 10.3% Asian, 8.4% African American, and 1.1% unidentified) participated in a 30-week implementation of the program. The results showed that students in classrooms that integrated RULER into their curriculum had higher year-end grades and higher teacher ratings of social and emotional competence (e.g., leadership, social skills, and study skills) in comparison to the students in the control group (Brackett et al., 2019).

In summary, schools should focus on culturally informed SEL practices where norms are created and endorsed by students and families, students can learn from and correct their mistakes, and bias and unfair systems are actively being discussed and dismantled. When this is paired with high academic expectations, meaningful and supportive teacher/student connection that is rooted in understanding identity and self-reflection, and culturally diverse curriculum it is possible to achieve a healthy school climate, see academic gains, and an increase in student self-concept.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There is a history of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students performing poorly in our schools when compared to their white peers. Both home and school factors have been shown to contribute to this achievement gap. These factors include socioeconomic status and poverty; race/ethnicity and segregation; teacher bias; lack of culturally responsive curriculum and instruction; and school climate/student engagement. Research has shown potential improvements in the achievement gap with teacher exploration of their own identity and implicit bias as well as targeted training in specific instructional and curriculum approaches including Morning Meeting/Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL), Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP), and Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL). Therefore, this research project involved looking at the impact of providing training in these instructional approaches, for students who attended a 6-week academic enrichment summer program. Based on the review of the literature 5 hypotheses and 9 research questions were developed.



## HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis one:** The provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the RULER Morning Meeting and Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL) curriculum; Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP); and engagement in culturally responsive literature (CRL) during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in increased teacher understanding and use of these strategies.

**Research Question 1:** Will there be an increase in teacher reports of the importance of practices related to MM/SEL, APB, and CRL between the time of their training and the end of the program?

**Research Question 2:** Will there be an increase in teacher reports of their comfort level and confidence in implementing the practices of MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL between the time of their training and the end of the program?

**Hypothesis 2:** The provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the RULER Morning Meeting and Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL) curriculum; Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP); and engagement in culturally responsive literature (CRL) during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in teacher perceived improved levels of student engagement and academic growth.

**Research Question 3:** Will there be an increase in teacher biweekly ratings of perceived student engagement?

**Research Question 4:** Will there be an increase in teacher biweekly ratings of perceived student academic gains?

**Hypothesis 3:** The provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the RULER Morning Meeting and Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL) curriculum; Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP); and engagement in culturally responsive literature (CRL) during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in increased student reports of engagement in these three practices.

**Research Question 5:** Will there be an increase in student ratings of engagement in MM/SEL and lessons with a focus on ABP and involving CRL from the beginning to the end of the program?

**Hypothesis 4:** The provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the RULER Morning Meeting and Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL) curriculum; Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP); and engagement in Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in an increase in student academic self-concept.

**Research Question 6:** Will there be an increase in student ratings of perceived ease in academic tasks from the beginning to the end of the program?

**Research Question 7:** Will there be an increase in student ratings of perceived academic ability from the beginning to the end of the program?

**Hypothesis 5:** The provision of targeted teacher training and implementation support in the RULER Morning Meeting and Social Emotional Learning (MM/SEL) curriculum; Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP); and engagement in Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) during the 2021 Horizons at CDS summer program will result in academic gains greater than typically seen in a 6-week academic program.

**Research Question 8:** Will reading gains for students be greater than typically seen in a 6-week academic program?

**Research Question 9:** Will math gains for students be greater than typically seen in a 6-week academic program?

## METHODS

### **Participants**

Horizons National is a program that serves students from under-resourced communities across the United States. Students enrolled in the program attend a 6-week summer program on the campus of an independent school, college, or university. During the 6 weeks, they are part of a small class of peers led by professional teachers, and classrooms are supported by assistant teachers and volunteers. Their day consists of both academic and enrichment activities such as art, music, swimming, and dance. Students join Horizons the summer after their kindergarten year and can return to the program each year through high school. This gives participants the opportunity to build lasting relationships with their teachers and peers and develop essential life skills.

Horizons at Carolina Day School (CDS) is in Asheville, NC, and is one of the 62 Horizons sites across the United States that serve over 6,000 students. Horizons at CDS completed its fourth summer in 2021 and served 38 students who had just completed grades kindergarten through third from the Asheville City and Buncombe County school systems. This research project focused on all students enrolled in the 2021 summer program. All students qualify for free and reduced lunch and 24 identify as Black, 10 identify as Latino, and 4 identify as white. In addition, 12 teachers and assistants in three different classrooms and areas of specialty (such as music, dance, and art) supported the 6-week program at the Horizons at CDS site. The teachers and assistants are educators with mixed backgrounds and experience in the public and independent school systems and 2 identify as Black, 3 identify as Latino, and 7 identify as white.

Six of the teachers and assistants participated in the research. Participants were the full-time teachers and assistants who were in the classrooms for rising 1<sup>st</sup> to rising 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. The other six teachers taught on a part time basis and instructed art, music, and yoga/movement and did not participate in the research component of the program. In addition, the researcher served as Student and Family Support Specialist, which involved leading teacher and volunteer training, teaching a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) block in each class 2 times a week for 30 minutes, weekly meetings with the teachers and assistants to discuss curriculum and student needs, and weekly phone calls with parents to provide program updates and promote program engagement.

## **Materials**

### **Teacher Surveys**

A Teacher Training Survey was created by the researcher to assess teacher knowledge regarding the three areas of focus during the training which are SEL/MM, ABP, and the use of CRL (see Appendix A). It consists of 5 open-ended questions and 13 rating scale questions. This survey was completed by the teachers prior to the Horizons training and again at the end of the program. A Teacher Implementation Survey was also created by the researcher to assess teacher implementation of the SEL/MM, ABP, and the use of CRL components of the program as described earlier in the literature review (see Appendix B). This is an 8-question survey created by the researcher which includes rating scales for frequency of implementation and perceived student engagement, as well as two items that provided qualitative data by having the teacher give specific examples of student engagement and academic progress. The teachers completed this survey three times over the 6-week program, approximately every two weeks.

## **Student Survey**

To assess the student's perception of their own engagement and academic success, the students participated in a Pre- and Post-Program Student Survey (see Appendix C). This survey is a 10-question rating scale created by the researcher which addresses previous exposure to and engagement in the practices of MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL. It also aims to assess the student's perceived academic ability and ease in the areas of reading and math. This survey was given to each student pre- and post-program.

Finally, student academic growth was assessed by the STAR assessment program. STAR assessments are computer-adaptive tests that are designed to provide teachers with accurate, reliable, and valid academic data so that they can make informed decisions about instruction and intervention for their students. The STAR Early Literacy Assessment was administered to students who had completed kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades, and the STAR Reading Assessment was administered to students in who had completed grades 2 and 3. Finally, the STAR Math assessment was administered to students who had completed grade 3. The STAR Assessments include skills-based test items, and an in-depth report is produced. For the purposes of this study and for Horizons National data collection, performance was reported in weeks of growth.

## **Procedures**

All teachers providing instruction for the 2021 Horizons at CDS program received 10 hours of training in May prior to the start of the summer program. At the start of the training the teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Training Survey to determine their prior knowledge and experience.

The teacher training took place over three days and included readings, explicit training in aspects of the RULER MM/SEL curriculum, ABP practices, as well as exploration of CRL. To provide thorough training, the PowerPoint presentation slides, the Horizons at CDS training manual, the RULER toolkit training manual, and CRL resources were provided to all teachers and assistants. The training was led by the Executive Director of the Horizons at CDS site and the researcher who served in the role of Student and Family Support Specialist for this site over the 2021 summer session.

Over the 10 hours of training, faculty engaged in personal and group exploration exercises around implicit bias and identity. They also learned how to use the RULER MM/SEL model to create classroom norms and structure morning meetings. There were training and planning opportunities to design lessons and projects through an ABP lens as well as to explore and identify CRL for their students to engage with during independent reading time and read aloud time. This training set the stage for the 6-week Horizons at CDS program. At the end of the summer session, the teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Training Survey again to determine changes in understanding and perception around SEL/MM, ABP, and CRL.

The 6-week summer program ran from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Prior to the start of the program the teachers were asked to give consent (see Appendix D) for the use of their pre- and post-program data as well as their bi-weekly Teacher Implementation Surveys. The parents of the students attending Horizons at CDS were given information regarding the research program at the open house and information session on June 12<sup>th</sup> and asked to provide consent for the data collected on their children to be used as part of this research project (see Appendix E). All students were given consent from their parents to participate in the research component of the program.

On the first day of the program, students were asked to give their assent to participate in the research component of the program (See Appendix F.) All students signed the assent form and were then asked to complete the Student Survey. The Student Survey was verbally administered in small groups of three to four students by the researcher/Student and Family Support Specialist. In addition, over the first three days of the program, the STAR assessment was administered to all student participants by the Reading Specialist and the researcher/Student and Family Support Specialist.

During the 6-week program, all teachers were expected to implement the practices of SEL/MM, ABP, and the use of CRL as trained. Each class participated in daily morning meetings with a focus on building community through eliciting student voice, “checking in” on the Mood Meter (from the RULER program) and participating in a fun and engaging activity. In addition to SEL in Morning Meeting, students had two 30-minute SEL lessons per week with the Student and Family Support Specialist. These lessons focused on student identity and assets, feelings vocabulary, and gave the students the opportunity to learn and practice strategies for mood regulation and how to handle conflict. To focus on student assets and ABP, each student engaged in making an “asset map” with their teachers and assistants where they identified and documented their personal, family, and community assets. Finally, to address the need for CRL two pieces of literature were picked each week for read aloud, discussion, and extension activities. These picture books reflected the images and voices of the Horizons at CDS student population. Discussion questions and extensions were planned for each book chosen. The researcher/Student and Family Support Specialist held a weekly 45-minute meeting with each lead teacher and assistant. The purpose of these meetings was to check in about student needs and support the teachers in implementing the program with fidelity. The teachers were asked to



complete the Teacher Implementation Survey (see Appendix B) three times over the summer to guide the discussion and encourage reflection about their lesson plans and perceived student engagement and perceived academic growth.

At the end of the 6 weeks, in the final days of the program, both teachers and students completed the surveys that were given at the beginning of the summer session. This provided post-program data that was then compared to the data collected at the beginning of teacher training and the summer session. In addition, the STAR assessment was re-administered to all students in the final week of the program to track academic growth. Access to the confidential STAR data is given by Horizons National, and parent consent was given by the families who participate in Horizons for this data to be collected, analyzed, and shared for program comparisons and research purposes.

## ANALYSIS

### **Teacher Prior Knowledge**

In addition to statistical analysis of the research questions described below, qualitative data was obtained pre- and post-program as teachers were asked to define identity, implicit bias, SEL, ABP, and CRL to assess their level of knowledge in these specific areas. Responses across the 6 teachers showed a varied level of understanding. In the area of identity, all participants reported identity as being related to “qualities and culture that make a person who they are” and there was little change in their definitions pre- and post-program. Only one teacher reported post-program that they would add how multifaceted identity is and that “identity is made up of all different areas like in school at home and in the community.”

Several teachers had received training in implicit bias prior to their Horizons training and their definitions did not change pre- and post-program. They stated that implicit bias is “unconscious beliefs or associations towards a social group” and “bias and attitudes one may form without understanding or consciousness.” The only addition post-program was the acknowledgement by one teacher that it was not just unconscious beliefs and attitudes towards a group but “unconscious negative beliefs and attitudes towards a group of people or person.”

In the area of ABP three assistant teachers did not know how to define this term pre-program, however, in the post-program survey one defined ABP as “having students learn about their particular gifts and strengths” another as “having students look at themselves and their unique strengths” and the third as “helping uncover children's strengths and assets in their self and communities.” The training and working with their colleagues over the 6 weeks helped

shape their definition of ABP and informed their ratings about the importance of ABP in their classrooms.

In the area of SEL, all teachers and assistant teachers knew how to define this term with responses such as “the development of social emotional skills such as self-awareness, empathy, gratitude, and self-regulation” and “explicitly teaching skills to understand others and manage emotions. SEL emphasizes building relationships.” Although all teachers had a good understanding of SEL and many had prior training in this area, one teacher added to her definition post-program, “this extends into the way you manage your classroom meaning taking the time to do MM and have a calming corner are very important.” Another added to his definition post-program by saying “I know more about SEL and how important vocabulary is when talking about feelings.”

Teacher understanding of CRL was largely defined by statements such as “literature that responds to and connects to the lives, heritage, and identity of all people” and “this ensures representation in books and fosters critical thinking and conversation.” However, 2 assistant teachers did not know how to define this term prior to the training and program. Post-program, however, they defined it as “kids being able to see themselves in the books they read” and “literature that shows many cultures and beliefs so that all are represented.” This shows growth in their understanding of CRL and informed their responses about the importance of CRL in their teaching practice.

### **Research Question 1**

To answer the research question *Will there be an increase in teacher reports of the importance of practices related to MM/SEL, APB, and CRL between the time of their training*

*and the end of the program?* a one tailed independent t test was run using the total importance score obtained across MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL practices. Teacher perception of importance was reported pre-and post-program on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The total importance score was calculated by combining the scores for the three practices.

The results of the t test ( $p = 0.025$ ) showed that there was a significant ( $p < .05$ ) increase in their perception of importance. To further understand this increase in teacher perception of importance, the three practices were explored in more detail and data for teacher responses were provided in Figures 1 and 2.

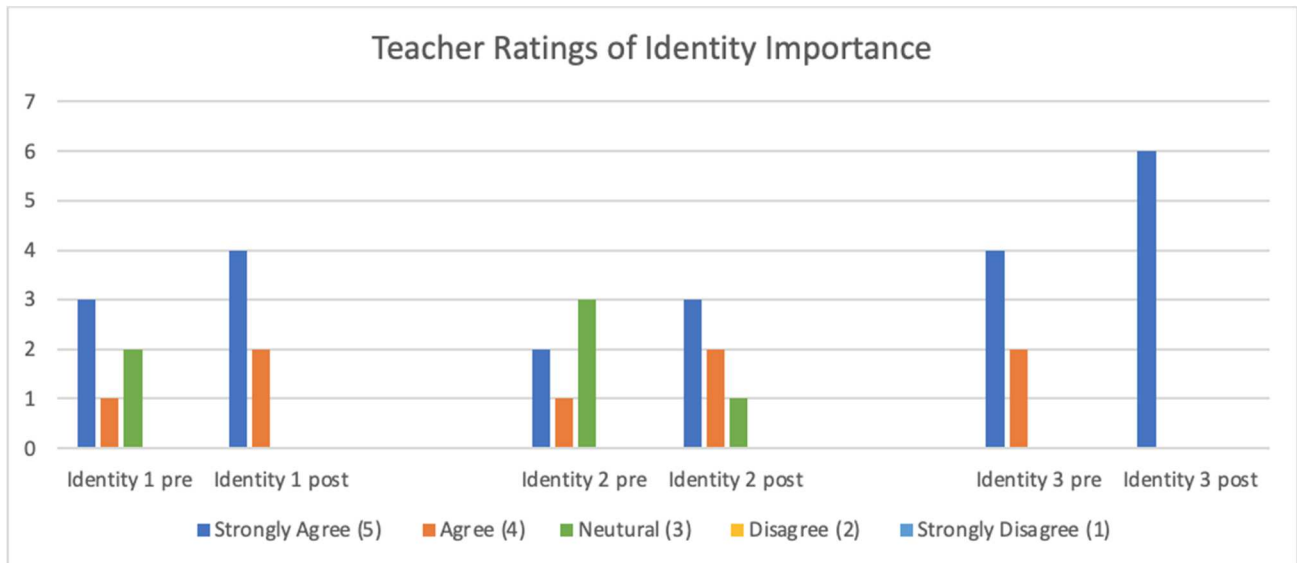
### **Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP) Beliefs**

To understand the importance of ABP, which is rooted in understanding identity, three specific statements were asked in the Teacher Survey. The first statement was *understanding my identity is important in my role as an educator (Identity 1)*, the second was *understanding my identity is a factor in my student's academic achievement (Identity 2)*, and the final statement was *understanding my student's identity is important to their academic achievement (Identity 3)*. When broken down by statement, two teachers moved from *neutral* to *agree* and one moved from *agree* to *strongly agree* when responding to *understanding my identity is important in my role as an educator*. In addition, when responding to the statement, *understanding my identity is a factor in my student's academic achievement*, two teachers moved from *neutral* to *agree* and one teacher moved from *agree* to *strongly agree*. Finally, when responding to the statement *understanding my student's identity is important to their academic achievement*, two teachers moved from *agree* to *strongly agree* meaning that all 6 teachers indicated that understanding

their student’s identity was extremely important to their academic growth. The pre- and post-program data for these three statements are provided in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Teacher Ratings of Identity Importance*



In addition to asking about the importance of identity the statement *understanding my implicit bias is important to my student’s academic growth*, was given and there was no change in the teachers answers pre-and post-program. Four teachers indicated *Strongly Agree* pre- and post-program and two teachers indicated *Agree* pre- and post-program. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 2.

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Beliefs**

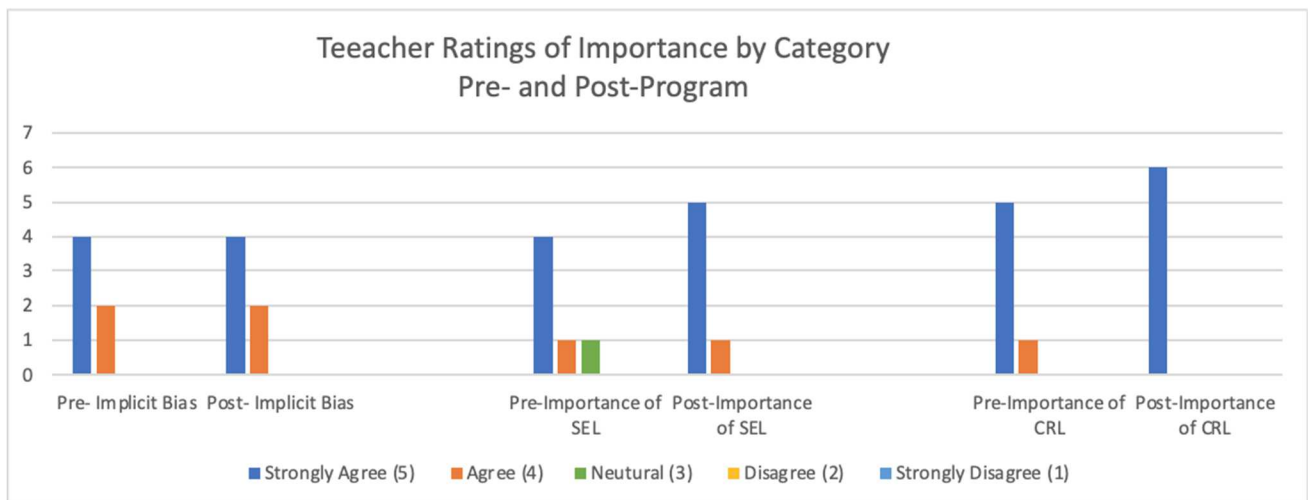
To understand perceived importance of SEL, the statement *SEL is important to my student’s academic achievement* was given. One teacher moved from *neutral* to *agree* and one moved from *agree* to *strongly agree*. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 2.

## Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) Beliefs

To understand perceived importance of CRL, the statement *exploring CRL is important to my student's academic success* was given. There was not much movement in this area as almost all teachers strongly agreed with this statement, however, the one teacher who reported *agree* in the pre-program survey, moved to *strongly agree* in the post-program survey. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Teacher ratings of importance by category pre- and post-program*



## Research Question 2

To answer the research question *Will there be an increase in teacher reports of their comfort level and confidence in implementing the practices of MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL between the time of their training and the end of the program?* a one-tailed independent t test was run using the total comfort score obtained across MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL practices. Teacher comfort in implementing these practices was reported pre- and post-program on a Likert scale

where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The total comfort score was calculated pre- and post-program by combining the scores obtained for the three practices.

The results of the t test ( $p = 0.035$ ) showed that there was a significant ( $p < .05$ ) increase in the level of teacher comfort in implementing these practices. To further understand this increase in teacher comfort, the three practices were explored in more detail and data regarding teacher responses are provided in Figure 3.

### **Asset Based Pedagogy (ABP) Comfort**

When given the statement *I am comfortable exploring and sharing my identity* pre- and post-program, there was no change in teacher response. In both surveys three teachers reported *strongly agree* and three reported *agree*. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 3.

When given the statement *I am comfortable exploring and sharing my implicit bias*, one teacher moved from *agree* to *strongly agree* post-program indicating that there was very little change in comfort in this area. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 3.

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Confidence**

When given the *statement I am confident in my ability to lead SEL lessons*, only one teacher reported *strongly agree* in the pre-program survey, however, post-program this number moved from one to five. In addition, one teacher moved from *disagree* to *agree* indicating that

across the board teachers were more confident in facilitating this practice. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in Figure 3.

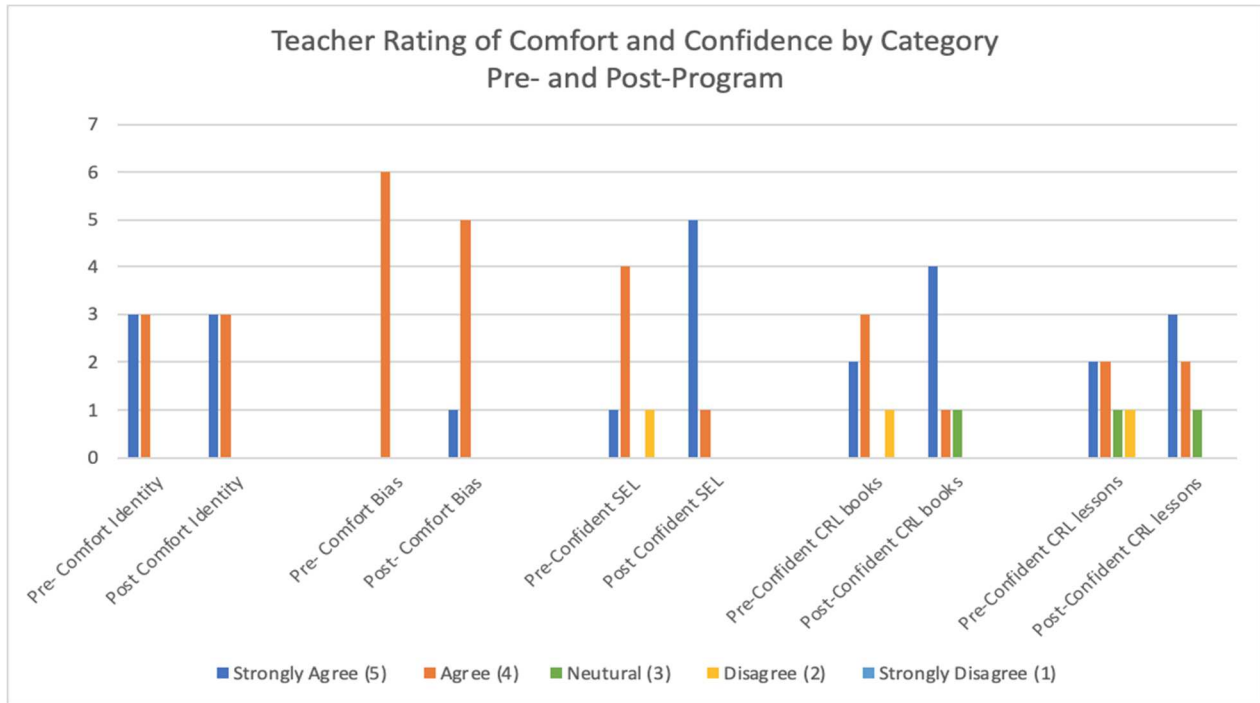
### **Culturally Responsive Literature (CRL) Confidence**

When given the statement *I am confident in my ability to pick CRL* one teacher moved from *disagree* to *neutral*, and two teachers moved from *agree* to *strongly agree* in the post-program survey indicating increased confidence in facilitating this practice. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in *Figure 3*. Finally, when given the statement *I am confident in my ability to plan and lead discussions and activities connected to CRL* one teacher moved from *disagree* to *neutral*, one teacher moved from *neutral* to *agree*, and one teacher moved from *agree* to *strongly agree* in the post-program survey indicating increased confidence in facilitating this practice. The pre- and post-program data for this statement are provided in *Figure 3*.



**Figure 3**

*Teacher Rating of Comfort and Confidence by Category Pre- and Post-program*



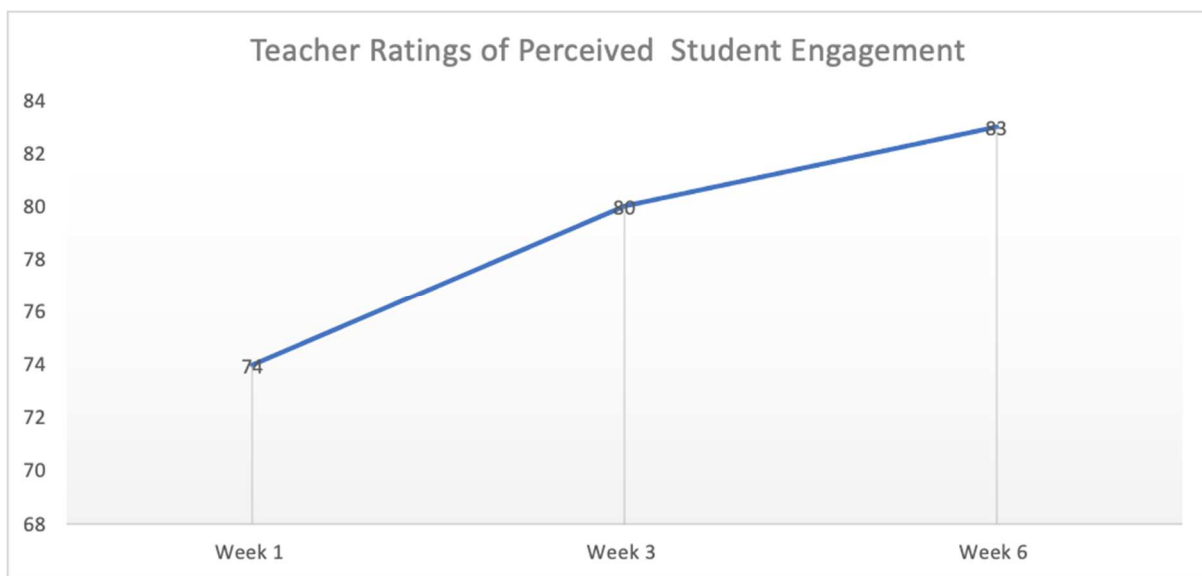
### Research Question 3

To answer the research question, *Will there be an increase in teacher biweekly ratings of perceived student engagement?* three statements were given bi-weekly, and answers were reported on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The statements included *my students were engaged during MM/SEL instruction, my students were engaged in lessons where the focus was on their identity and assets and my students were engaged in lessons that incorporated culturally responsive literature*. The total perceived engagement score was calculated by combining the scores obtained for all three practices which were collected weeks one, three, and six.

Three one tailed independent t tests were run that compared weeks one and six ( $p = 0.01$ ), weeks one and three ( $p = 0.07$ ), and weeks three and six ( $p = 0.21$ ). Results showed that the increase in total engagement between weeks one and six is significant ( $p < .05$ ), the increase in engagement between weeks one and three is not significant ( $p > .05$ ), and the increase in engagement between weeks three and six is not significant ( $p > .05$ ). The bi-weekly data for this statement are provided in Figure 4. It is important to note that the highest possible score for total engagement each week is a score of 90.

**Figure 4**

*Teacher Ratings of Perceived Student Engagement*



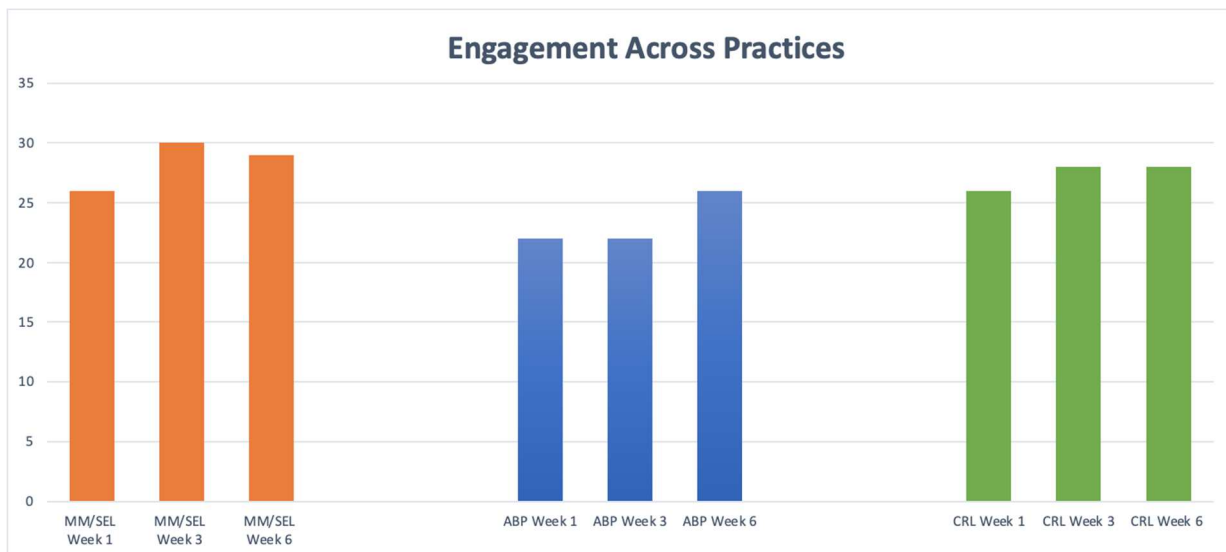
### **Types of Engagement**

Reported engagement in the practices of MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL were explored in more detail and data regarding teacher responses were provided in Figure 5. It is important to note that the highest score for engagement per practice was 30. Engagement in MM/SEL increased from a total score of 26 to 30 between weeks one and three and then fell slightly in

week six to 29. In the area of ABP, engagement did not increase until week six, when it went from a score of 22 to 26. Engagement in the practice of CRL increased between weeks one and three from a total score of 26 to 28, and then engagement stayed the same between weeks three and six. The biweekly data for the individual practices is provided in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Engagement Across Practices*



### Examples of Engagement

Qualitative data was gathered biweekly, with each teacher giving examples of student engagement in the areas of MM/SEL, ABP, and CRL. In week one the rising first/second grade classroom teacher and assistant reported high levels of engagement in MM/SEL by saying, "Each student shared an idea while we made our classroom charter and signed their name on our agreement in morning meeting," indicating that all students were involved in this activity. In the rising fourth-grade classroom, the teacher and assistant reported that "During SEL the students paired up and each student picked and talked about 3 feeling words with their partners. All participated."

In week 3 the rising third-grade class started an asset map project and the teacher and assistant reported that, "Every student wrote a sentence for each part of their asset map and were engaged in their small groups." In the rising first/second grade class during week three the teachers wrote, "We studied Hispanic heritage and all the children listened and responded to our book talk, danced, and drew. Our Hispanic students all shared where their families immigrated from."

Finally, in week 6, the rising fourth-grade teacher reported, "On Tuesday, all students participated in math games with the volunteers. No one sat out or chose to take a break." This was uncommon as a couple of students often chose to sit out of game time and do independent work. The rising third-grade teacher and assistant teacher also reported in week 6 that, "1/2 of the students read a book about the NFL and joined a zoom with a former NFL player, and they wrote their own questions to ask him!" indicating that all students were engaged in the interview process.

#### **Research Question 4**

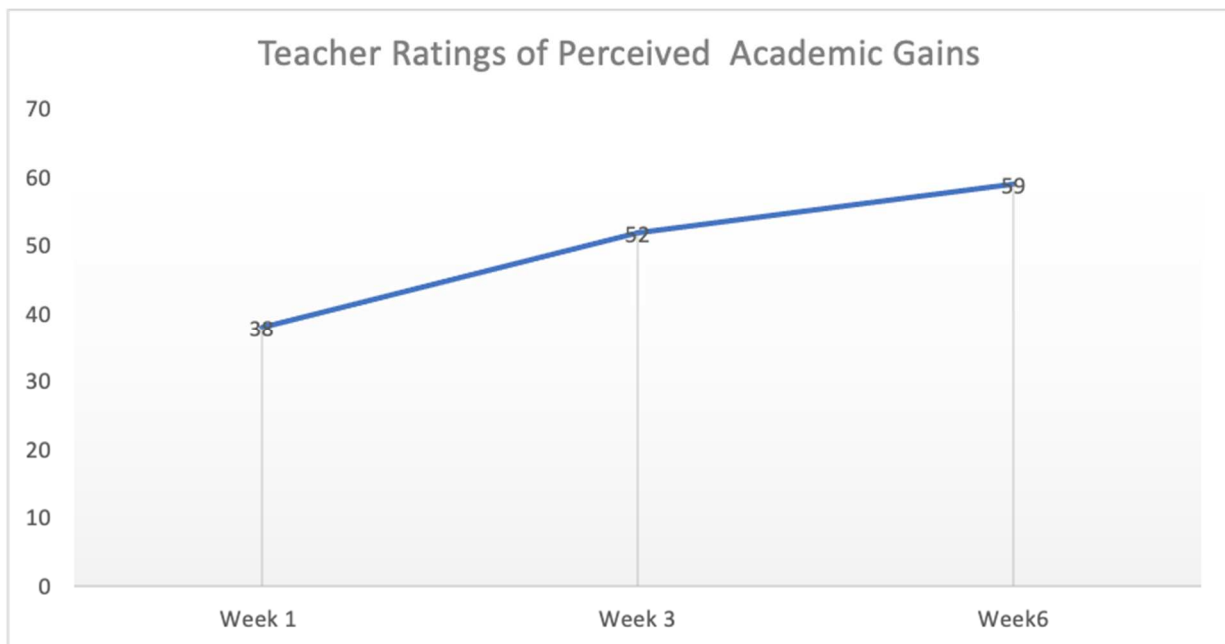
To answer the research question *Will there be an increase in teacher biweekly ratings of perceived student academic gains?* Two statements were given bi-weekly, and answers were reported on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The statements were *My students made academic gains in reading* and *My students made academic gains in math*. The total perceived academic gains score was obtained by combining the reading and math scores which were collected on weeks one, three and six.

Three one tailed independent t tests were run that compared weeks one and six ( $p = 0.11$ ), weeks one and three ( $p = 0.0001$ ), and weeks three and six ( $p = 0.16$ ). Results show that the

increase in perceived academic gains between weeks one and six is not significant ( $p > .05$ ), the increase in perceived academic gains between weeks one and three is significant ( $p < .05$ ), and the increase in perceived academic gains between weeks three and six is not significant ( $p > .05$ ). Figure 6 illustrates teacher ratings of perceived academic gains across the six weeks. It is important to note that the highest total score was 60.

**Figure 6**

*Teacher Ratings of Perceived Academic Gains*



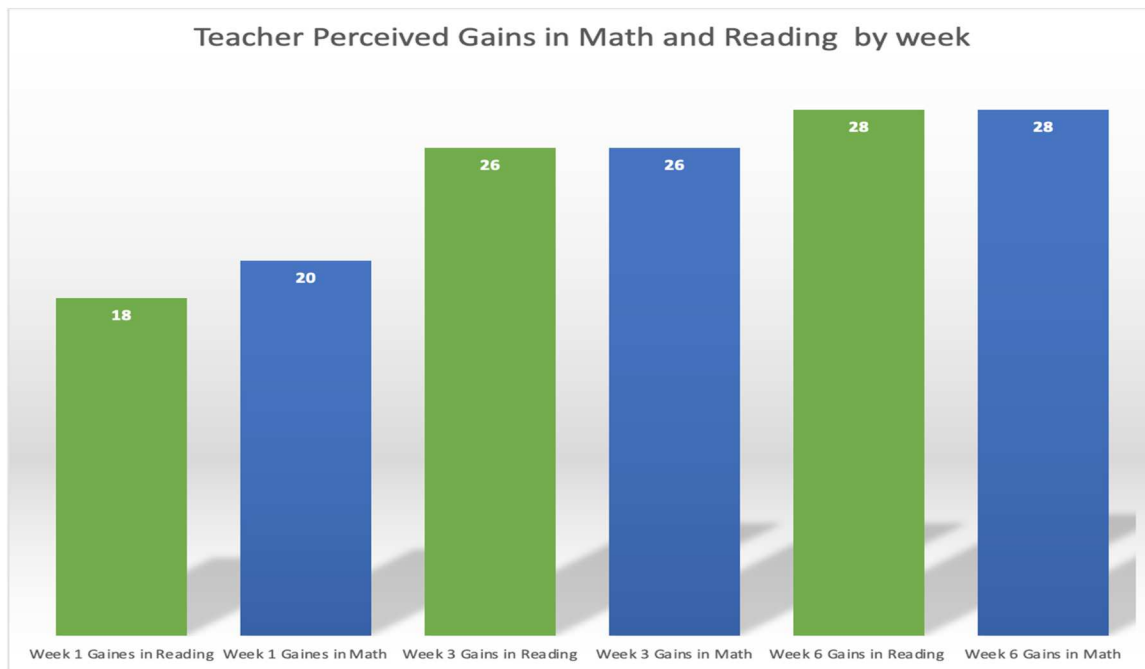
### **Types of Academic Gains**

Reported academic gains in reading and math were explored in more detail and data regarding teacher responses were provided in Figure 7. It is important to note that the highest score that could be attained in each academic area is 30. Perceived gains in reading increased from a total score of 18 to 26 between weeks one and three and increased again in week six to

28. In the area of math there was an increase in total score between weeks one and three from 20 to 26, and again between weeks three and six from 26 to 28. The biweekly data for reading and math is provided in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

*Teacher Perceived Gains in Math and Reading by Week*



### **Examples of Academic Gains**

Qualitative data was gathered biweekly, where each teacher gave examples of perceived academic gains in the areas of reading and math. In week one, the rising first/second-grade teacher and assistant reported, "In the lowest reading group all 4 kids were able to give a rhyming word on their own during our lesson on Thursday morning." This was a new skill for all students in this group. The teacher and assistant in the rising third-grade class wrote, "one student did three repeated readings of a passage about "roots" and decreased her reading time each time she read."

In week three the rising fourth-grade teacher and assistant wrote that, "All of the students read during quiet reading time without playing and talking to each other" while the rising first/second-grade teacher and assistant wrote, "In math, all of the students showed that they knew how to use counters to solve addition problems to 10 during our game. They all got the answers correct."

In week 6 the rising fourth-grade teachers reported that, "Each Student wrote a three sentence thank you note to our Americorps VISTA." This was a new skill for those students. Finally, in week 6 the rising third-grade teacher and assistant reported, "During reading groups, the students in group 2 got through their whole reading passage and answered the questions." This was the first time that this group had experienced this level of success.

### **Research Question 5**

To address the research question *Will there be an increase in student ratings of engagement in MM/SEL and lessons with a focus on ABP and involving CRL from the beginning to the end of the program?* students rated their engagement in the three practices at the beginning and end of the program by responding to three statements on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. There was also an option to mark N/A which students could mark if they did not have the opportunity to engage in one or all of the practices in their sending school.

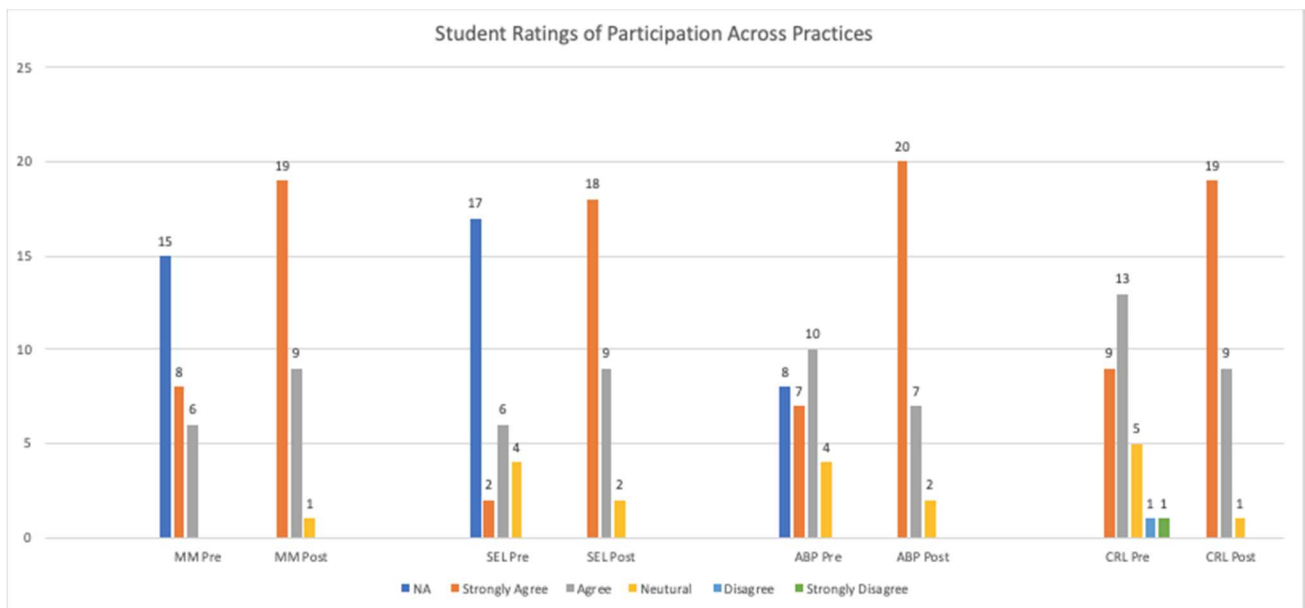
There were 15 students who reported that they did not have a Morning Meeting in their schools, 17 that reported not having structured SEL lessons, and 8 that reported not having a focus on ABP. Given that they did not have the opportunity to engage in these practices pre-program, a t test could not be run for total engagement pre- and post-program. However, all

students reported that they engaged in the practice of using CRL pre- and post-program. A one tailed independent t test was run for engagement in the practice of CRL ( $p = 0.001$ ) and results showed that the increase in student reported engagement was significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Student reported participation across practices was explored in more detail and data regarding student responses were provided in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Student Ratings of Participation Across Practices*



**Research Question 6**

To answer the research question *Will there be an increase in student ratings of perceived ease in academic tasks from the beginning to the end of the program?* A one tailed independent t test was run using the total perceived academic ease score for both reading and math pre- and post-program. Perceived academic ease was determined with two statements and each was answered on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and



1 = Strongly Disagree. The t test run to determine perceived academic ease pre and post program ( $p = 3.4348E-05$ ) showed that the results were very significant ( $p < .05$ ).

### **Research Question 7**

To answer the research question *Will there be an increase in student ratings of perceived academic ability from the beginning to the end of the program?* two one tailed independent t tests were run. One t test used the total perceived academic ability score obtained pre-and post-program, and the other used the total perceived academic ease score pre- and post- program. Perceived academic ability and perceived academic ease were both determined by two statements, and each was answered on a Likert scale where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The t test ( $p = 0.01$ ) for perceived academic ability showed that the results were significant ( $p < .05$ ) and the t test ( $p = 3.43475E-05$ ) for academic ease showed that the results were very significant ( $p < .05$ ). Reported gains in perception of academic ease and ability in reading and math were explored in more detail and data regarding teacher responses were provided in Figure 9.

### **Perceived Academic Ease and Ability in Reading**

There was noticeable movement in student ratings for perceived reading ability with 10 more students reporting that they *strongly agreed* that reading was easy for them and 9 more students reporting that they *strongly agreed* that they were good at reading in the post- program survey. In addition, in the pre-program survey, two students *strongly disagreed* that reading was easy for them, and one student *strongly disagreed* that they were good at reading. In the post survey, there were no students that *strongly disagreed* with these statements indicating that their

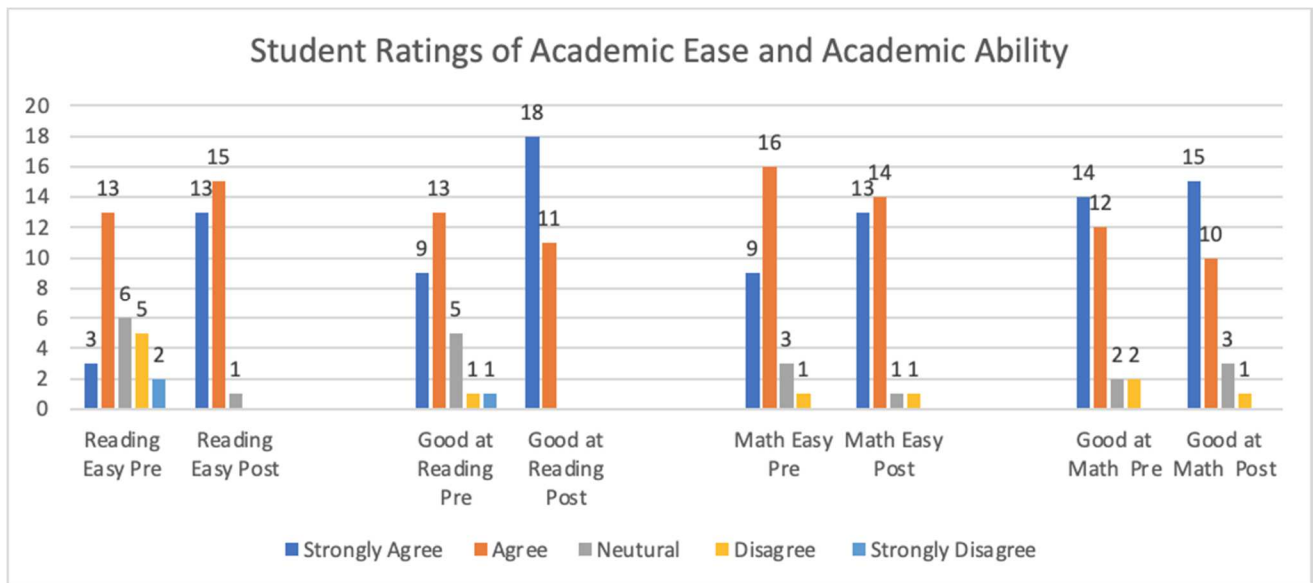
academic self-concept in the area of reading increased over the 6 weeks. The pre-and post-program data for perceived ease and ability in math is provided in Figure 9.

### Perceived Academic Ease and Ability in Math

There was noticeable movement in ratings for math pre-and post-program as four more students rated that they *strongly agree* that math is easy for them and one more student reported that they *strongly agree* that they are good at math in the post-program survey. In addition, two students moved from “neutral” to “agree” in response to math being easy and one student moved from “disagree” to “neutral” in response to being good at math post-program. The pre-and post-program data for perceived ease and ability in math is provided in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

*Student Ratings of Academic Ease and Academic Ability*



## Research Questions 8 and 9

To answer research question 8 *Will reading gains for students be greater than typically seen in a 6-week academic program?* And research question 9 *Will math gains for students be greater than typically seen in a 6-week academic program?* The STAR Assessment was given to all students pre- and post-program.

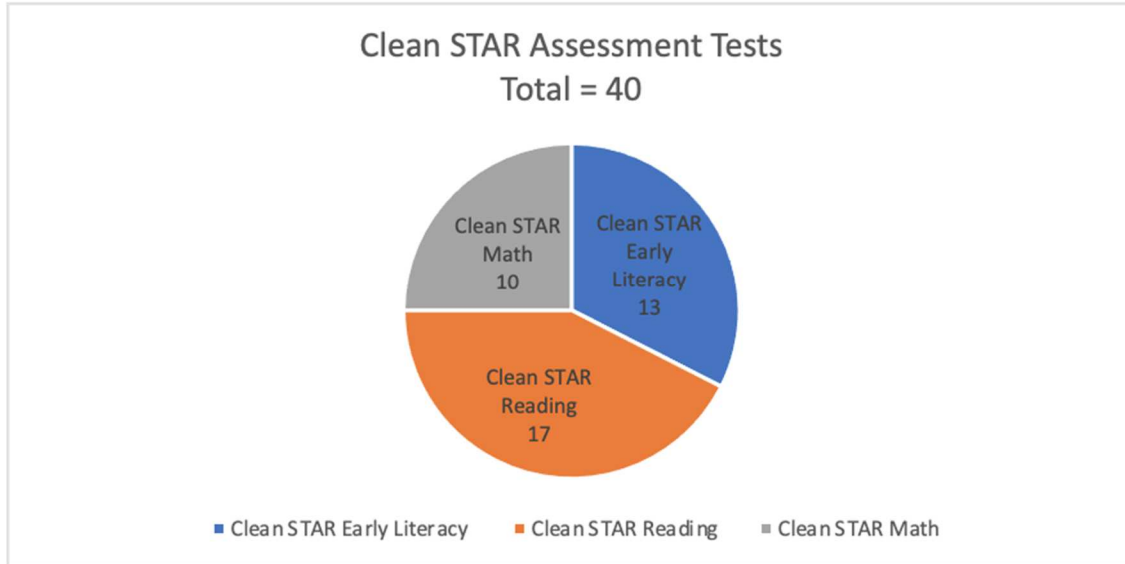
### Data Cleaning Rules

Academic growth data was measured in “weeks of growth” and STAR data was subject to Horizon’s National cleaning rules. Cleaning rules set by Horizons National included removing tests where students did not have both a pre-and a post-assessment, a pretest score was more than 2 years above grade level (Example: for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, anything above 6<sup>th</sup> grade), a pretest score was more than 3 years below grade level (Example: for 4<sup>th</sup> grade, anything below 1.9), the negative growth score was larger than 1 year, the positive growth score was more than 1.5 years, or the time between tests was less than 21 calendar days or more than 70 calendar days.

Out of 54 total tests there were 40 clean tests across the areas of Early Literacy, Reading, and Math, and the average days between testing was 33.87. There were 14 tests removed for cleaning purposes, 8 for only having one test, 1 for the pre-test score being 2 years above grade level, 3 for negative growth scores greater than a year, and 2 for growth scores being greater than 1.5 years. Figure 10 illustrates the breakdown of clean tests, and Figure 11 illustrates the breakdown of tests that were removed.

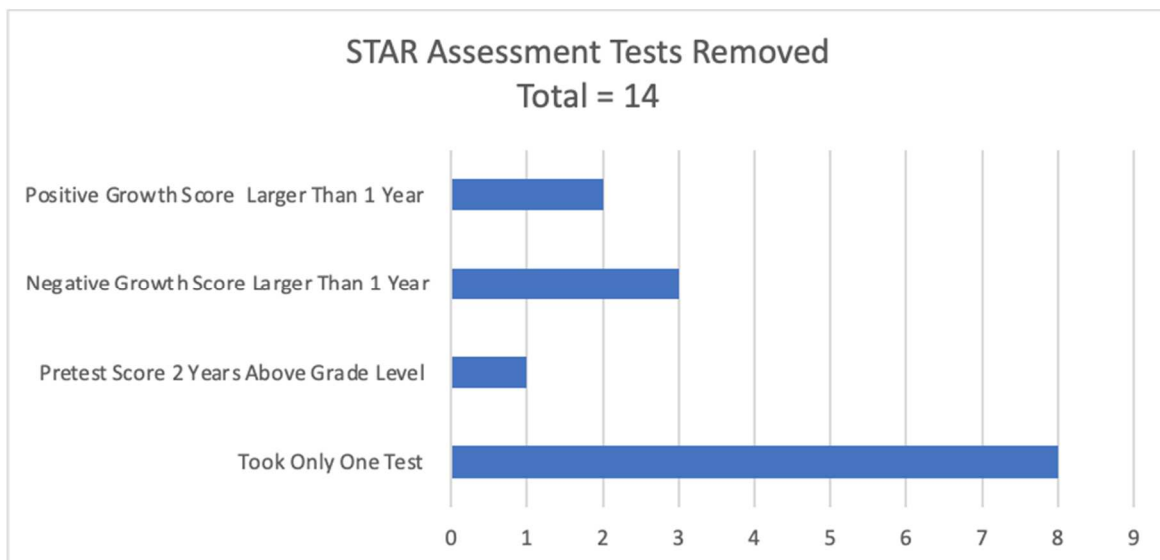
**Figure 10**

*Clean STAR Assessment Tests*



**Figure 11**

*STAR Assessment Tests Removed*



## **STAR Early Literacy Results**

STAR Early Literacy results were collected for 13 rising first- and second-grade students. Results were broken down by grade and showed 9.9 weeks of growth for rising first-grade students and 9.38 weeks of growth for rising second-grade students over the 6-week program. STAR Early Literacy results were further broken down to show weeks of growth for those students who were performing below grade level at the pre-test, which was 9 students. In the rising first-grade cohort, the students performing below grade level at the pretest showed an average of 14.08 weeks of growth over the 6 weeks, and in the rising second-grade cohort, the students showed an average of 27.08 weeks of growth. Results for STAR Early Literacy are illustrated in Figure 12 and in Figure 13.

## **STAR Reading Results**

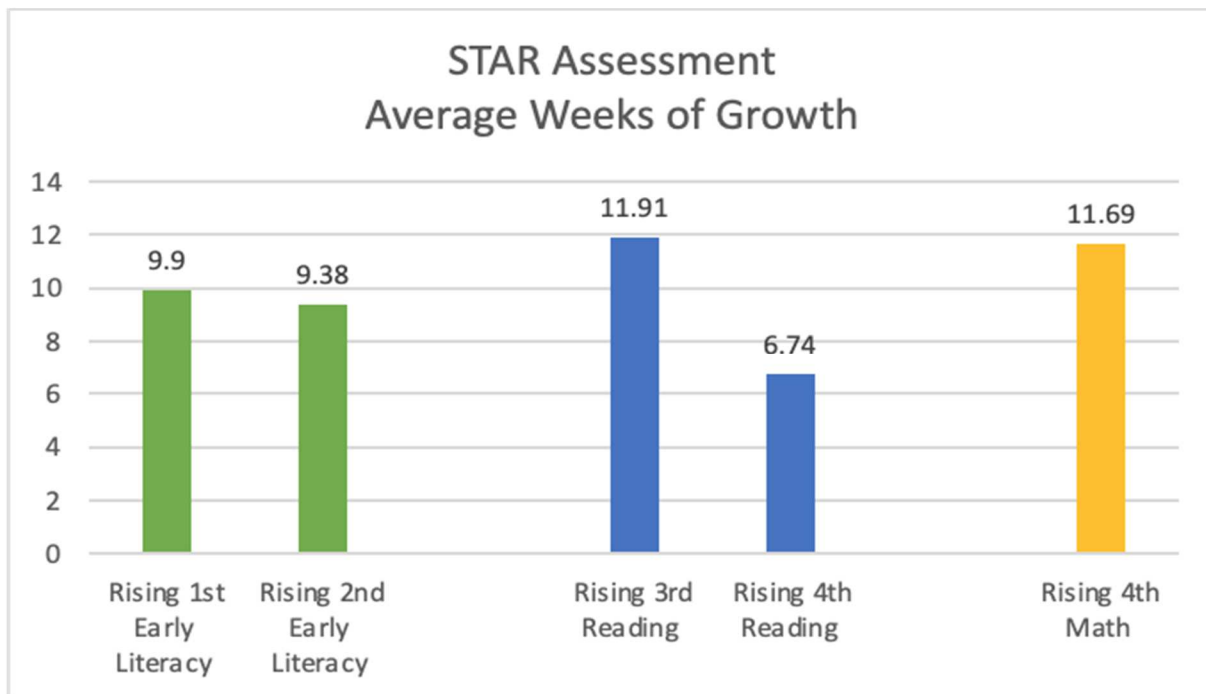
STAR Reading results were collected for 17 rising third- and fourth-grade students. Results were broken down by grade and showed 11.91 weeks of growth for the rising third-grade students and 6.74 weeks of growth for the rising fourth-grade students over the 6-week program. STAR Reading results were further broken down by weeks of growth for those students who were performing below grade level at the pre-test, which was 14 students. In the rising third-grade cohort, the students performing below grade level at the pretest showed an average of 10.52 weeks of growth over the 6 weeks, and in the rising fourth-grade cohort, the students showed an average of 6.74 weeks of growth. Results for STAR Reading are illustrated in Figure 12 and in Figure 13.

## STAR Math Results

STAR Math results were collected for 10 total students in the rising fourth-grade cohort. Results showed 11.69 weeks of growth over the 6 weeks of programming. STAR Math results were further broken down by weeks of growth for those students who were performing below grade level at the pretest, this was 8 students. The students performing below grade level at the pretest also showed an average of 11.69 weeks of growth over the 6 weeks. Results for STAR Math are illustrated in Figure 12 and in Figure 13.

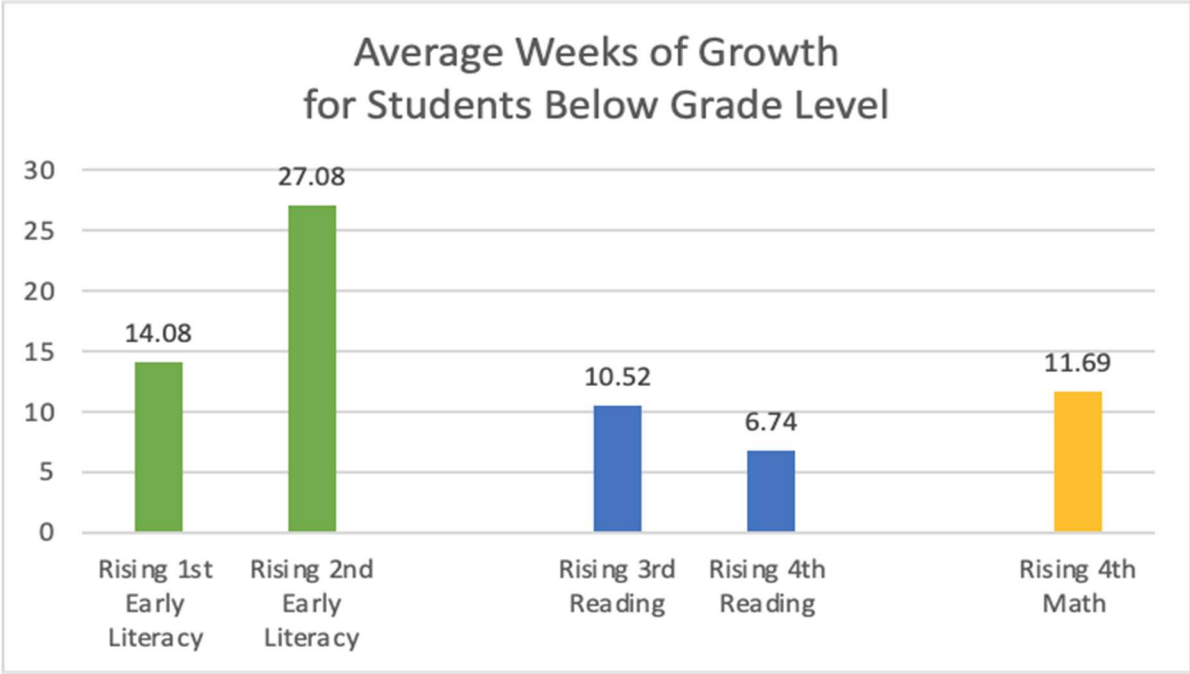
**Figure 12**

*STAR Assessment Average Weeks of Growth*



**Figure 13**

*Average Weeks of Growth for Students Below Grade Level*



## DISCUSSION

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

There were many limitations to this research study. First and foremost, the size of the study is extremely small and although there are benefits to smaller programs such as Horizons at Carolina Day, it did not offer a large sample of teacher or student data from which to make conclusions and the results should be interpreted with caution. Limitations for teachers included variability in prior training in the three practices being explored. Limitations for teachers and students included variables related to the COVID 19 pandemic. For many students it was the first time returning to in-person learning, and many of the youngest learners had never been to school. This meant that a lot of time and energy was spent acclimating the students to the routines of school. In addition, attendance was variable, and several students did not participate in two rounds of STAR testing, which was the program's measure of academic growth and several students only participated in the pre-program survey. Finally, given that there are so many areas of focus, it is hard to determine with certainty which, if any, practice was most beneficial and supported academic growth the most.

Given the number of hypotheses and research questions, future directions of this study could include a more detailed and in-depth study around teacher identity and implicit bias, or each individual practice highlighted in this study. In addition, academic growth and student perception could be tracked across several summers to show how students respond to one or more practices.



## Teacher Growth

The importance of teacher understanding and awareness of their own and their student's identities and implicit biases have proven to be foundational to building a safe and productive learning environment (Miller & Harris, 2018). This is vital for student success. In addition, the practices highlighted in this study (MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL) have shown to have a positive impact on student learning (Barrio, 2020). In this study, the intention behind the training was to build understanding around both identity and unconscious bias, as well as strengthen teaching practices with the addition of MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL.

For the teacher participants in this research study, it was clear that they began the study with an understanding about the correlation between implicit bias and achievement and the importance of understanding their own implicit bias. In addition, most of the teachers already felt comfortable with sharing aspects of their own identity and bias with students. This is important because the literature suggests that as we become more comfortable exploring and sharing our biases, our classrooms and communities become more equitable, informed, and accepting (Miller & Harris, 2018). For future training, these appear to be areas that could be determined in advance to build on the teacher's beliefs and skills that they already have.

When the perceived importance of MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL was explored, the data showed that the teachers grew in their understanding of how important these practices were, especially in the areas of MM/SEL and the use of CRL. Of note is that there was no change in teachers understanding around the connection between understanding implicit bias and student achievement. It is also worthy to note, however, that all teachers were already in the *agree* or *strongly agree* category indicating that they understood this correlation and the importance of understanding their own implicit bias.

The data from this research showed that the kind of teacher training provided in this study can lead to gains in several different areas. There was exploration of teacher identity and implicit bias during the training, and an increase in recognizing the importance of understanding their own identity and the identity of their students. Of utmost importance is that all teachers post-program *strongly agreed* that understanding their student's identity was important to their academic success. There was also explicit training in important teaching practices and there were gains in teacher confidence in leading MM/SEL lessons and lessons that integrated CRL.

These areas of growth along with the beliefs that teachers brought into the study helped build a safe and productive environment in which the Horizons at CDS students could learn and deepen their understanding of themselves as learners and community members. The study showed, however, that further training about the correlation between teacher comfort in sharing their own identity and bias with their students and student academic growth and participation could be beneficial.

### **Teacher Perceptions of Student Engagement and Academic Growth**

One of the primary goals of the Horizons at Carolina Day summer program is to improve student engagement and academic growth. The biweekly ratings of student engagement and teacher examples of student engagement appeared to indicate that the practices employed by the teachers were exciting to the students and that they were actively engaged in the lessons. When broken down by category, the ABP project and the response to CRL were both areas where students seemed to have a larger increase in engagement, and teachers reported that, in general, students had a wonderful time creating their asset maps and engaging in literature discussions.

The biweekly ratings of student academic growth and teacher examples of student academic growth also appeared to indicate a steady increase in student academic growth across the six weeks. Teachers indicated that the students were motivated by the academic tasks that they were presented with and that they were tenacious in getting their work done.

### **Student Participation, Self-Concept, and Academic Growth**

#### **Student Participation**

In addition to teacher perceptions, students were asked to reflect upon their participation in the practices that were being explored in this study (MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL). The goal was for their perceived level of participation to increase as compared to their sending school. Based on student responses, however, it was determined that many of the students participating in this study were attending schools where the MM/SEL and ABP practices were not used on a regular basis. Therefore, this was their first experience with many of these practices. This prevented the researcher from being able to measure increases in participation. It is not lost on the researcher that it is a problem in the city and county schools that these practices are not being employed as they are an important part of student and community growth. A single measure of participation in these two activities was collected from the students at the end of the program as they were able to participate in these practices at Horizons at CDS, and this total number indicated that overall, they were strongly involved and enjoyed many aspects of MM/SEL and ABP practices. This is evidence that the city and county would see strong engagement if they were to implement these practices at all of their schools.

The practice of using Culturally Responsive Literature was the only practice where all participants had the opportunity to engage both at their sending schools and at Horizons at CDS.

Their participation in these activities during the summer program rose significantly indicating that the students were drawn to the culturally responsive literature that was being shared and that they were actively engaged in classroom discussions. Why these students rated that they were more actively engaged in these practices during the summer is not clear and additional research would be helpful to know how to get this kind of engagement during the regular school year.

### **Student Self Concept**

In addition to participation, student academic self-concept was explored in the pre- and post-program survey. Two aspects of academic self-concept were considered including how easy they perceived reading and math to be, and their overall academic ability in reading and math. The survey results indicated that the student self-concept grew over the 6-week program, and that most of the students felt confident in their academic endeavors in the Horizons at CDS program. Of particular interest to the researcher were the two students who showed improvement in their perception of their reading skills. This was seen by their ratings moving from *strongly disagree* to *neutral* and *agree* in reading being easy and moving from *strongly disagree* and *disagree* to *agree* in being good at reading post-program. Both students reported high engagement in all activities and were seen as leaders in their classrooms by their classmates and teachers which could be correlated to their increased self-concept. What is not known is whether this increased academic self-concept will carry over into their academic work during the regular school year.

### **Student Academic Growth**

Having students make academic gains is very important to the Horizons at CDS program, and the data shows that that there were gains greater than would typically be expected in a 6-

week academic program. These gains were across grades and subjects. It is important to note that students who came to the program below grade level made even more gains than the overall average. It is believed that this growth is a testimony to student comfort, classroom practices and procedures, and teacher organization and intention with lesson planning. What is not known is if this growth will continue throughout the school year.

### **Final Conclusions**

Across all areas of this study, there was teacher and student growth. Although there were many limitations, several points are clear. Teacher exploration of identity and implicit bias is relevant and vital in our world today, and although we cannot say definitively that there is a correlation between this and positive student academic outcomes, there is evidence that the teacher's willingness to explore and share about their identities and biases created a safe and open environment in which their students could grow and learn.

Further, targeted teacher training in MM/SEL, ABP, and the use of CRL seemingly increased the use of these practices in the classrooms and increased student engagement which in effect had positive academic outcomes for the Horizons at CDS students. Finally, the use of these practices seemed to boost student self-concept which the literature tells us is at the heart of both personal and academic growth (Cohen et al., 2006). It is the researcher's hope that schools and programs will adopt these practices to make learning more meaningful and relevant to their students. In addition, it is the researcher's hope that teachers and students will work to explore their identities and biases to strengthen their self-concept, their understanding of others, and create warm intentional classroom communities where everyone can flourish.

## REFERENCES

- Act, E. S. S. (2015). Every student succeeds act. *Public law*, 114-95.
- Ansell, S. E. (2004, September 10). Achievement Gap. *Education Week*.  
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/achievement-gap/2004/09>
- APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice for People with Low-Income and Economic Marginalization*. (2019.). 48.
- Barrio, B. L. (2021). Understanding culturally responsive practices in teacher preparation: An avenue to address disproportionality in special education. *Teaching Education*, 32(4), 437–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2020.1796956>
- Bottiani, J. H., Larson, K., Debnam, K., Bischoff, C., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2017). Promoting educators' use of culturally responsive practices: A systematic review of in-service interventions. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–19. doi:10.1177/0022487117722553
- Bowman, B., Comer, J., & Johns, D. (2018). Addressing the African American Achievement Gap: Three Leading Educators Issue a Call to Action. *YC Young Children*, 73(2), 14-23. doi:10.2307/26558913
- Brackett, M. A., Bailey, C. S., Hoffmann, J. D., & Simmons, D. N. (2019). RULER: A Theory-Driven, Systemic Approach to Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 144–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1614447>
- Bureau, U. C. (n.d.). *Census.gov*. Census.Gov. Retrieved May 9, 2021, from <https://www.census.gov/en.html>
- Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., & Master, A. (2006). Reducing the Racial Achievement Gap: A Social-Psychological Intervention. *Science*, 313(5791), 1307–1310. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1128317>
- Colby, S. A., & Lyon, A. F. (2004). Heightening Awareness about the Importance of Using Multicultural Literature. *Multicultural Education*, 11(3), 24–28.

Delpit, L. (2021). Lisa Delpit on pervasive inequities. *Education Week*.  
<https://www.edweek.org/education/lisa-delpit-on-pervasive-inequities/2012/04>

Finn, J. D., & Zimmer, K. S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97–131). New York, NY: Springer

Ford, D. Y., & Grantham, T. C. (2003). Providing Access for Culturally Diverse Gifted Students: From Deficit to Dynamic Thinking. *Theory Into Practice*, 42(3), 217–225.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 253–278.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499>

Gross, T., 2017. A “Forgotten History” Of How the U.S. Government Segregated America. *NPR.org Fresh Air*.

Hair, N. L., Hanson, J. L., Wolfe, B. L., & Pollak, S. D. (2015). Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 169(9), 822–829.  
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.1475>

Hanushek, E. A. (2019, March 19). The Achievement Gap Fails to Close. *Education Next*. <https://www.educationnext.org/achievement-gap-fails-close-half-century-testing-shows-persistent-divide/>

Hill, H.C. (2017). The Coleman Report 50 Years On: What Do We Know about the Role of Schools in Academic Inequality? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716217727510>

Hoffman, M. C. (2018). Culturally Responsive Teaching--Part 1: Acknowledging Culture and Self-Cultivation. *Communique*, 47(2), 1–23.

Kerpelman J, Eryigit S, Stephens C. (2008) African American adolescents’ future education orientation: associations with self-efficacy, ethnic identity, and perceived parental support. *J Youth Adolesc.*;37(8):997–1008. [[Google Scholar](#)] [[Ref list](#)]

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W.F. (2016). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 10–31). Routledge

Li, Y., & Lerner, R. M. (2013). Interrelations of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive school engagement in high school students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42, 20–32.  
doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9857-5

López, F. A. (2017). Altering the Trajectory of the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Asset-Based Pedagogy and Classroom Dynamics. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(2), 193–212.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487116685751>

Lutz, M. (2017). The Hidden Cost of Brown v. Board: African American Educators' Resistance to Desegregating Schools. *Online Journal of Rural Research & Policy*, 12(4).  
<https://doi.org/10.4148/1936-0487.1085>

Miller, L. A., & Harris, V. W. (2018). I Can't Be Racist—I Teach in an Urban School, and I'm a Nice White Lady! *World Journal of Education*, 8(3), 1.  
<https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v8n3p1>

Othman, L. B. (2018). The Problem of Disproportional Representation of Students from Minority Races in Special Education. *International Journal of Special Education*, 33(1), 171–183.

Parkway, C. for the C. C. 1001 M. V., & Alameda, S. 110. (2016, January 19). *Diversity in Children's Literature: Check Your Blind Spot, Part 2*. Center for the Collaborative Classroom.  
<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/diversity-in-childrens-literature-check-your-blind-spot-part-2/>

Peterson, D. S. (2014). A Culturally Responsive Alternative to “Drill and Kill” Literacy Strategies: Deep Roots, Civil Rights. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16(4), 234–239.

Puchner, L., & Markowitz, L. (2015). Do Black Families Value Education? White Teachers, Institutional Cultural Narratives, & Beliefs about African Americans. *Multicultural Education*, 23(1), 9–16.



Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83, 357–385.

doi:10.3102/0034654313483907

Whaley, A. L. (2018). Advances in stereotype threat research on African Americans: Continuing challenges to the validity of its role in the achievement gap. *Social Psychology of Education*, 21(1), 111–137. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-017-9415-9>

Whitney, J. (2018, January 10). *Keeping the Poor Poor: How Government Automates Inequality*. Progressive.Org. <https://progressive.org/api/content/a5251612-f560-11e7-91c9-121bebc5777e/>

Wilson WJ. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf; 1996. pp. 262–279.

## APPENDIX A

### Teacher Training Survey

In preparation for the Horizons at CDS teacher training we would like you to provide us with your initial thoughts about the following questions.

We appreciate your time and look forward to working with you.

How would you define <b>Identity</b> ?					
How would you define <b>Implicit Bias</b> ?					
How would you define <b>Asset Based Pedagogy</b> ?					
How would you define <b>Social Emotional Learning</b> ?					
How would you define <b>Culturally Responsive Literature</b> ?					
	Yes		No		
I have had prior training(s) in one or more of the areas mentioned above.					
In what area(s) have you received training?					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am comfortable exploring and sharing my identity.					
Understanding my identity is important in my role as an educator.					
Understanding my identity is a factor in my student's academic achievement.					
Understanding my student's identity is important to their academic achievement.					
I am comfortable exploring and sharing my implicit bias.					
Understanding my implicit bias is a factor in student's academic achievement.					
Social emotional learning is important to a student's academic achievement.					
I am confident in my ability to lead social emotional learning lessons/activities.					
Exploring culturally responsive literature is important to a student's academic success.					
I am confident in my ability to pick out culturally responsive literature.					
I am confident in my ability to plan and lead discussions and activities connected to culturally responsive literature.					

APPENDIX B

**Teacher Survey on Student Engagement and Academic Achievement**

Please fill out this survey prior to your weekly check-in with the Student and Family Support Specialist

	Every day	3-4 days	1-2 days	0 days	
I conducted Morning Meetings using the Morning Meeting/SEL template provided in the teacher training.					
I conducted lessons that had a specific focus on student assets.					
I engaged in read-aloud activities with my students using the culturally responsive literature provided in the teacher training.					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My students were engaged during Morning Meeting and SEL instruction (actively participated in mood meter check in, discussions, and activities).					
My students were engaged in lessons where the focus was on their identity and assets (actively participated in discussions and activities).					
My students were engaged in lessons that incorporated culturally responsive literature (actively participated in discussions and activities).					
My students made academic gains in reading.					
My students made academic gains in math.					
An example of student engagement this week was...					
An example of academic growth this week was...					

APPENDIX C

**Student Survey on Engagement and Academic Achievement**

Please fill out this survey at the beginning and end of your Horizons at CDS 6-week summer session

Did your class have Morning Meeting?	YES		NO			
If yes to what extent did you participate in those meetings A lot to Not at all	All the time		Sometimes		Not at all	
	NA	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I participate in morning meeting activities						
I participate in discussions about my feelings						
I participate in activities where I learn about myself or explore my unique qualities						
I participate in discussions about books that are read aloud to me						
I am good at reading						
Reading is easy for me						
I am good at math						
Math is easy for me						

