

**ADDRESSING THE DISPARITY OF BLACK MALE EDUCATORS:
BUILDING CAPACITY TO MENTOR BLACK MALE YOUTH**

A disquisition presented to the faculty of the Graduate School of
Western Carolina University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Educational Leadership.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	ii
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	x
Abstract	xi
Disquisition	xii
The Problem: Disparity Among Male Educators Compared to Black Students	1
Literature Review	6
Theoretical Framework	14
The Local Context: Johnston County Public Schools	15
My Professional Role and Positionality	20
Causal Analysis	24
Improvement Initiative Design	31
Theory of Improvement	34
Design Team	35
Implementation Activities and Timeline	40
Improvement Initiative Session	42
Analysis Plan for Improvement Initiative	50
Data Collection	59
Data Analysis	61
Quantitative Analysis	62
Qualitative Analysis	62
Results	63
Implication	86
Recommendation for Practitioners	89
Direction for Future Research	90
Limitation of the Study	92
Conclusion	95
References	97
Appendix A	109

Appendix B 110
Appendix C 112
Appendix D 113
Appendix E 114
Appendix F 119
Appendix G 123
Appendix H 125
Appendix I 127
Appendix J 130
Appendix K 132
Appendix L 134

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1. Infographic of the Statistics by Race of Teachers in the United States	3
2. JCPS Secondary School Teachers Infographics	17
3. Causal Analysis of Four Overarching Themes Illustrating Why There Is a Lack of Black Male Teachers in JCPS.	25
4. Addressing the Aim: Driving Toward Improvement: Driver Diagram	31
5. Improvement Initiative Timeline	42
6. Professional Development Sessions Content	44
7. PDSA Cycle of Professional Development Sessions	52
8. Measures Matrix	61
9. Results from Driver Measure: Sense of Mentorship and Community	65
10. Results from Driver Measure: Connections	66
11. Results from Process Measure: Appropriate Length of Session	74
12. Results from Balance Measure: Leaving the Profession and Major Events	77
13. Results from Balance Measure: Family, Work, and Outside Obligation	78
14. Results from Outcome Measure: Mentorship and Support	80
15. Results from Outcome Measure: Lead and Recruit	81
16. Results from Outcome Measure: Perception of District Support	82
17. Results from Outcome Measure: Increased Interaction with Black Males	83
18. Results from Outcome Measure: Participate in Black Male Mentorship Group (throughout the year)	84

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Demographics of Johnston County Public Schools Teachers	19
2. Demographics of Participants	39
3. Improvement Initiative Practical Measures	53
4. Measures and Data Methods	54

ABSTRACT

ADDRESSING THE DISPARITY OF BLACK MALE EDUCATORS: BUILDING CAPACITY TO MENTOR BLACK MALE YOUTH

Tobias De’Von Hocutt Sr., Doctor of Educational Leadership

Western Carolina University (July, 2023)

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This study aimed to build the capacity of Black male educators in Johnston County Public Schools (JCPS) to mentor Black male youth into teaching careers. My theory of improvement holds that by building knowledge and mentoring capacity among current Black male educators in JCPS, we can better mentor Black male students into education as a career. A causal analysis was conducted to examine the factors that contribute to the low number of Black male teachers in JCPS. The theoretical framework incorporated Critical Race Theory and explored systemic barriers faced by Black male educators in the teaching field. The intervention consisted of four online professional development sessions, each lasting 1.5 hours. The primary objective of these sessions was to build a network among current Black male educators and inform the participants about the importance of mentoring Black male youth to encourage them to pursue teaching as a profession. The session encompassed various topics, such as shared stories and experiences, the effectiveness of a mentoring program, the current state of JCPS, and educational opportunities. The objective was to raise participants' awareness about mentoring and empower them to share this valuable knowledge within their schools. Ultimately, the long-term goal of this initiative was for participants to serve as mentors, inspiring and guiding young

Black males toward careers in teaching, with the potential to increase the number of Black male educators in JCPS.

Keywords: Black male educators, minority teachers, underrepresentation, mentoring, building capacity, support network

DISQUISITION

Historically, Executive Doctor of Education (EdD) programs have been designed for school leaders (practitioners), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs have been designed for professors and researchers. Despite the type of scholar each program was designed to train, both programs' curricula and culminating experiences often require a traditional five-chapter research-based dissertation. Across the United States, EdD programs commonly require the traditional, research-based dissertation as the capstone experience. Compared to a traditional PhD dissertation, the disquisition focuses on utilizing existing research to solve an educational problem. Lomotey (2020) contended that scholar-practitioners should be able to address the issues they deal with in their workplaces daily. Lomotey (2020) further posited that most traditional EdD programs do not prepare school leaders to be practical problem solvers. Having identified this inadequacy, faculty at Western Carolina University developed courses, the disquisition, and other culminating scholarly activities that focus on identifying, exploring, and addressing problems of practice.

Lomotey (2020) described a disquisition as a formal problem-based discourse in which a problem of practice is identified, related, analyzed, and addressed in-depth. The disquisition is a research study that focuses on addressing problems of practice experienced by a school, community college, four-year college, and university leaders. Hence, given its name to speak to the apparent divergence from the conventional dissertation, Lomotey (2020) asserted that the disquisition symbolizes a unique conceptual change that requires a new label. Moreover, Lomotey (2020) informed that the disquisition seeks to extend the boundaries of traditional thinking beyond the traditional five-chapter research dissertation - focusing on problems of practice and appropriate interventions and their assessments. In this disquisition, I created a

professional development series to build the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth into the field of education.

The Problem: Disparity Among Black Male Educators Compared to Black Students

A National Issue

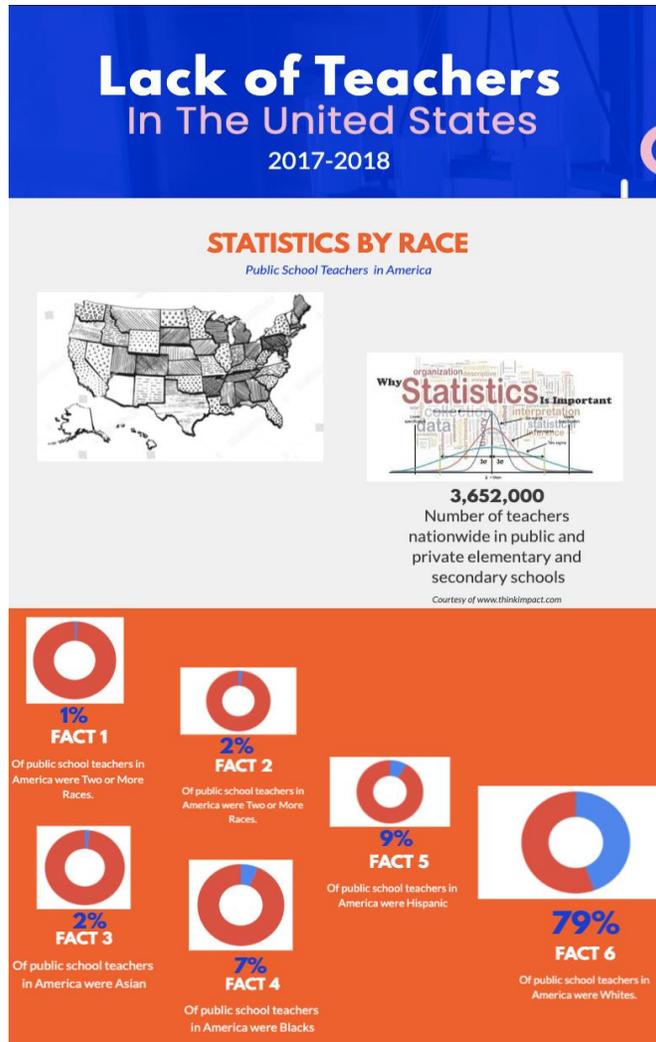
The desegregation of schools in the United States had a profound and lasting impact on Black communities, as it resulted in African American students being bused out of their neighborhoods to attend predominantly white schools, leading to a ripple effect of community disintegration. Before desegregation, there were many Black teachers. As a result, Black students performed better in school. In "The Lost Education of Horace Tate: Uncovering the Hidden Heroes Who Fought for Justice in Schools," Walker (2018) highlighted that the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, decision resulted in a substantial loss of Black teachers and school leaders. Integration efforts led to the transfer of Black students to previously white-only schools, which subsequently led to the non-retention of a number of Black teachers. "A side effect of this was a considerable drop in the academic performance of Black students. Black students' academic failure resulted from the loss of Black teachers" (Sealey-Ruiz & Lewis, 2011, p. 189). Siddle-Walker (1996) argued that desegregation did not necessarily improve educational outcomes for Black students but instead disrupted important community connections and support networks, contributing to ongoing challenges facing African American communities. Ladson-Billings (2006) viewed the forced desegregation of schools as a debt owed to African American communities, with the resulting loss of community cohesion and social networks negatively impacting the education of African American students. Overall, desegregation had societal changes, highlighting the current identified need for mentorship programs and a focus on community building to promote academic success and retain Black male teachers in schools.

The makeup of the public school teaching profession is a matter of concern due to various factors. One issue that has been raised is the retention of teachers. According to a

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022) report, about 17% of public school teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. This turnover rate can be costly for schools and negatively impact student learning. In the United States during the 2017-18 academic year, approximately 79% of public school teachers were White, 9% were Hispanic, 7% were Black, 2% were Asian, 2% identified as two or more races, and 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native. Additionally, those who were Pacific Islanders made up less than one percent of public school teachers (Schaeffer, 2021). Overall, ensuring that there are enough qualified and committed teachers in our public schools is an important issue for the education system and society as a whole. Figure 1 is an infographic that represents the lack of teachers in the United States as well as the disparity according to race.

Figure 1

Infographic of the Statistics by Race of Teachers in United States



U.S. Department of Education (n.d.)

The Drive Task Force was assigned to develop an actionable plan aimed at enhancing racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity within North Carolina's educator workforce. The DRIVE Task Force in North Carolina was established to focus on "Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education." Comprised of various stakeholders, including parents, educators, administrators, education advocates, representatives from state and local government,

and employers, the Task Force aims to improve equity and inclusion in the education profession. Its primary goal is to submit a report to the Office of the Governor, assessing the state's progress in increasing educator diversity in K-12 public schools and proposing strategies to enhance diversity in the short, mid-range, and long term. The report will identify stakeholders, assets, and funding sources to support the recruitment, retention, development, and support of educators of color. Ultimately, the DRIVE Task Force seeks to increase diverse representation in classrooms, positively impacting student success and addressing the need for qualified teachers in North Carolina schools while fostering a more representative and inclusive vision for education in the state (North Carolina Governor's Office, 2023). Highlighting the disparity between the number of students of color in classrooms and the representation of minority teachers, the Drive Report (2021) revealed a considerable gap. Highlighting the disparity between the number of students of color in classrooms and the representation of minority teachers, the Drive Report (2021) revealed a considerable gap. The U.S. Department of Education states that the non-white population constitutes approximately 50 percent of the public school student body, a proportion projected to rise in the coming years (Moss, 2016). Nearly 80% of teachers in the U.S. are white, but most students are of color (NCES, 2022). That makes teachers considerably less racially and ethnically diverse than their students and the nation as a whole (Geiger, 2018). Today, of the 3.5 million teachers in America's classrooms (King, 2019), only eight percent are Black teachers, and approximately two percent of these teachers are Black males (NCES, 2010). Over the past few decades, the Black teaching force in the U.S. has dropped significantly (Lewis, 2006; Lewis et al., 2008; Milner & Howard, 2004), and this educational crisis shows no signs of ending in the near future (Sealey-Ruiz et al., 2014). During the 2005-06 academic year, African American teacher turnover was 20.7% compared to 19.4% for other teachers of color and 16.4% for white

teachers. There is a lack of recruitment, retention, and development of Black male teachers (Wood, 2021). One of the reasons that could cause this high attrition rate is the environment/working conditions. These conditions have made it difficult for Black male teachers to teach and positively impact their students (Irvine, 2011).

The declining number of Black male teachers is a matter of concern, particularly as the nation's public school student population becomes increasingly diverse (Brown, 2014). Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of access to Black faculty members in influencing the educational outcomes of Black students. Similarly, Dee (2005) conducted research titled "Representation in the Classroom: The Effect of Own-race Teachers on Student Achievement," revealing that Black students who have at least one Black teacher during their elementary school years' experience enhanced educational outcomes, including decreased dropout rates and a greater likelihood of enrolling in advanced coursework. Harris (2016) conducted another study titled "Teacher Race and School Discipline," indicating that Black students, especially males, face a lower risk of suspensions or disciplinary actions when taught by Black teachers. This suggests that the presence of Black faculty members contributes to the establishment of a more equitable and supportive school environment. Furthermore, Jackson (2018) explored the long-term impacts of same-race teachers in the study "The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers," revealing that exposure to same-race teachers has enduring positive effects on the educational outcomes of Black students, resulting in higher rates of high school graduation and increased likelihood of college enrollment (Dee, 2005; Harris, 2016; Jackson, 2018).

The academic outcomes of Black males in the United States continue to lag behind their White and Asian peers. Additionally, Black males are disproportionately suspended or expelled

from school, and less likely to graduate from high school or attend college. The lack of diversity among school leaders and administrators further exacerbates the issue, as it hinders cultural responsiveness and understanding of the experiences and needs of Black male students. To address this issue, initiatives such as recruitment and retention efforts, diversity training for educators and school leaders, and implementing culturally responsive teaching practices are important in improving academic outcomes for Black male students. To further enhance academic outcomes for Black male students, it is essential to recognize the positive impact that an increased representation of Black male teachers can have. Research has shown that Black male teachers in the classroom improve student success across the board (Milner, 2006) When Black male students have Black male teachers as role models and mentors, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and connection in the school environment (Brooms, 2019). Black male teachers can serve as relatable figures who understand the unique challenges and experiences faced by Black male students, leading to increased engagement and motivation to succeed academically. Moreover, having BTs in the classroom can challenge stereotypes and implicit biases, promoting a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Initiatives focused on recruiting, retaining, and supporting BTs, combined with diversity training for educators and school leaders, and implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, create a approach to improving academic outcomes for Black male students, fostering a positive impact on their educational journeys and future success (Howard, 2016).

Literature Review

Education is a vital aspect of society where we acquire essential knowledge, such as facts, job skills, and cultural values (Little, 2023). Within this context, we encounter certain challenges, including deficit ideology, the underrepresentation of Black teachers, the disparity between Black male teachers and students of color, and having teachers who share the same

background as students. Education not only imparts knowledge but also molds our conduct and imparts morals and ethics (Little, 2023). In this review of literature, I examine issues that lead to deficit ideology, the underrepresentation of Black teachers, the disparity between Black male teachers and students of color, and the student experience with teachers of color.

Deficit Ideology

Deficit ideology in education refers to the perspective that certain student groups, like Black male students, are inherently deficient and face challenges in academic success (NWEA, 2022). This viewpoint intended to focus on weaknesses rather than strengths and can manifest in assumptions about disadvantaged backgrounds, academic shortcomings, and behavioral issues among Black male students (Zhao, 2016). Depending on teachers' deficit ideology, students may receive different opportunities, resources, and instruction, perpetuating disparities (Zhao, 2016). Robinson and Clardy (2011) emphasized the importance of challenging deficit thinking for culturally diverse students.

The impact of deficit ideology on the educational experiences and outcomes of Black male students, leading to lower engagement, academic achievement, and higher disciplinary actions. To address this issue, educators and policymakers must confront the biases and assumptions underlying deficit ideology (Howard, 2021). Creating a culturally responsive and inclusive learning environment that values students' diverse backgrounds is crucial (Gorski, 2016). Milner (2013) stressed the significance of diversifying the teaching workforce, including increasing the representation of Black Male Teachers (BMTs), to challenge and counteract deficit ideologies. BMTs can serve as positive role models, dispelling stereotypes and fostering inclusive classrooms. By recognizing the impact of deficit ideology and promoting a diverse

teaching force, educators can create a more equitable and empowering educational environment, supporting the academic success of all students, including Black males.

Student Experience with Teachers of Color

Recognizing the role of Black male teachers in the success of Black students, research consistently underscores their positive impact on student outcomes (Lindsay, 2020; Rosen, 2018). However, there is a shortage of Black male teachers in the United States, as indicated by demographic data from the National Center for Education Statistics (Mawhinney & Mulero, 2012; NCES, 2022; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Research studies consistently demonstrate the positive impact of Black male teachers on student outcomes, highlighting the long-term effects of exposure to such teachers (Lindsay, 2020; Rosen, 2018). Having at least one Black male teacher has been shown to improve graduation rates and decrease the likelihood of high school dropout (Rosen, 2018). Moreover, the increased representation of Black teachers, in general, leads to improved behavior and a decrease in disciplinary actions among Black students (Gasman, 2021). These findings underscore the increasing presence of Black male teachers to positively influence the educational journeys of Black students.

To address the shortage of Black male teachers, various initiatives and programs have been implemented. The My Brother's Keeper program aims to provide opportunities and support for boys and young men of color, including access to high-quality education and mentorship (Duncan, 2010). The Pathway to Teaching (P2T) program encourages high school students of color to consider careers in teaching by providing college readiness skills, college credit, and field experience (Beuten, 2017). The Call Me MISTER program offers scholarships, mentoring, and professional development to Black male students interested in pursuing teaching careers (Longwood University, 2020). These programs play a vital role in increasing the number of

Black male teachers and providing positive role models for students of color while also addressing their academic and social needs.

According to Fregni (2020), students do, indeed, benefit from having teachers who look like them. Research has shown that Black male students are disproportionately affected by the effects of systemic racism and other forms of oppression, leading to lower educational attainment, lower graduation rates, and higher rates of suspension and expulsion (Borowski & Will, 2021). Having Black male teachers in the classroom can help to counter these adverse effects by providing positive role models and creating a sense of cultural responsiveness and relevance in the curriculum. Thus, from a critical race perspective, increasing the representation of Black male teachers in the classroom is essential for promoting equity and social justice in education.

The presence of Black male teachers positively impacts students and improves school culture. By providing students with role models and mentors who share their cultural background and experiences, Black male teachers can help to improve academic outcomes, support social-emotional development, and promote a positive school culture. Black male teachers serve as role models, mentors, and father figures for underrepresented students (Callahan, 2020). Furthermore, having Black male teachers in schools can increase the diversity and representation of teachers, which is important for students to see teachers who look like them and have similar experiences. Black male teachers can serve as role models and mentors for students, particularly Black male students who may not have many positive male role models in their lives. They can provide guidance, support, and encouragement to students, helping them to succeed academically and personally. Black male teachers can help to support the social-emotional development of students. They can serve as positive male role models, helping to foster a sense of belonging and

community for students who may not have strong male figures in their lives. Black male teachers can also have a positive impact on the school culture overall. They can help to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and serve as advocates for students of color. Their presence can also help to counteract stereotypes and biases that may exist in the education system.

According to Milner (2011), “Black male teachers’ practices in classrooms with students can serve as exemplars from which other educators can learn, and Black Males and Culturally Responsive Teaching develop” (p. 418). Thus, it is important for schools and education systems to ensure that students have access to diverse teaching staff so that all students can benefit from these positive experiences. Students experience academic outcomes and positive impacts relative to college aspirations and self-confidence; however, data illustrate that people of color become educators at lower rates than their white peers, and educators of color leave the teaching profession at higher rates (McKenna, 2018).

The positive impact of having Black teachers, particularly for Black students and Black boys, is evident in various educational outcomes. According to Rosen (2018), an initiative in 2018 revealed that Black students who had a single Black teacher were 13% more likely to enroll in college, and with two Black teachers, that likelihood increased to 32%. Specifically, for Black boys from low-income families, having a Black teacher reduced high school dropout rates by 39% (Rosen, 2018). These statistics emphasize the influence that Black teachers can have on educational trajectories. Furthermore, research suggests that the presence of Black male educators can lead to reduced dropout rates, increased enrollment in college-level courses for Black students (Camera, 2018), lower suspension rates (Cheng, 2017), and serve as an inspiration for more Black males to pursue careers in teaching (Causey, 2021). Collectively,

these findings underscore the importance of increasing the representation of Black male teachers in the education system to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of Black students."

It is imperative that all teachers empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural relevance to impart knowledge and skills and disrupt educational inequities (Gulati, 2021). Having the accessibility to a full range of high school math and science courses necessary for college is imperative. Only 57% of Black students have access to these college-readiness courses compared to 71% of white students (Bridges, 2020). Anderson (2018) reported that Black male students are more likely to take remedial college courses than other students. Inadequate preparation also shows up in standardized test scores. Sixty-one percent of Black students who took the ACT in the 2015 high school graduating class met none of the four ACT college readiness benchmarks, nearly twice the 31% rate for all students. Low test scores make the rest of the college application process more difficult (Bridges, 2020).

The lack of pre-collegiate courses being introduced to our underrepresented high school students of color is one of my top issues. During the past 50 years, the U.S. has seen racial and ethnic disparities in higher education enrollment and attainment and gaps in earnings, employment, and other related outcomes for students from communities of color. Specifically, the bachelor's degree attainment gap has doubled, from nine to 20% for Hispanic residents in 1974 and six to 13% for Black residents since 1964 (US Education, 2016). These opportunities to enroll in college classes while in high school should be more accessible to our underrepresented youth, specifically our Black male high school students. This will give these students a chance to complete college courses and earn college credits that they will take with them upon graduation.

In many cases, students can also earn dual credits - meeting high school graduation requirements with college courses (NCDPI, n.d.). All school districts should be providing equitable resources such as better peer support for our underrepresented youth (mentors), better accessibility to financial opportunities, and scholarship opportunities targeting our underrepresented youth. They should also be intentional in elaborating on courses and their importance. There is also work that remains to be done at the collegiate level. At the bachelor's level, roughly three percent of education students are African American; at the master's level, they make up four percent of education students (King, 2019).

Mentorship of Black Male Teachers

Mentorship plays a major role in the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers, contributing to their emotional well-being, professional growth, and career advancement. Additionally, mentorship programs have the potential to enhance teacher diversity and improve academic outcomes for Black male students. For instance, Bristol (2018) conducted a study highlighting the criticality of mentorship programs in the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in urban schools. The study used phenomenology to explore the experiences of 27 Black male teachers in an urban school district, revealing that they felt primarily positioned as disciplinarians by their peers and school administrators. Rejecting stereotypes, they focused on attending to students' social and emotional development to better engage and manage behavior, emphasizing the need for further research and support for Black male teachers. This study provides insights into the experiences of Black male teachers, revealing the need to challenge stereotypes and biases they face in the education system. By emphasizing the importance of attending to students' social and emotional development, the study informs strategies to build the capacity of Black male educators as effective mentors for Black male youth, promoting

improved academic outcomes and personal growth. Similarly, Osborne (2018) emphasized how mentorship provides the necessary support and guidance for Black male teachers to thrive in urban educational settings.

Community support is also a vital component in creating an inclusive and nurturing environment for Black male teachers. Howard and Flennaugh (2011) underscored the importance of community support in fostering a welcoming atmosphere for these teachers. Additionally, Johnson and Borman (2010) discussed the role of community engagement in promoting teacher diversity and enhancing outcomes for students of color. Consequently, investing in mentorship programs and community support systems becomes imperative to establish a diverse and supportive environment for Black male teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for Black students.

The implementation of mentoring programs targeting the recruitment and retention of Black male teachers in schools can be justified by the critical role played by mentorship and community support in providing emotional, professional, and career guidance to these teachers and promoting teacher diversity, and improving outcomes for Black male students. Bristol, White, and Wright (2018) conducted a study that showed how mentorship programs could be critical in recruiting and retaining Black male teachers in urban schools. In 2018, White and Wright conducted a study focusing on mentorship programs and their impact on recruiting and retaining Black male teachers in urban schools. The study aimed to address the challenges faced by Black male teachers in urban settings. The researchers explored how mentorship programs could help attract and retain these teachers. The study likely investigated the effectiveness of mentorship programs in supporting and empowering Black male teachers, with the goal of improving teacher diversity and educational outcomes in urban schools.

Osborne (2018) highlighted the importance of mentorship in providing Black male teachers with the support and guidance they need to be successful in urban schools. Howard and Flennaugh (2011) argued that community support is essential in creating a welcoming and supportive environment for Black male teachers. Johnson and Borman (2010) discussed the role of community engagement in promoting teacher diversity and improving outcomes for students of color. Thus, investing in mentorship programs and community support systems can help to create a more diverse and supportive environment for Black male teachers, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for Black students in our schools.

Theoretical Framework

The lack of representation and visibility of Black teachers in positions of power and authority contributes to a sense of disconnection and marginalization for Black male students, perpetuating disparities in educational outcomes and limiting opportunities for success. Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a lens to understand how systemic racism and other forms of oppression intersect to create and perpetuate barriers for Black individuals in education (Bell, 1992). This recognition of racism's permanence and structural nature emphasizes how these intersections maintain inequities in various sectors, including education, limiting full participation and representation for Black people (Bell, 1992). The historical trend of perpetuating white ideologies in the education system has made it welcoming and advantageous for white individuals to pursue careers, while desegregation policies unintentionally led to a hostile environment for Black teachers, further exacerbating the underrepresentation of Black educators. To address these issues, social justice leadership and critical race work in education are essential to challenge and transform systems, promote equity, and create a more inclusive educational experience for all students. Implementing inclusive and engaged pedagogy,

recognizing and dismantling inequitable systems, and nurturing positive relationships with marginalized students are key steps in empowering Black male students and educators in their pursuit of educational success.

The Local Context: Johnston County Public Schools

In this section, I review the state and local community context, demographics of JCPS teachers, and student factors, explain my professional role and positionality, and present a causal analysis of the problem.

North Carolina and JCPS

The number of teachers of color is disproportionate to students of color in North Carolina. Seventy-nine percent of K-12 teachers are white, while 51% of K-12 public school students are non-white (NC DPI Statistical Profile, 2021), which indicates that the number of teachers of color is disproportionate to students of color in North Carolina.

JCPS is a growing school district located in the Piedmont area, approximately 25 miles east of Raleigh, North Carolina. In the 2010 census, JCPS was the seventh-largest school system in North Carolina. JCPS has over 37,000 students enrolled in their 46 schools spanning from PK through 12. The institution prides itself on “empowering our students to enrich their world by facilitating learning through relationships and relevant, innovative experiences” (JCPS, 2021).

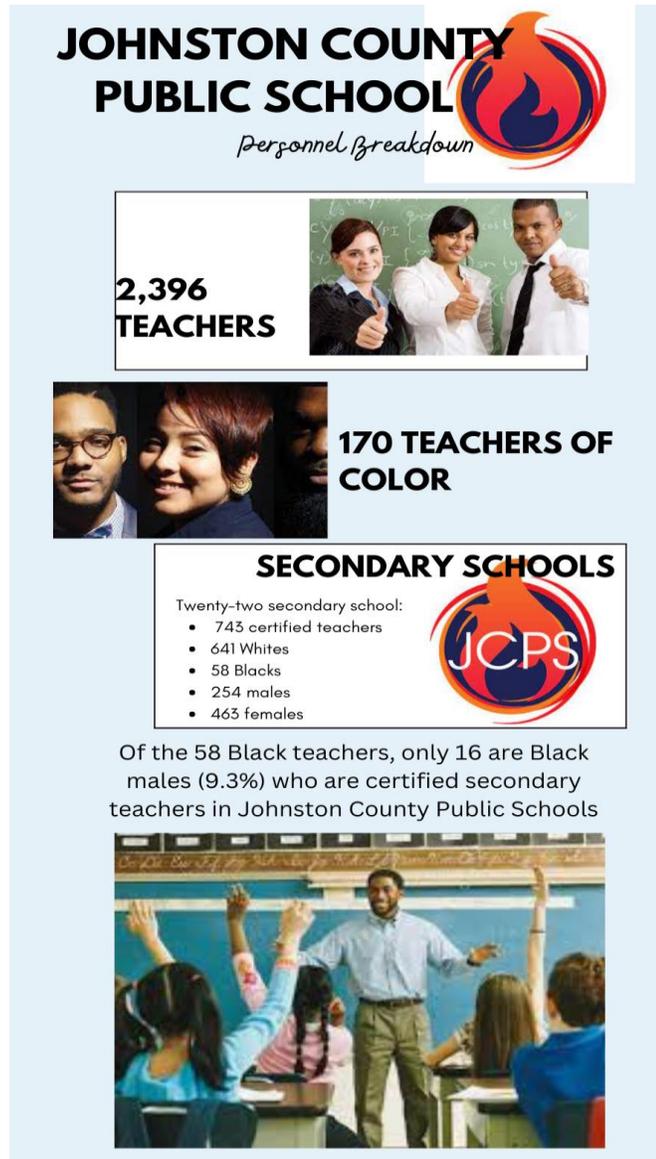
JCPS Teachers

JCPS currently has 2,396 teachers, and 170 are teachers of color. In their 22 secondary schools, they have 743 certified teachers, 641 whites, 58 Blacks, 254 are males, and 463 are females. Of the 58 Black teachers, only 16 are Black males (9.3%) who are certified secondary teachers in JCPS (Statistical Profile, 2020).

Gov. Roy Cooper's Teacher Advisor, LaTanya Pattillo stated that she has been advocating for more teachers of color. "As our student demographics change, we need to consider the importance of representation," Pattillo said. A recent article by ABC 11 Eyewitness News (2020) noted the importance of considering the need for students not only to see themselves reflected in the classroom but to provide them with opportunities, have high expectations, and for students to feel valued. Figure 2 is an infographic that represents JCPS secondary school teachers. This image breaks down the district teaching force by gender and race.

Figure 2

JCPS Secondary School Teachers Infographic



(NCDPI, 2021)

In 2018, for elementary teachers, approximately 10.32% were male, while 89.68% were female. In terms of race, 62.22% were White, and 37.78% were Black. For secondary teachers in the same year, 27.69% were male, and 72.31% were female. In 2019, similar patterns were observed for elementary teachers, with 9.21% being male and 90.79% female. In terms of race,

67.12% were White, and 32.88% were Black. For secondary teachers, 37.08% were male, and 62.92% were female. The vast majority, 92.84%, were White, while 7.16% were Black. Moving on to 2020, the percentages for elementary teachers showed a slight change, with 9.61% being male and 90.39% female. Among them, 62.57% were White, and 37.43% were Black. For secondary teachers, 35.42% were male, and 64.58% were female. Similarly, the majority, 91.70%, were White, and 8.30% were Black. In 2021, the pattern continued, with 10.01% of elementary teachers being male and 89.99% female. Regarding race, 62.54% were White, and 37.46% were Black. For secondary teachers, 35.95% were male, and 64.05% were female. Again, the majority, 91.67%, were White, while 8.33% were Black.

Table 1 gives a detailed breakdown of the demographics of JCPS teachers from 2018 to 2021. The demographics of teachers in the education system were analyzed and the numbers were converted into percentages to gain understanding of the distribution. These percentages illustrate the gender and racial distribution across different assignments and emphasize the need to address disparities and strive for greater diversity and inclusion within JCPS.

Table 1*Demographics of Johnston County Public Schools Teachers*

Public School Personnel Summary
 Johnston County Public Schools
 School Years from 2018-2021

Year	Assignment Classification	Gender Male	Gender Female	Race White	Race Black
2018	Elementary Teachers	155	1347	1401	79
2018	Secondary Teachers	241	629	48	48
2019	Elementary Teachers	145	1428	1450	96
2019	Secondary Teachers	248	421	605	47
2020	Elementary Teachers	149	1399	1424	97
2020	Secondary Teachers	254	463	641	58
2021	Elementary Teachers	153	1376	1406	97
2021	Secondary Teachers	267	476	641	58

(NCDPI, 2021)

Furthermore, underrepresenting Black teachers can result in implicit bias and discrimination toward Black students. Black students may be disproportionately disciplined or have lower expectations set for them by non-Black teachers, which can negatively impact their academic performance and self-esteem.

There is an alarmingly low number of Black male teachers in JCPS compared to white teachers. Because there are not enough Black male teachers in JCPS, there are few educators that can serve as important role models for Black male students, helping them to see themselves reflected in the education system and encouraging them to pursue careers in education.

In 2021, JCPS faced challenges in student performance, with 15 schools receiving a D or F grade for student performance and 14 schools categorized as low-performing. Additionally, 18 schools did not meet growth targets. These concerning statistics serve as a starting point for examining the factors associated with the underrepresentation of Black male teachers and their potential impact on student outcomes.

The connection between lower-performing schools and the underrepresentation of Black male teachers is an important area of analysis. Research has shown that the presence of Black male teachers can have a positive influence on student outcomes, including improved graduation rates, reduced dropout rates, and increased enrollment in college-level courses (Rosen, 2018; Camera, 2018). Therefore, exploring the reasons behind the limited representation of Black male teachers in schools with lower performance can shed light on how this disparity may contribute to the educational challenges faced by students in these settings.

By investigating the factors associated with the underrepresentation of Black male teachers in JCPS schools experiencing academic difficulties, I can gain valuable insights into potential solutions and strategies to enhance student outcomes. It is important to examine recruitment and retention efforts, cultural responsiveness within schools, and the creation of inclusive and supportive environments that foster a sense of belonging for all students. Addressing the underrepresentation of Black male teachers and promoting their inclusion in these schools has the potential to impact student achievement and create more equitable educational opportunities positively.

My Professional Role & Positionality in JCPS

As a Black male educator, I possess a deep understanding of the culture, values, and beliefs that shape the experiences of Black students. Reflecting on my own journey through the

educational system, I recognize the need for mentoring programs like the one at hand, as I would have greatly benefited from such support. Growing up as a Black cisgender, educated, middle-class, able-bodied English-speaking man in eastern North Carolina and attending Johnston County Public Schools, I personally and professionally attach great value to this initiative. I am aware that many Black male students have been navigating an educational system that has failed to adequately support them in reaching their fullest potential.

Dumas (2016) asserted that various factors, including family income, neighborhood resources, and access to quality child care and schooling, can impact children's ability to thrive and perform in their social environments. In my case, attending low-performing schools was not a matter of choice but a circumstance imposed by the limited options available to me. As a result, my parents had to contend with my behavioral issues, which often resulted in suspensions.

Dumas (2016) further explained that while the significance of both biological and psychosocial development is acknowledged by critical childhood scholars, it is equally important to recognize how children's actions within their environments shape their development and the world around them. Throughout my academic journey, from elementary to secondary school, I never had the opportunity to learn from a teacher who looked like me. Davis (2003) emphasized that the early educational experiences of African American boys significantly impact their academic trajectory.

The failures of the system also meant that my undiagnosed learning disability (dyslexia) went unnoticed during my elementary and secondary years. Due to behavioral issues, I was fast-tracked through high school without access to any college readiness programs, which left me unprepared for what lay ahead. Gordon (1999) noted that being at risk of failure is often a consequence of the failure or incapacity of the developmental environment to meet the needs of the individual. Gordon suggests that focusing on addressing deficient environments may be more

productive than solely focusing on the characteristics of the person. Undoubtedly, the shortcomings of the educational system played a role in my own challenges and struggles.

As a Black male educator, I deeply empathize with the struggles and negative connotations associated with being a minority in areas dominated by patriarchy and white privilege. Navigating whiteness over the past 14 years within the public school system has been challenging, given the entrenched nature of white privilege within JCPS. As an administrator in JCPS, I am personally invested in increasing the representation of Black male teachers in my district. I firmly believe that representation matters, as having a teacher from the same background can foster deeper connections and more engaged learning (Beach et al., 2022). Moreover, a growing body of research supports the notion that children benefit in numerous ways from having a teacher who shares their race or ethnicity (Ordway, 2022). At the core of my disquisition lies the understanding that addressing the underrepresentation of Black male teachers and students in JCPS strengthens our schools and communities. By providing access to resources and cultivating a vision that supports these students, I can work towards a more equitable future.

Throughout my journey as a Black male teacher, I have experienced instances of racism and discrimination. In my first year of teaching, I faced the disheartening situation of a parent requesting that their child be removed from my class solely based on the fact that I was a Black male teacher. The principal then relayed to me the parent's discomfort with his daughter having a Black male teacher, an experience she had not encountered before.

During that initial year of teaching, I found myself as the sole Black male teacher in my school. As a lateral entry teacher, I faced the additional challenge of having limited background knowledge in the specific content area I was assigned to teach. The responsibilities of lesson

planning, parent communication, navigating school technology systems, and inputting grades were all new to me and proved to be quite overwhelming. Unfortunately, I received little support from both the administration and my colleagues within the building, and even the district office failed to provide the necessary assistance.

These experiences left me feeling hurt, lonely, uncomfortable, and deeply concerned. It was during this time that I began to recognize the magnitude of this issue and felt compelled to address it on a larger scale. However, I remained steadfast and determined not to let these experiences break me, knowing that my passion and dedication could still positively impact and inspire students. As a testament to this dedication, I was honored as the 2014 Beginning Teacher of the Year for JCPS and received the 2017 "Leading with the Heart" award for consistently going above and beyond inside and outside the classroom. This accolade, inspired by Mike Krzyewski's (2001) book, recognizes individuals within the school system who demonstrate leadership, compassion, and heart in their daily work.

For me, education is not merely about providing access to knowledge; it is about engaging in the intellectual and spiritual growth of aspiring future educators. I am acutely aware of the pressing need for more Black male teachers and support networks for current Black male teachers. Educational leadership must critically examine historical outcomes in order to address the disparities in Black male teacher representation and the subsequent impact on student outcomes. Our goal for increased representation must remain just, equitable, and unwavering. The students of JCPS will undoubtedly benefit from having educators who look like them and share their experiences and identities. Recognizing and addressing this reality could ground JCPS in a more equitable and just educational environment for all its students.

Causal Analysis

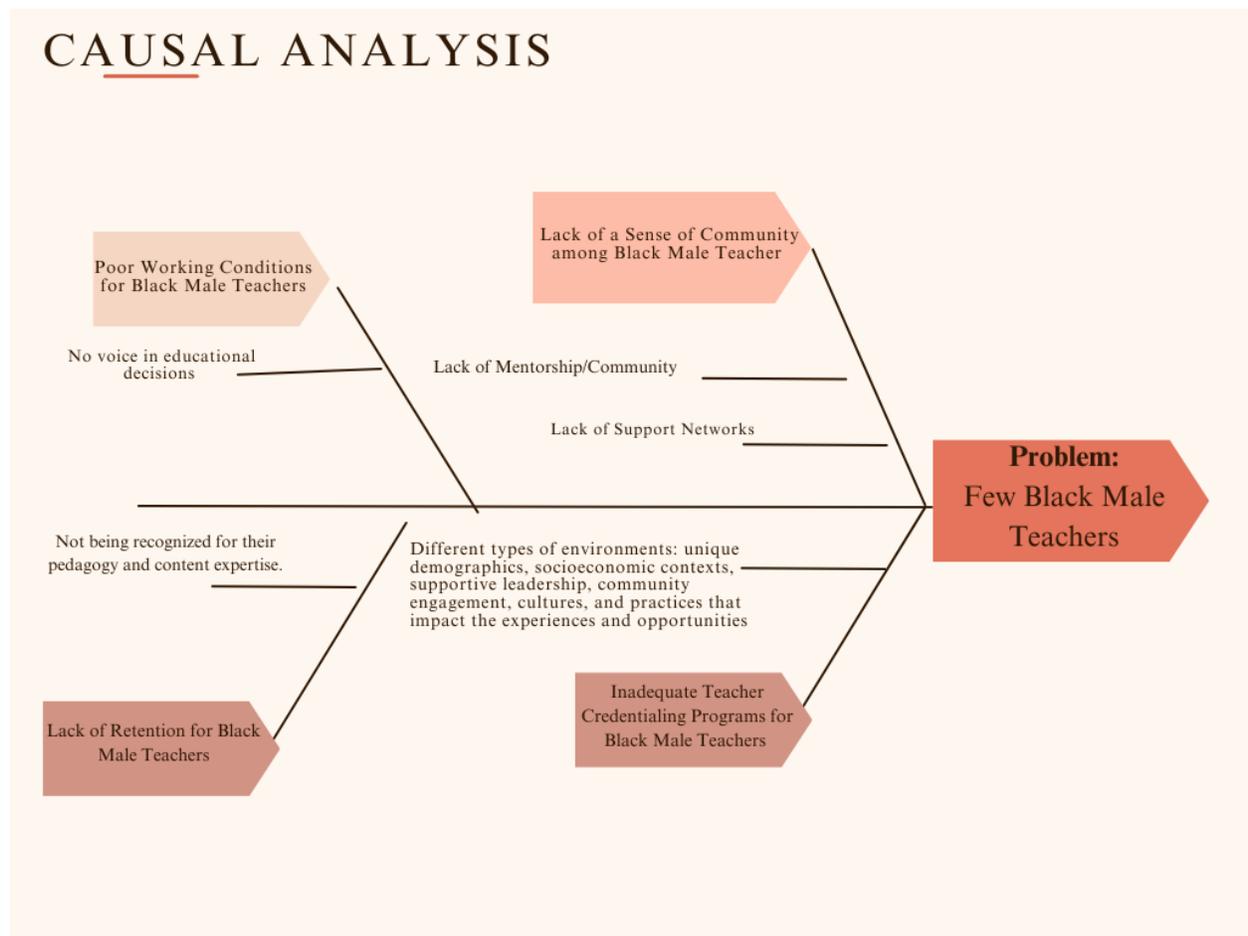
In this section, I provide a causal analysis of the identified problem and a driver diagram to address the problem. A causal analysis is defined as a process for identifying and addressing the causes and effects of an identified problem (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). This improvement tool helps to identify the root causes of a problem instead of simply addressing the symptoms of a problem. I start with a description of causal analysis as an improvement tool, then follow with supporting literature along with a figure that identifies four primary root causes of the identified problem.

This tool helped identify four potential root causes contributing to the underrepresentation of Black male educators which may have negative impacts on the issue. These causes include poor working conditions for Black male teachers, lack of retention for Black male teachers, inadequate teacher credentialing programs for Black male teachers, and lack of a sense of community among Black male teachers. Each cause has a sub-cause (“Why does this happen?”), which helped me to identify these leading causes. For the lack of retention of Black male teachers, one sub-cause was not being recognized for their pedagogy and content expertise. Another sub-cause for inadequate teacher credentialing programs for Black male teachers was the presence of different types of environments which can have unique demographics, socioeconomic contexts, supportive leadership, community engagement, cultures, and practices that impact the experiences and opportunities available to teachers. Poor working conditions for Black male teachers constituted another sub-cause, specifically limited professional autonomy in the classroom and no voice in education decisions; and for lack of a sense of community among Black male teachers, the sub-cause was the lack of mentorship, and support networks.

Figure 3 depicts four overarching causes illustrating why there is a lack of Black male teachers in JCPS.

Figure 3

Causal Analysis of Four Overarching Themes Illustrating a Lack of Black Male Teachers in JCPS.



Poor Working Conditions for Black Male Teachers

Black male teachers face numerous challenges in the teaching profession, stemming from poor working conditions such as large class sizes, outdated resources, and limited support from administrators and the community. These obstacles are further compounded by the intersecting

factors of race and gender, which subject Black male teachers to discrimination and stereotypes. Consequently, the turnover rate among Black male teachers tends to be high, as highlighted by Moore (2017). Importantly, teachers of color, including Black male teachers, are frequently assigned to schools with less desirable working conditions, which adversely affects their motivation and willingness to remain in the profession. It is imperative for schools and school districts to address these issues and proactively foster a supportive and equitable work environment for all teachers, acknowledging the principles of critical race theory (CRT) that shed light on systemic disparities and promote transformative change.

Lack of Retention for Black Male Teachers

The lack of retention for Black male teachers can be attributed to several factors, with poor working conditions playing a role (Bristol, 2020). Black male teachers, who are more likely to be assigned to schools in disadvantaged areas, often face challenging conditions such as large class sizes, insufficient resources, limited professional development opportunities, and inadequate administrative support (Ford, 2013). These conditions lead to heightened stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, ultimately leading to their departure from the profession. Additionally, the intersectionality of race and gender exposes Black male teachers to implicit bias, stereotypes, and microaggressions, creating a hostile work environment (Brown, 2019). The lack of representation and mentorship opportunities further contribute to their isolation and limited career advancement prospects (Tillman, 2001).

While addressing poor working conditions, it is equally important to recognize and address the specific barriers faced by Black male teachers. Targeted initiatives are needed, such as mentorship programs, fostering inclusive school cultures, promoting professional development opportunities, and actively recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Borowski and

Will (2021) highlighted the unwelcoming nature of schools for Black men, with many being pigeonholed into disciplinarian roles rather than being recognized for their pedagogy and expertise.

The attrition of Black male teachers within their first few years results in a loss of guidance and mentorship for Black students Brooks et al. (2013). Lewis and Toldson (2013) emphasized the systemic nature of the underrepresentation and attrition of Black male teachers, calling for increased support and resources, including mentorship programs and targeted recruitment efforts. Bryan et al. (2016) stressed the importance of creating inclusive and supportive environments for Black male teachers and raising awareness of their challenges.

Addressing the issue of retention for Black male teachers is critical for promoting equity, diversity, and excellence in education (Bryan et al., 2016). External factors, such as systemic racism and discrimination, further contribute to the challenges faced by Black male teachers, especially when they are concentrated in under-resourced schools serving high-poverty communities. It is essential for schools and education systems to address these issues and provide the necessary support and resources to retain Black male teachers (Kafele, 2022).

Inadequate Teacher Credentialing Programs for Black Male Teachers

Teacher education programs lack a differentiated curriculum that prepares teacher candidates for employment in diverse types of schools or districts (Moore & Richmond, 2015). They argued that traditional mono-cultural teaching approaches do not adequately prepare candidates for the realities of the classroom, particularly in environments where many Black male teachers find employment. These environments often require Black male teachers to act as father figures, disciplinarians, and role models, but teacher preparation programs do not offer sufficient coursework to prepare Black male educators for these roles. As a result, Black male

teachers may be able to gain employment, but they may struggle to effectively teach students and navigate a deeply flawed and dysfunctional educational system. Moore and Richmond emphasized the need for teacher education programs to address these issues and provide preparation for Black male teachers.

Lack of a Sense of Community Among Black Male Teachers

McKinley (2021) stated the lack of representation and role models for Black male teachers within the teaching profession contributes to a sense of isolation and disconnection among them. Furthermore, the lack of support and mentorship exacerbates this problem by making it harder for Black males to feel valued and supported in their roles. McKinley (2021) espoused to address this issue, schools and education systems must provide support and resources such as opportunities for professional development, mentorship, and networking, as well as creating an inclusive school culture. Additionally, creating spaces where Black male teachers can come together and connect, such as through professional learning communities or employee resource groups, can be beneficial. By providing support and fostering a sense of community, schools and education systems can help Black male teachers feel more connected and engaged in their work.

Driver Diagram

Bryk et al. (2017) described a driver diagram as a tool for building a testable hypothesis. It can be a valuable tool for many contexts, from improving process reliability, redesigning service, creating new products, and generating enhanced user experience. This tool visually represents a shared theory of how things might improve, building upon knowledge gleaned from research, observation, and experience. The driver diagram illustrates what structures, processes, and norms are believed to require a change in the system, as well as how these could be changed

through the application of specific ideas. The driver diagram consists of an aim that you are trying to accomplish. The measurement will be how you will know a change is an improvement, and the theory of improvement guides my improvement initiative. These drivers act as "levers for change" and guide improvement efforts by focusing attention and resources on the factors most likely to drive meaningful change. The primary drivers are high-level elements in the system that must change to accomplish the outcome of interest. Drivers are elements within a system that influence the desired outcome, or aim (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 133). Below them are secondary drivers, more actionable approaches, places, or opportunities within the system where a change can occur.

With the lack of Black male teachers in JCPS, it is necessary to put an infrastructure in place to address this need; the number of Black male teachers in JCPS is below the national average. The driver diagram outlines the key drivers for achieving the desired outcome. Three primary drivers are highlighted: networking, leadership development through building capacity, and targeted recruitment/community building.

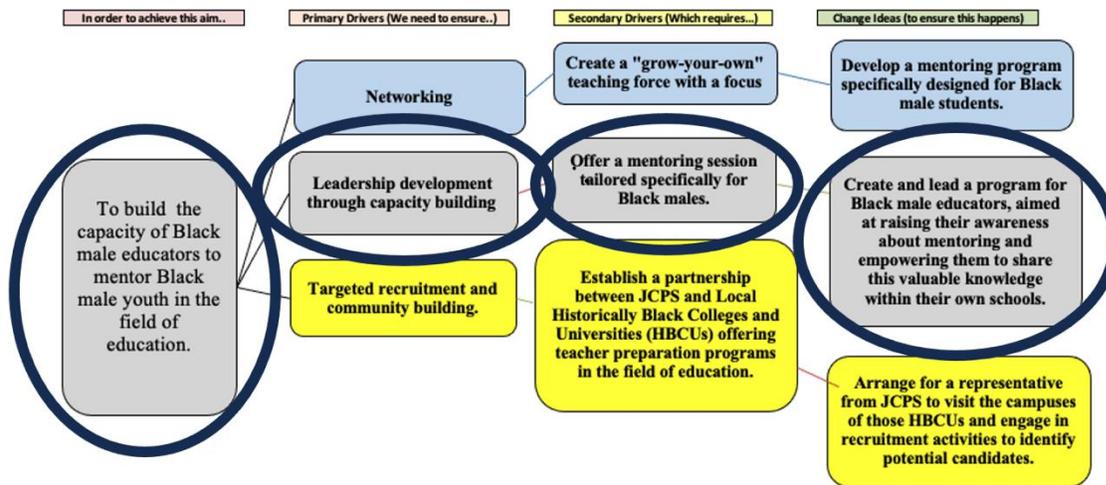
In the gray boxes, leadership development through building capacity is the primary driver, accompanied by the secondary driver of providing weekly mentoring sessions for Black male educators. The change idea is to build knowledge and mentoring capacity among current Black male educators in JCPS, so we can better mentor Black male students into education as a career. The yellow and blue boxes contain additional change ideas that might address building the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth. However, these change ideas were not selected for this study.

The short-term aim of my improvement initiative was to build the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth in the field of education. raise Black male educators by

providing them with informative, professional development sessions focused on mentoring. These sessions covered a range of topics, including personal stories and experiences, the importance of mentoring programs, the current state of JCPS, and available educational opportunities. The objective was to raise participants' awareness about mentoring and empower them to share this valuable knowledge within their schools. Figure 4, a driver diagram (Bryk et al., 2017), highlighted three research areas I identified as necessary to build the capacity among Black male teachers to mentor Black male youth.

Figure 4

Addressing the Aim: Driving Toward Improvement



The aim of my improvement initiative was to build the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth in the field of education by providing them with informative, professional development sessions focused on mentoring. These sessions covered a range of topics, including personal stories and experiences, the importance of mentoring programs, the current state of JCPS, and available educational opportunities. The objective was to raise participants' awareness about mentoring and empower them to share this valuable knowledge within their schools.

Improvement Initiative Design

Improvement science served as the methodology for guiding and evaluating the implementation of my intervention throughout this improvement initiative. Improvement Science emphasizes collaboration and learning and is particularly useful in complex and dynamic systems where traditional problem-solving approaches may not be effective (Langley et al., 2009). The key principles of improvement science include a focus on achieving measurable

outcomes, using data to inform decision-making, engaging stakeholders in the improvement process, and rapid testing and iteration to refine interventions (Langley et al., 2009).

Improvement science utilizes four types of practical measures, including outcome measures, process measures, balancing measures, and driver measures (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Langley et al., 2009).

The short-term aim of my improvement initiative was to build the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth in the field of education by providing them with informative, professional development sessions focused on mentoring. The sessions covered a range of topics, including personal stories and experiences, the importance of mentoring programs, the current state of JCPS, and available educational opportunities. These topics were addressed as part of the improvement initiative to create a networked improvement community and foster engagement within the community of Black male educators, referred to as "BOC" (Building Our Community).

The improvement initiative implemented community-engaged professional development for Black male educators in JCPS. The objective was to build the capacity of Black male educators within JCPS. The community of Black male teachers involved in this initiative was referred to as "BOC" (Building Our Community), emphasizing the challenging yet rewarding nature of community building. The primary goal was to build the capacity of Black male educators to guide Black male youth into teaching careers in JCPS. This involved sharing stories and experiences, exploring the effectiveness of mentoring programs, examining the then-current state of JCPS in relation to Black male teachers, and exploring various educational opportunities.

Engaging the members of "BOC" was for building a strong community. The engagement process provided opportunities for active participation, idea sharing, and collaboration. Effective

communication played a vital role in facilitating engagement and ensuring open channels for dialogue, feedback, and support. By fostering engagement, a profound sense of belonging was created within the community, recognized as essential for community-building. Shared identity, culture, and language were promoted among the members to strengthen the sense of belonging and encourage active contribution to the development of the community's capacity to mentor Black male youth into the field of education.

My plan for BOC was to inspire and motivate Black male educators to take an active role in guiding and supporting Black male youth into the field of education within JCPS. To achieve this, I served as a passionate facilitator who loved teaching and showcased creativity to inspire the community of Black male educators in JCPS. Each week, I focused on delivering planned sessions, providing necessary resources, and addressing social and emotional needs. The ultimate goal for BOC was to build their capacity to mentor Black male youth into the field of education.

Creating a networked improvement community goes beyond simply developing improvement strategies; it involves the process of collective improvement and how individuals become part of the improvement process (Bryk et al., 2017). The improvement initiative implemented community-engaged professional development for Black male educators in JCPS, with the objective of building their capacity to mentor Black male youth in the education field. By sharing personal stories and experiences, the members of "BOC" were able to connect on a deeper level, fostering a sense of community and mutual support.

The importance of mentoring programs was emphasized during the sessions. The goal was to build the mentoring capacity of Black male educators, enabling them to provide guidance and support to Black male youth considering a career in education. By creating opportunities for active participation, idea sharing, and collaboration, the engagement process within the

community was facilitated. Effective communication and open channels for dialogue, feedback, and support was established, ensuring that the needs and concerns of Black male educators were heard and addressed. Additionally, the sessions explored the current state of JCPS in relation to Black male teachers, shedding light on challenges and potential barriers they may face. The objective was to raise participants' awareness about of mentoring and empower them to share this valuable knowledge within their schools.

Looking toward the long-term goal of increasing the representation of Black male teachers in JCPS, it is key to address the current shortage of educators from this demographic. Currently, the number of Black male teachers in JCPS falls below the national average, emphasizing the need for an infrastructure that addresses this pressing issue. Bristol (2017) emphasized that only two percent of teachers in the United States are Black men, underscoring the increasing representation. This lack of representation impacts all students, but it particularly affects the educational experiences of Black boys (Sekou, 2021). It is important to note that achieving the long-term goal will require time and patience such as building rapport, inspiring interest, and guiding students towards educational and career pathways. Additionally, completing a teacher preparation programs typically span several years.

Theory of Improvement

My theory of improvement holds that by building knowledge and mentoring capacity among current Black male educators in JCPS, we can better mentor Black male students and increase the number of Black male students interested in pursuing careers in education. This could to lead to a positive impact on Black students' educational experiences and outcomes, as previous research had shown that the presence of Black male teachers had long-term effects on student success (Lindsay, 2020; Rosen, 2018). By providing training through the professional

development sessions, support, guidance, and role models through the mentoring efforts of Black male educators, I aimed to create a more inclusive and empowering educational environment for Black students. Additionally, the initiative was intended to address the shortage of Black male teachers in the United States, as indicated by demographic data from the National Center for Education Statistics (Mawhinney & Mulero, 2012; NCES, 2022; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The overall goal of the initiative was to enhance the educational journeys of Black students and contribute to their academic success and overall well-being.

Design Team

A design team was assembled by the researcher to assist with the design of improvement initiatives, providing valuable feedback (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). The input of design team members was key to operationalize the improvement initiative, involving a review of formative and summative data to make decisions that facilitated improvement.

The design team, comprised of professional and distinguished Black educators from JCPS, played a major role in the improvement initiative aimed at building the mentoring capacity of Black male educators to guide Black male youth into the education field. Their assistance was sought in analyzing the problem of practice, identifying potential causes, and creating an Ishikawa fishbone diagram for problem analysis (Ishikawa, 2018), which served as the causal analysis. In creating a networked improvement community, the focus extended beyond improvement strategies to include the process of collective improvement and how individuals became part of the improvement (Bryk et al., 2017). This meant that it was not just about coming up with good ideas and strategies, but also about how we all worked together to make those improvements happen.

The primary goal of the initiative was to build the mentoring capacity of Black male educators to provide guidance and support to Black male youth in the education field. The design team's diverse backgrounds and experiences aligned with the goals of the initiative, contributing to the development of effective improvement strategies. The design team, alongside a passionate facilitator, delivered planned sessions, provided necessary resources, and addressed the social and emotional needs of the community. Through their collective efforts, they established a nurturing and empowering environment for Black male educators within JCPS, inspiring them to take an active role in mentoring and supporting Black male youth.

Regarding positionality, all the design team members shared similar backgrounds and experiences, being Black, highly educated, and lifetime community residents of Johnston County. Their contribution to the development and implementation of the intervention was valuable. The diversity and commonality among the proposed design team members aligned with the goals of the improvement initiative. Their wealth of knowledge and experience reflected the diversity of thought necessary for developing the best improvement for the initiative (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

The design team consisted of licensed educators, including the researcher who served as an assistant principal and facilitator/scholar-practitioner at a high school, a former high and middle principal currently serving as the JCPS Safety and COVID-19 Response Manager, a former middle and elementary principal currently serving as an interim, two elementary principals, a former middle school principal, and current JCPS Auxiliary Administrator, an early college principal, and a middle/high principal.

The design team reviewed the initiative's goals and survey instruments. They collaborated on developing content aligned with the outlined sessions and determined meeting

times and days for the intervention. Their purpose was to assess the intervention's effectiveness, provide ongoing updates, and discuss diverse perspectives and observations related to changes throughout the initiative. The sessions were customized to enhance the learning experience and highlight the value of proportional representation of Black male teachers.

Participants

Following the successful defense of my proposal, I began personally contacting every JCPS and spoke with one of their school administrator. I explained to that administrator the nature of the call (that I am conducting a study on Black male educators within JCPS). With determination, I inquired about the number of Black male educators on their staff, diligently noting down their names.

Once I gather all the names, I took a proactive approach by cold emailing the potential participants, displaying my professionalism and commitment to the study. In the email, I presented the details of the research and, with persuasive enthusiasm, invited them to be a part of this study (See Appendix A). As responses started pouring in, I wasted no time in scheduling the initial meeting, leaving no room for delays or hesitation. During this encounter, I provided a overview of the study, ensuring that each participant had a clear understanding of its objectives and importance. Demonstrating my passion for this research, I asked each potential participant directly if they would willingly participate. I promptly shared a single link containing the consent form, the descriptive survey, and the pre-mentorship survey. This streamlined approach not only facilitated the process for the participants but also underscored my commitment to a thorough and organized study. By taking these steps, I ensured that the study would encompass a diverse and engaged group of Black male educators, ready to contribute their valuable insights to this field of study. The study included a diverse group of 10 Black male educators employed in

different roles within JCPS, bringing a wealth of experience and contextual perspectives to the study. Participants had varying years of teaching experience in JCPS, ranging from several years to over a decade.

During the initial session, descriptive survey items were administered. Based on the survey items results, it was determined that the age range of the participants varied from 43 to 47, with 10% falling within the 29-35 range. The 24-28 and 36-42 age groups accounted for 20% each, while the 48+ age group represented 40% of the participants. In terms of years of teaching experience, the 0-3- and 6-9-year groups constituted 30%, while the 12–20-year group made up 40% of the participants. Regarding grade levels, both middle and high school teachers comprised 40% each, whereas elementary teachers accounted for 20% of the participants. A summary of this data is presented in Table 6. The age range, years of teaching experience, and grade levels were categorized to provide a clear overview of the participant demographics and better analyze the data patterns. Categorizing the data helps us identify trends and gain insights into the specific groups of educators participating in the study, ultimately contributing to an understanding of the results. Table 2 illustrates the age range, teaching experience, and grade level.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants

Age Range	Percentage	Teaching Experience	Percentage	Grade Levels	Percentage
24-28	20%	0-3	30%	Elementary	20%
29-35	10%	0-9	30%	Middle School	40%
36-42	20%	12-20	40%	High School	40%
43-47	10%	20-25	-	-	-
48+	40%	25+	-	-	-

The improvement initiative implemented a community-engaged professional development for Black male educators in JCPS. The objective was to build the capacity of Black male educators to guide Black male youth into the teaching field in JCPS. The community of Black male teachers involved in this initiative is referred to as "BOC" (Building Our Community), emphasizing the challenging yet rewarding nature of community building. A clear vision, purpose, and platform for the engagement and motivation of Black male educators were developed collaboratively with the team. The primary goal was to build the capacity of Black male educators to guide Black male youth into teaching careers in JCPS. This involved sharing stories and experiences, exploring the effectiveness of mentoring programs, examining the current state of JCPS in relation to Black male teachers, and exploring various educational opportunities.

Boyd and Nowell (2018) stated that healthy organizations include a sense of community, the ability and willingness to assist others, and a sense of belonging. Engaging the members of

"BOC" was key for building a strong community. The engagement process provided opportunities for active participation, idea sharing, and collaboration. Effective communication played a vital role in facilitating engagement and ensuring open channels for dialogue, feedback, and support. By fostering engagement, a sense of belonging was created within the community, recognized as essential for community-building. Shared identity, culture, and language were promoted among the members to strengthen the sense of belonging and encourage active contribution to the development of the community's capacity to mentor Black male youth into the field of education.

My plan for BOC was to inspire and motivate Black male educators to take an active role in guiding and supporting Black male youth into the field of education within JCPS. To achieve this, I served as a passionate facilitator who loved teaching and showcased creativity to inspire the community of Black male educators in JCPS. Each week, I focused on delivering planned sessions, providing necessary resources, and addressing social and emotional needs. The ultimate goal for the BOC was to build their capacity to mentor Black male youth into the field of education.

Implementation Activities and Timeline

Prior to the study, I sought approval from both Western Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and JCPS. Appendix B was Western Carolina University's Institutional Review Board approval, and Appendix C was the JCPS approval letter, serving as evidence of the obtained approval. The Improvement Process began with the planning phase, which included weekly meetings conducted by the design team. These meetings involved engaging knowledgeable participants to collectively discuss the identified problem, identify

relevant issues, and brainstorm potential causes and interventions, as referenced by Hinnant-Crawford (2020).

During these meetings, the design team familiarized themselves with the improvement science process and shared details of the improvement initiative, including the desired outcomes. A schedule was established to guide the implementation of the intervention, with specific responsibilities assigned to each member of the design team. The timeline for the improvement initiative can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5

Improvement Initiative Timeline

Implementation Plan/Timeline: <i>By building the capacity of Black male teachers to mentor Black male youth into the teaching profession.</i>	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023
Develop design team and set future meeting dates; scholar-practitioners educate the design team on the improvement process; scholar-practitioners share the identified problem and the improvement initiative, including desired outcomes.					
Develop design team and set future meeting dates; scholar-practitioners educate the design team on the improvement process; scholar-practitioners share the identified problem and the improvement initiative, including desired outcomes.					
Scholar practitioners share session content with the design team; the design team reviews proposed session content and make any needed revision to training materials; the design team plans the implementation of professional development sessions, including identification of roles within the team.					
Descriptive Survey, Pre-Survey (baseline) distributed to Black male teachers for data collection.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 1: Training for Black male teachers • Teacher Completes Reflective and Weekly Checklist 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 2: Training for Black male teachers • Teacher Completes Weekly Checklist 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 3: Training for Black male teachers • Teacher Completes Reflective and Weekly Checklist 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 4: Training for Black male teachers • Teacher Completes Weekly Checklist, Post-Survey distributed to Black male teachers for summative data/PDSA Cycle 					

Improvement Initiative Sessions

In my improvement initiative, I organized four virtual sessions following a detailed agenda that participants could access. The sessions mini-lessons facilitated by me, and break-out sessions for participants to engage in discussions on session topics.

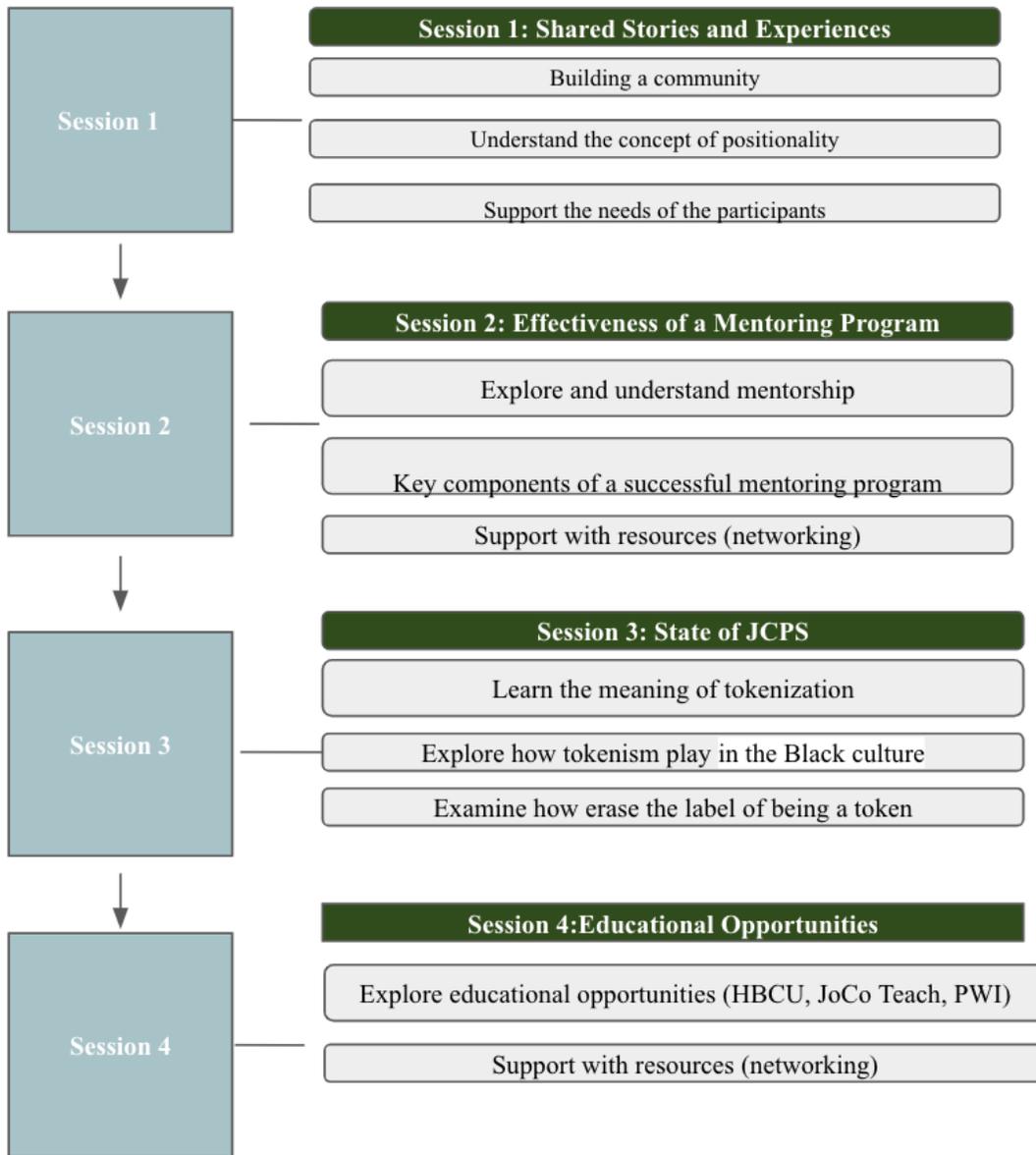
Additionally, during our discussions, we covered a range of topics, including the delivery of professional development content, norms, expectations, session schedules, and the decision to use Google Classroom as our primary platform (Appendix D). JCPS educators commonly use Google Classroom, so it is software they are familiar with. Google Classroom served as a centralized hub, enabling participants to access Google Meets links, host artifacts, conduct surveys, share presentations, provide action plan instructions, and send calendar invites. To provide a clear outline of each week's activities, the weekly agendas were made available in Google Classroom. You can find them in Appendices E1, E2, E3, E4, and E5. Additionally, each session included specific action steps for participants to implement between sessions, ensuring the practical application of the knowledge gained.

To guide participants through the professional development sessions, I utilized Google Slideshows, shown in Appendix F. These slideshows served as a visual aid, guiding the participants through the content of each session. They provided structure, key points, and relevant information, ensuring consistent and organized delivery of the professional development material. Combining Google Slideshows and the action steps provided participants with a guided learning experience. The agendas helped participants understand the overall plan, the action steps encouraged practical application, and the Google Slideshows supported the effective delivery of content in each session.

The sessions were carefully designed to address the unique experiences, challenges, and strengths of Black male teachers. The initiative consisted of four sessions, with participants assigned action steps to be completed between sessions. Figure 6 provides a snapshot of the content of each professional development session, followed by a more detailed description of each session.

Figure 6

Professional Development Sessions Content



The sessions on sharing stories and experiences, exploring the effectiveness of mentoring programs, examining the current state of JCPS in relation to Black male teachers, and exploring various educational opportunities were all linked to the underlying theory of the improvement initiative. The theory posited that by building knowledge and mentoring capacity among current

Black male educators in JCPS, several issues that hinder the representation and retention of Black male teachers in the profession could be addressed.

Session 1: Shared Stories and Experiences

This session aimed to provide a platform for Black male educators to share their personal experiences and challenges within the education field. By openly discussing their experiences, the design team sought to identify common obstacles faced by Black male teachers, such as poor working conditions and the lack of a sense of community. This sharing of stories could help create awareness of the issues and foster a supportive environment among the community of Black male educators.

In the first session, the main focus was on "Shared Stories and Experiences" of Black male educators working within JCPS. The primary objective of the session was to foster a supportive community among these educators, providing a secure platform for sharing their unique experiences, resources, and success strategies. Goings (2015) highlighted the presence of strategic and systemic barriers that often silence the stories of Black males in society. Therefore, the session aimed to break through this silence and create a safe environment where teachers could comfortably exchange their narratives as Black male educators in JCPS.

To kickstart the session, I personally shared my own story and experiences as a Black male educator in JCPS. Following that, participants were given the opportunity to reflect and voluntarily share their own stories. Moreover, the session emphasized cultivating a strong sense of identity among participants.

The overarching goal was to build a supportive community where the participants could feel comfortable and motivated to participate in future sessions. Rather than just providing information, the aim was to create a space where Black male educators could connect with one

another and build meaningful relationships. The concept of a community and their positionality were discussed, and a positionality activity was also incorporated into the session. The session aimed to ensure that participants never lost or silenced their voice, fostering an inclusive and empowering environment for all Black male educators involved. As a concluding task, participants were assigned action steps that involved sharing their stories with a White educator within their local school context.

Session 2: Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program

This session delved into the importance of mentoring programs for Black male educators, which could help improve retention rates. By evaluating and understanding the impact of mentoring, the design team sought to identify strategies to enhance existing programs or develop new ones to better support Black male teachers throughout their careers, thus addressing the lack of retention for Black male teachers.

During the second session, I was pleased to see both returning and new participants, indicating that my efforts were making an impact. I was particularly excited to welcome Dr. George Noflin, the director of the Call Me MISTER program at Grambling State University, as our guest speaker. The Call Me MISTER program (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models, n.d.), present in some higher education institutions, aims to increase the number of teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Dr. Noflin's discussion focused on the power and importance of mentoring and supporting the professional growth and development of Black male educators, directly aligning with the purpose of our intervention. This session explored the effectiveness of mentoring programs in providing support and empowerment to Black male students. Smith (2021)

emphasized their positive impact in encouraging Black male students interested in pursuing careers in education.

Throughout the session, Dr. Noflin shared insights into the successful model of the Call Me Mister program, offering strategies to recruit Black male youth into the teaching profession and establish mentoring programs within their respective schools. His presence not only provided valuable guidance but also opened avenues for networking opportunities and ensured ongoing support for all participants.

As a follow-up action plan, participants were encouraged to share what they learned in their professional learning communities (PLCs) or with fellow educators in their local schools. The session aimed to foster continuous learning and collaboration among Black male educators to create a supportive and empowered community.

Session 3: State of JCPS

In this session, the design team analyzed the prevailing conditions within JCPS that might contribute to the underrepresentation of Black male teachers. This examination involved looking into factors such as recruitment efforts and professional development opportunities. By understanding the systemic challenges faced by Black male teachers, the initiative could work towards implementing targeted improvements to increase their representation.

In session 3, we delved into the demographics of Black male educators and students within JCPS, where we discovered that the representation of Black male educators stood at only 0.6% of the workforce. This realization highlighted the urgency of addressing this disparity and led us to explore the concept of tokenism - when people from underrepresented groups are included merely for the sake of showing diversity without genuine opportunities for involvement.

During the session, we shifted the focus towards erasing the label of tokenism and discussed ways to excel as educators and become leaders in our schools. Our collaborative learning environment encouraged participants to share their perspectives, voice their concerns, and contribute practical ideas to collectively address tokenism's negative effects.

Interactive discussions centered around strategies to overcome tokenism and foster genuine inclusivity and equal treatment. These discussions aimed to challenge systemic barriers and brainstorm innovative approaches to create a more inclusive and equitable environment. Strategies, including easing the label of tokenism and creating supportive environments in classrooms, schools, and communities, can help participants foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, targeted interventions like mentoring programs and initiatives to increase the representation of Black male educators are suggested to be implemented.

As the session concluded, participants were assigned action steps. They were encouraged to share their newfound knowledge with administrators in their schools or colleagues within their professional learning communities (PLCs). The objective was to promote widespread sharing of acquired knowledge and facilitate meaningful discussions among educators to collectively work towards a more diverse and supportive teaching force in JCPS.

Session 4: Educational Opportunities

This session sought to identify and assess different educational opportunities available to Black male educators. It aimed to address the issue of inadequate teacher credentialing programs and provide access to relevant and supportive educational pathways for aspiring and current Black male teachers. Enhancing these opportunities could attract more Black males to pursue teaching careers and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge.

In the fourth and final session, participants were presented with informational content focused on diverse educational opportunities, highlighting various pathways to higher education. The main objective was to equip participants with resources and knowledge to effectively share this information with others. The session specifically offered insights into education preparation programs available at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the JoCo TEACH Program.

The JoCo TEACH program was established in 2019 as a teacher pipeline for Johnston County Public Schools (JCPS). It offers a seamless pathway for diverse high school students to earn an associate degree in science or art in teacher education through Johnston Community College (JCC). Some students complete their degree while in high school, while others can finish it in an additional year at JCC. The program was developed in collaboration with North Carolina State University and JCC, and it aims to train future educators who will eventually return to JCPS to serve as teachers. Currently, 50 students are enrolled in the JoCo TEACH program, making it the first of its kind in North Carolina (JC Board of Education approves JoCo TEACH Scholarship, 2022).

Our guests, including Suzanne Sweat, coordinator of the JoCo TEACH program, and Dr. Stacey Sowell from West Virginia State University (an HBCU), were featured speakers in this session. They provided support, offering guidance on the application process, sharing relevant data, personal experiences, and facilitating the establishment of a professional network.

Throughout the session, participants engaged with the experts, gaining firsthand knowledge about the unique features and advantages of these institutions and programs. The collaborative environment aimed to empower participants to assist their students with the

necessary tools and insights to navigate the application process, explore opportunities, and make informed decisions about their educational journeys.

During Suzanne Sweat's presentation, she shared the mission and values of the JoCo TEACH program. She also highlighted the need to increase Black male representation in the program, mentioning that currently, there is only one Black male student involved. As a result of the presentation, all the participants vowed to support the recruitment of Black male youths to this program. The participants recognized the importance of representation, believing that "If they see me, they can be me," which could inspire them to sign up.

Dr. Stacey Sowell discussed the rich history of HBCUs and emphasized the benefits of a supportive community within these institutions. In conclusion, the session provided valuable information about diverse educational opportunities, HBCUs, and the JoCo TEACH Academy. The speakers inspired participants to actively promote and support inclusive educational pathways for all students.

Overall, each of these sessions was designed to address the specific challenges identified in the theory, namely the poor working conditions, lack of retention, inadequate credentialing programs, and lack of a sense of community among Black male teachers. By focusing on these aspects and implementing targeted improvements, the improvement initiative aimed to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Black male educators in JCPS, ultimately increasing their representation and positively impacting the success of Black male students in the education system.

Analysis Plan for Improvement Initiative

Improvement science served as the methodology for guiding and evaluating the implementation of my improvement initiative. Improvement Science uses Plan-Do-Study-Act

(PDSA) cycles to provide a structured approach to test and refine changes in a continuous learning process. These cycles enable practitioners to plan interventions, implement them, study their effects, and act on the findings to further enhance the improvement efforts (Langley et al., 2009). This cycle ensured that we continuously improved the professional development sessions.

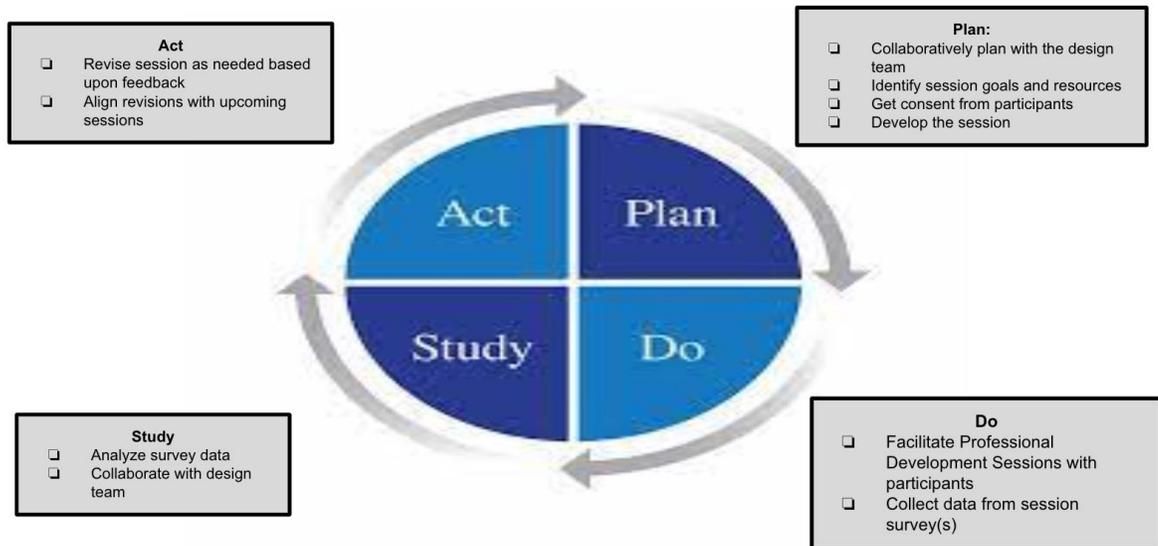
The analysis plan began by collaboratively planning with the design team to establish the objectives, structure, and content of the professional development sessions. This ensured a shared understanding and effective communication among team members. Once the session goals and necessary resources were identified, consent was obtained from the participants, informing them about the purpose, content, and potential data collection or analysis. The next step involved developing the sessions, creating instructional materials, activities, and other supporting materials in collaboration with the design team.

Once the sessions were ready, the facilitation of professional development sessions began, with the focus on creating an engaging and productive learning environment for the participants. Data were collected from session surveys, which provided valuable feedback from the participants regarding their satisfaction, perceived learning outcomes, and specific aspects of the sessions.

The collected survey data were then analyzed, involving the summarization and categorization of responses, identification of trends or patterns, and drawing conclusions. This analysis was done in collaboration with the design team to gain a understanding of the participants' experiences. Based on the insights gained from the analysis, revisions were made to the professional development sessions as needed. This involved modifying content, activities, or delivery methods to address areas of improvement and enhance the effectiveness of future sessions. Figure 7 illustrates the PDSA cycle.

Figure 7

PDSA Cycle of Professional Development Sessions



Improvement Science emphasizes collaboration and learning and is particularly useful in complex and dynamic systems where traditional problem-solving approaches may not be effective. The key principles of improvement science include a focus on achieving measurable outcomes, using data to inform decision-making, engaging stakeholders in the improvement process, and rapid testing and iteration to refine interventions. Improvement science utilizes four types of practical measures, including outcome measures, process measures, balancing measures, and driver measures (Hinnant-Crawford, 2018).

Table 3, presented below, depicts the Improvement Initiative Measures. This table outlines the types of measures, data collected, frequency, and the number of actions planned throughout the initiative. Its purpose is to visualize the progression and identify the intended actions, providing an overview of the initiative's trajectory.

Table 3*Improvement Initiative Practical Measures*

Types of Measure	Type of Data Collected	Frequency	Dissemination
Driver	Driver measure survey, Quantitative and Qualitative data	2x	1st and 3rd Sessions
Process	Process Measure Survey Items, Quantitative and Qualitative Data	4x	Every Session
Balancing	Quantitative Data	1x	4th Session
Outcome	Quantitative and Qualitative data	1x	4th Session

Table 4 below was developed to highlight the various measures, their types, and the number of items falling under each data type. This information is particularly useful given the use of mixed methods in this study.

Table 4*Measures and Data Methods*

Measure	Measure type	Qualitative items	Quantitative items
Driver Measure Survey	Driver	6	4
Pre-Mentorship Survey/ Post-Mentorship Survey	Outcome	2	10
Post-Mentorship Survey	Balance	-	3
Process Measure Survey	Process	2	9

Driver Measures

A driver measure in improvement science as a specific factor or intervention that is believed to have an impact on achieving a desired outcome or goal. The driver measure survey items, consisting of ten questions, were designed to assess different aspects of the implementation's effectiveness, rather than focusing on personal interests or preferences. They aimed to tell you whether the initiative is working- that means they are mini versions of the outcome measures- and they should give you insight into that (Hinnant-Crawford, 2018).

These drivers act as "levers for change" and guide improvement efforts by focusing attention and resources on the factors most likely to drive meaningful change. The process of identifying drivers involves exploration and data analysis to select feasible options that can have a substantial impact on the desired outcome. The driver measure survey (Appendix G), was developed to assess participants' learning from the sessions, I used the same survey that was conducted after session one and session three. The driver measure survey included both qualitative and quantitative data. The inclusion of the driver measure survey helped answer the critical question: "Is it working?" (Langley et al., 2009). The driver measure survey was

specifically designed to evaluate participants' learning from two sessions, each with a distinct focus. One session centered around sharing stories and experiences, while the other delved into discussing the current state of Johnston County Public School (JCPS). Driver measure survey items provided valuable insights to the design team regarding the extent to which the sessions had influenced participants' thinking or perspectives. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data gathered through these driver measure surveys items enabled an evaluation of the impact of the sessions on participants' learning experiences.

Process Measures

Understanding and analyzing processes is a fundamental aspect of improvement science, as highlighted. Processes refer to a series of steps or actions taken to achieve a specific outcome or goal. By examining processes, areas for improvement can be identified, and efforts can be directed toward making positive changes that impact outcomes. It is important to recognize that processes are dynamic and may require ongoing monitoring and adjustments in response to environmental or other factors (Hinnant-Crawford, 2018).

The process measure survey (Appendix H) was disseminated to participants after each session. The process measure survey items included a question asking participants to indicate the specific session they were participating in and their assigned number for this study. This helped to distinguish between different sessions and organize the data accordingly. The aim was to measure participants' knowledge of the session content, evaluate the quality of the sessions, and gauge their interest in the content. These measures focus on aspects such as attendance, completion of assigned tasks (e.g., homework), and other factors related to the execution of the initiative. They are distinct from driver measures, which assess the content and impact of the

sessions themselves. Participants were asked about their familiarity with the session content, their perception of the session's quality, and their level of interest in the content.

Collecting frequent data was a key objective to determine whether positive changes occurred during the implementation of the proposed improvements. The primary focus of process measures was to measure implementation fidelity, aiming to create a high-quality professional development program. The process measure survey items also explored participants' perspectives on the mode of content delivery and the structure of the learning sessions, including any aspects they believed should be modified.

Furthermore, the process measure surveys aimed to capture participants' self-perceptions, examining whether the sessions had prompted them to question their worth, value, and future within the district and the teaching profession. The process measure also gauged participants' perceptions about being mentored and whether the sessions fostered a sense of community and mentorship. Additionally, the process measure surveys sought to understand whether participants had formed connections with other teachers during the sessions. These process measures helped ensure that the professional development sessions effectively met the needs of the participants.

Balance Measures

Balance measures are utilized to assess whether improvements in one area have unintended negative impacts on other areas, as noted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2019) and Langley et al. (2019). Hinnant-Crawford (2018) emphasized the importance of achieving balance by considering various factors and trade-offs when making decisions and implementing changes in improvement science. To assess potential unintended consequences, such as participants missing out on significant life events or intruding upon their work, family time, or other obligations, which may disrupt their work-life (question

13-15) was included in the post-mentorship survey (Appendix I), as the balance measure. Monitoring and adjustment of balancing priorities and perspectives, as emphasized by Hinnant-Crawford (2020), were necessary to ensure that desired outcomes were achieved without unintended consequences. The collected data played a role in understanding participant perspectives and ensuring the success of the improvement initiative.

Considering the improvement initiative for Black male educators, several potential negative impacts should be addressed. First, participants may begin questioning their commitment to the teaching profession as a result of the sessions, potentially leading to considerations of leaving the profession. This could adversely affect the retention of Black male educators within the education system. Second, participants may perceive that their involvement in the sessions has caused them to miss out on life events, resulting in feelings of regret or dissatisfaction. Such circumstances may strain their personal lives and overall well-being.

Finally, the sessions may intrude upon participants' work, family time, or other obligations, disrupting their work-life balance and potentially increasing stress levels. By incorporating questions that assess these potential negative impacts into the post-mentorship survey item, the study seeks to gather insights into whether the improvement initiative has unintentionally caused any adverse effects. The collected data will inform necessary adjustments to the program, ensuring effective support for the professional development of Black male educators while considering their well-being and job satisfaction.

Outcome Measures

According to Hinnant-Crawford (2018), an outcome refers to "a measurable result or impact that is intended to be achieved through an improvement effort" (p. 70). It is essential to define clear and specific outcomes in improvement initiatives to guide decision-making and

allocate resources effectively, as well as to ensure that the outcomes are measurable and observable for tracking progress. Outcome measures answer the question did the improvement initiative work? The outcome measure answers the participants' perspectives after all sessions allowing for a comparison of their initial and final perceptions Hinnant-Crawford (2018). In this study, the outcome measure compared pre-mentorship survey items (Appendix J) and post-mentorship survey items responses to assess changes in the participants' knowledge regarding my study and to track their progress throughout sessions.

The pre-mentorship survey items and the post-mentorship survey served as outcome measure survey items. It consists of ten questions that explore the participant's personal definition of mentorship, their belief in the importance of mentorship, their perception of the need for mentorship and support for Black males in the district, their confidence in leading and recruiting Black males into the teaching profession, their experience of being mentored as a Black male educator, their willingness to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year, their view on mentorship as a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students, and their perception of being mentored and supported as a Black male educator in the district. The pre-mentorship survey items and the post-mentorship survey incorporated both qualitative and quantitative survey items, aiming to assess anticipated changes.

The outcome measure was collected using the same instrument as the pre-mentorship survey items with three additional balancing measure survey items. The post-mentorship survey items data served as a means to gather information on the participants' perspectives after all sessions allowing for a comparison of their initial and final perceptions.

The pre-mentorship survey items and the post-mentorship survey items aimed to assess participants' perspectives regarding the need for mentorship and support for Black males in the

district, the qualifications of individuals to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession, the perception of being mentored as an educator, the willingness to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year, the recognition of mentorship as a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students, and the perception of mentorship and support as a Black male educator in the district.

The design team collected qualitative and quantitative data enabling them to assess the individual and overall impacts of the professional development on the participants. The outcome measures aimed to evaluate changes in participant capacity to mentor, aligning with the long-term goal of developing a mentoring program for Black male youth in their schools.

Data Collection

The data collection process implemented for this improvement initiative involved gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from participants before the mentorship sessions, after the individual sessions, and at the end of the mentorship sessions. Surveys were disseminated using Qualtrics- an online survey and data collection tool. All collected information was securely stored electronically, adhering to data protection standards. Participants were given a consent form (Appendix K) prior to data collection, confirming their voluntary participation. Each participant was randomly assigned and emailed a numeric identifier.

Before the first session, participants completed pre-mentorship survey items (this was the pre-survey to give me outcome data). After each session, a process measure survey items were administered to assess progress. Driver survey items were conducted after the first and third sessions, along with the process measure survey items, as driver and process measures. A post-mentorship survey, including balance measure questions (numbered 13-15), were conducted after the final session, along with the process measure survey items.

To simplify survey items administration and enhance participant convenience, the survey items were combined into a single link. This eliminated the need to send multiple links, reducing the risk of non-completion. Participants were provided with the consolidated link to access and complete all the survey items conveniently. The session survey items links were shared with participants after each professional development session. The data obtained from each measure were then downloaded and interpreted individually.

Figure 8 depicts the various survey items administered to participants throughout the mentorship program. Prior to the first session, participants completed a pre-mentorship survey and descriptive survey items. I also included a survey that is not one of the practical measures, which was the descriptive survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather background information such as age, teaching experience, grade level, the particular course they teach, and years of experience.

Figure 8

Measures Matrix

Measures Matrix

Measures	Before Session 1	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
Driver		Driver Measure Survey		Driver Measure Survey	
Process		Process Measure Survey	Process Measure Survey	Process Measure Survey	Process Measure Survey
Balance					Embedded in the post mentorship survey
Outcome	Pre-mentorship survey				Post mentorship survey
Descriptive	Descriptive survey				

Data Analysis

In the role of the researcher, I analyzed each practical measure. These practical measures, essential to the improvement science process, was instrumental in addressing questions pertinent to the improvement efforts for the identified problem of study. The data collected through these practical measures was gathered and analyzed on a weekly basis, facilitating timely action.

The data analysis procedures employed in this study were designed to be adaptive and responsive to the participants' feedback and concerns. Following each session, the design team promptly met the day after to address any areas of concern raised during the sessions or survey

results of the previous session. This approach allowed us to take immediate action and ensure that the study progressed smoothly.

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles was instrumental in enabling us to implement necessary changes if any issues or challenges arose during the sessions. By collecting data in this manner, we could identify potential areas for improvement and make adjustments as needed. These adaptations were key in maintaining the effectiveness and relevance of the research. Throughout the study, I worked closely with the design team, collectively reviewing the process and balancing measures. However, the data showed that no modifications or adjustments were needed throughout the study.

Quantitative Analysis

I used Microsoft Excel to analyze quantitative data. To analyze quantitative data, I used counts and percentages. I examined the survey items and tallied the frequency of each response option. This tallied the frequency of each response option to identify overall trends, determine the most frequently reported findings, and understand how the responses were distributed within the Likert scale. The analysis of the descriptive survey, driver, process, balance and outcome measures involved quantitative methods.

Qualitative Analysis

In qualitative research, patterns play a important role in identifying regular and repetitive occurrences of actions or data that appear multiple times. Saldaña (2021) defined patterns as arrangements that bring together multiple elements into a unified structure. These patterns provide stability and serve as indicators of how humans live and work, making the world more understandable and predictable. By identifying patterns, qualitative researchers can uncover reliable evidence that demonstrates habits, salience, and in people's daily lives. These patterns

help validate the description of individuals' routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships, commonly referred to as the "five Rs." Recognizing and discerning these trends strengthens the observations made during the research process by transforming them into concrete instances of meaning (Saldaña, 2021, p. 8)

To analyze qualitative survey items, I utilized the Delve tool (Delve, 2023). It allowed me to organize, categorize, and analyze textual data such as open-ended survey items responses. I conducted a thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2021), of the responses to the open-ended questions. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and key ideas that emerged from the participants' responses. I categorized and coded the responses to capture the wide range of experiences, perspectives, and learning shared by the participants. This qualitative analysis helped me gain a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts, reflections, and perceptions throughout the study. The analysis of the driver, process, and outcome measures involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

It is important to note that the descriptive survey was separate from the improvement science measures and was primarily used to gather participant information. Some of the descriptive data collected was discussed in the participant section of the study.

Results

This section presents the results related to the driver, process, balance, and outcome measures, as well as additional information from the descriptive survey items. Participants gave consent to participate in the study prior to the first session. Participants were randomly assigned an anonymous numeric identifier. These identifiers were communicated to the participants individually via email. Subsequently, the descriptive survey (Appendix L) was administered to

collect relevant data on the participants, facilitating a understanding of their demographics and backgrounds.

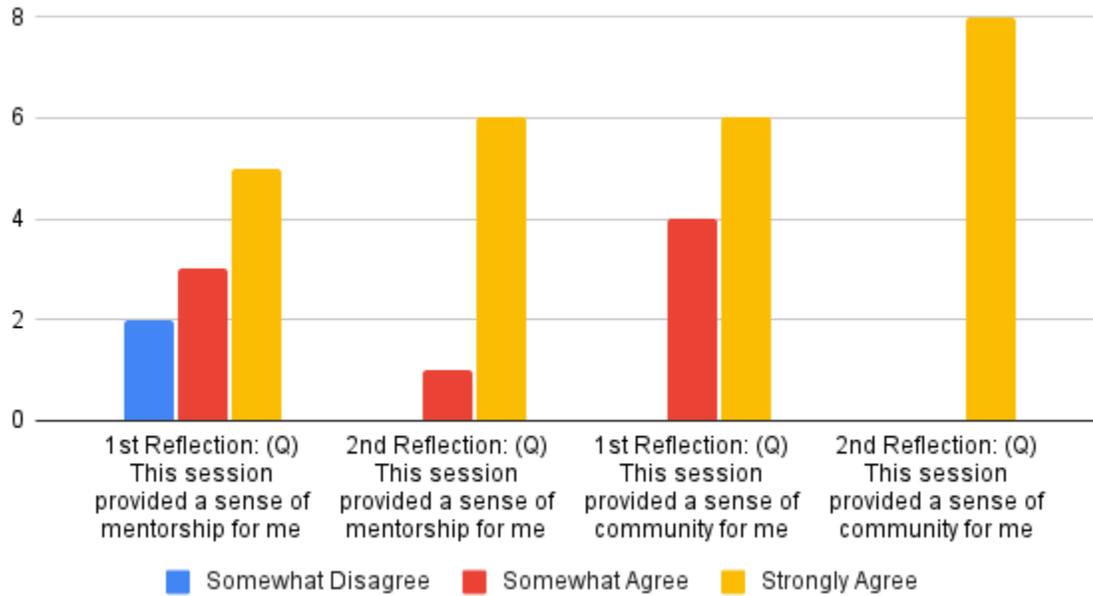
Driver Measure

The driver measure survey collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The driver measure survey helped answer the critical question: "Is it working?" (Langley et al., 2009). The driver measure was specifically designed to evaluate participants' learning from two sessions, each with a distinct focus. One session centered around sharing stories and experiences, while the other delved into discussing the current state of Johnston County Public School (JCPS). These survey items provided valuable insights to the design team regarding the extent to which the sessions had influenced participants' thinking or perspectives. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data gathered through these survey items enabled an evaluation of how the sessions engaged participants' learning experiences.

To summarize the key findings of this measure, when I compared the driver measure survey items and asked participants about their perception of mentorship, I found the following results: after session one, 80% of participants agreed that the intervention contributed to their sense of mentorship. After session three, this agreement increased to 100%, with 86% strongly agreeing. Similarly, when participants were asked about their sense of community, I obtained the following results. After session one, 80% of participants reported that the intervention provided a sense of community. After session three, 100% of participants reported feeling a sense of community. Figure 9 displays the driver measure survey items results for a sense of mentorship and sense of community.

Figure 9

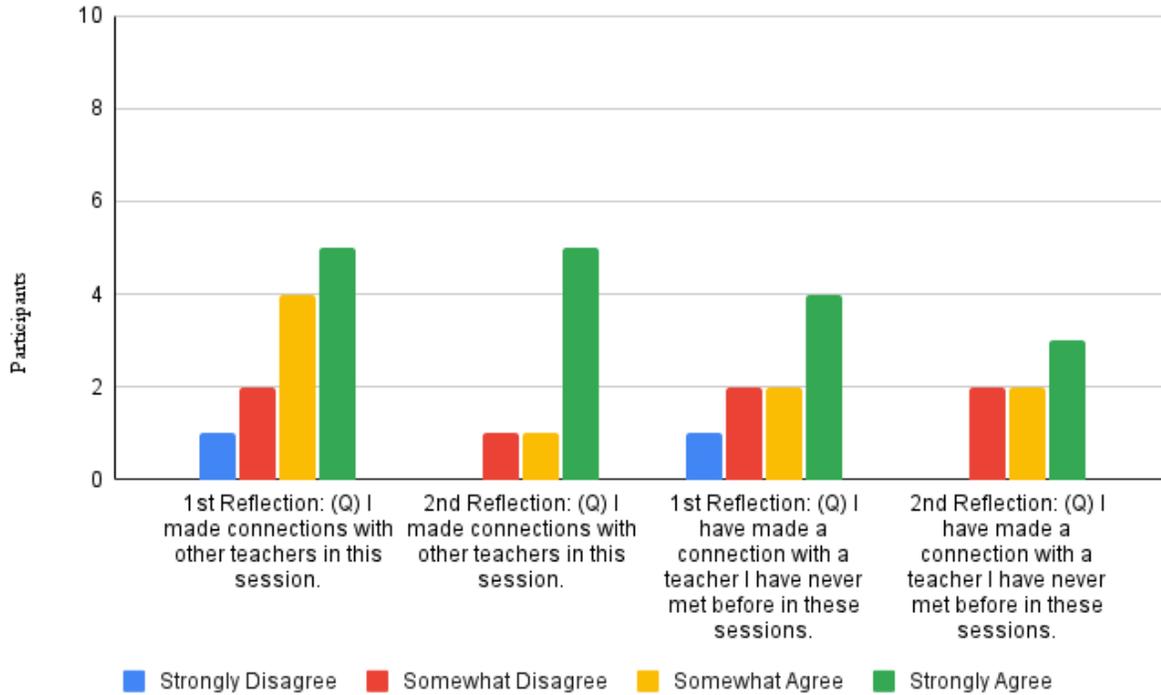
Results from Driver Measure: Sense of Mentorship and Sense of Community



The Figure 10 illustrates participants' responses, shedding light on their connection with other teachers during sessions one and three, as well as their perception of making a connection with previously unfamiliar teachers. In the driver measure survey, participants expressed varying levels of agreement or disagreement.

Figure 10

Results from Driver Measure: Connections



The data provided valuable insights into participant responses regarding their connection with other teachers during session one. Specifically, 10% strongly disagreed, 20% somewhat disagreed, 40% somewhat agreed, and 30% strongly agreed with the statement about their connection with other teachers.

The participants' perceptions of making a connection with unfamiliar teachers was further explored. After the first session, 20% strongly disagreed, 20% somewhat disagreed, 20% somewhat agreed, and 40% strongly agreed. This indicated a higher percentage of participants (60%) expressing agreement, either somewhat or strongly, with making a connection.

After the third session, 20% of participants somewhat disagreed, 20% somewhat agreed, and the majority, comprising 30% of participants, strongly agreed with making a connection with

unfamiliar teachers. These results indicated a continued positive trend in the participants' perceptions of connection with previously unknown teachers throughout the sessions. Overall, the figure presented a view of participant responses, highlighting their varying levels of agreement or disagreement regarding connection with other teachers during session one, as well as their perceptions of making connections with unfamiliar teachers throughout the sessions. The data suggested that a proportion of participants expressed agreement in forming connections with both known and unfamiliar teachers, underscoring the success of the program in fostering a sense of community among educators.

In addition to the findings discussed above, participants shared their personal reflections on how the sessions influenced their perspectives on Black males in education. Using the Delve tool, the participant responses were examined and analyzed to identify common themes in their personal definitions of mentorship. Analysis of the participants' responses revealed several recurring themes that shed light on their experiences.

The participants in the research sessions shared valuable insights regarding their major ideas, challenges, and changes in thinking and perspectives. In response to the question about sharing major ideas, one participant ranked the importance of providing opportunities for mentorship of Black males and Black male educators as the first major idea. They emphasized providing education and proper training for school districts and administrators to understand how to educate Black male students with cultural implications effectively. One participant stated, “the sobering reality of the low representation of Black male educators, comprising only 2% of the teaching population”, were identified as the third major idea. Another participant highlighted, “The existence of programs aiming to provide access to teaching credentials specifically for

Black males, the vital role of mentoring for Black males' growth and development, and the importance of having Black male educators as role models”.

When asked about the one thing that challenged or changed their thinking or perspective, one participant noted he initially questioned his effectiveness as a Black male educator. However, he realized during the first session that his presence in the classroom has a positive impact on the lives of young Black males, which affirmed his commitment and motivated him to continue serving and mentoring other Black males. One participant stated that the lack of mentorship for Black male educators at the district level and the shared experiences among Black male educators also raised awareness and drove their intrinsic motivation to address the scarcity of Black male educators. Another participant stated he, “recognized the shortage and exodus of Black male educators, inspiring them to develop strategies to deal with the impact and the issue in primary and secondary schools”. Another participant acknowledged, “the perspective change they experienced by seeing and hearing from Black male educators, leading them to be more intentional in mentoring Black males and providing practical career advice and character development.” The collective experiences and reflections of participants highlighted the pressing need for mentorship and support for Black male educators at the district level, driving their "internal motivation to address the scarcity, develop strategies, and be more intentional in mentoring and providing practical guidance and character development for Black males in primary and secondary schools.

Regarding whether the sessions challenged or changed their practice as educators, participants shared valuable insights. One participant mentioned a new awareness of the relevance of Black educators to youth, regardless of race, while another participant became more intentional in their efforts to provide and receive mentorship. One participant stated, “the

sessions opened their minds to the lack of mentorship and connections with a community of educators who look like them.” Participants acknowledged the sessions' impact on changing their practice as educators, ranging from providing access to programs that can train Black males as educators to be aware of opportunities beyond high school and developing relationships with students, especially Black males. One participant stated, “that he would reevaluate his intent and purpose as an educator, committed to mentoring Black male students and fellow Black male teachers, and felt motivated to pour into others like them and encourage Black males to pursue careers as educators.”

When participants were asked, “What mode of delivering content or structure of the learning sessions have you liked the most?”, several key themes and patterns emerged. First, a number of participants expressed their satisfaction with the current mode of delivery and the structure of the sessions, stating that no changes were needed. They enjoyed the existing structure and content, indicating a high level of contentment. Second, a notable trend was the lack of specific suggestions for improvement. Many participants either had no comments, were unsure, or did not offer any suggestions for changes. This suggests that they did not identify any particular areas that required modification or enhancement. Furthermore, participants demonstrated an acceptance of the current mode of delivery and structure. They reported that the existing format was effective and working well, thus not requiring any alterations. Their feedback emphasized their positive experiences and contentment with the sessions as they were.

When participants were asked, “What mode of delivering content or structure of the learning sessions should be changed to make these next sessions better?” several key themes and patterns emerged. First, a number of participants expressed their satisfaction with the current mode of delivery and the structure of the sessions, stating that no changes were needed. One

participant mentioned, "I honestly don't think there is a need for any changes to the current mode of delivery or structure of the sessions." Another participant expressed their opinion, stating, "I believe the mode of delivery is working well and doesn't require any changes at all." Second, a notable trend was the lack of specific suggestions for improvement. Many participants either had no comments, were unsure, or did not offer any suggestions for changes. This suggests that they did not identify any particular areas that required modification or enhancement. Furthermore, participants demonstrated an acceptance of the current mode of delivery and structure. They believed that the existing format was effective and working well, thus not required any alterations. Their feedback emphasized their positive experiences and contentment with the sessions as they were.

When participants were asked about the impact of the sessions on their worth, value, future in the district and profession, and their feelings regarding mentorship, several key themes and patterns emerged. In the first driver measure survey, some participants noted a positive impact on their self-perception and sense of purpose as Black male educators. They noted that the sessions enhanced their view of themselves and prompted them to reflect on their role and the importance of mentorship. Others expressed uncertainty or a desire for more support and mentorship within the district. In the second driver measure survey administration, participants mentioned how the sessions influenced their perspectives on diversity, inclusivity, and their value in the county. They shared that the sessions increased their belief in their worth and value as educators and deepened their desire to mentor youth.

One participant stated, "I believe my relationship with my mentors helps me know my worth, value, and future in the district and in the profession." Another participant shared, "Yes, absolutely! It has made me reexamine my reason or 'my why?' behind what I do daily in the

profession as a Black male educator. It has allowed me to reflectively think about how I can better serve in my capacity. It has also helped me see the necessity of having a mentor and being mentored." One participant stated, "It's definitely affected how I approach different rooms and conversations. I've always been aware of diversity and inclusive hiring to meet quotas, but just seeing how that dynamic affects a workplace." Another participant shared, "Absolutely yes! It has caused me to personally evaluate and reevaluate my worth, value, and future. It has allowed me to realize the importance of the mentorship component needed as Black male educators."

Overall, the key themes that emerged from participants' responses include the following:

Enhanced self-perception and reflection: The sessions prompted participants to reevaluate their role and purpose as Black male educators. They engaged in self-reflection, considering how they could better serve and the mentorship. Need for support and mentorship: Some participants expressed a need for greater support and mentorship within the district. They recognized the lack of support and emphasized the importance of mentors, particularly those who share their experiences. Impact on perspectives: The sessions had a transformative effect on participants' perspectives, particularly regarding diversity, inclusivity, and their own value within the county. They contemplated how these aspects influence the workplace and their own worth and future in the profession. While there were participants who responded negatively or had no specific answer, the overall themes highlighted the profound impact of the sessions on participants' perceptions of self-worth, value, and mentorship.

When asked, "Did this session challenge or change your practice as an educator, some key findings were revealed. In the first and second driver measure surveys, participants highlighted the positive impact of the session on their practice, becoming more intentional in providing mentorship and receiving mentorship as Black male educators. They recognized their

role and raised awareness of their impact. Some participants also acknowledged the lack of mentorship and connections within a community of educators who share similar experiences.

One participant reported, “The session had challenged and changed their practice as an educator. They were motivated to provide Black males with access to programs, such as "Call Me Mister," that train them to become educators. The session also highlighted the importance of being aware of other programs that students can pursue. They realized that students often lack awareness of opportunities beyond high school and that being knowledgeable about such opportunities can impact their lives. In terms of changing their practice, the participant recognized the need to establish stronger relationships with all their students, with a particular focus on Black males. Another participant shared, “The session had caused them to rethink their intent and purpose as an educator.” They became more aware of the importance of mentoring Black male students and fellow Black male teachers, acknowledging their role as a seasoned educator in providing support and guidance. One participant stated, “The session had opened their mind to the lack of mentorship or connections they had with a community of educators who share their racial background.” This realization highlighted the importance of establishing connections and seeking mentorship within their community. These participant responses demonstrate the transformative impact of the session on their practice as educators, leading to a renewed focus on providing opportunities, mentoring Black male students, fostering relationships, and seeking support within their professional community.

Process Measure

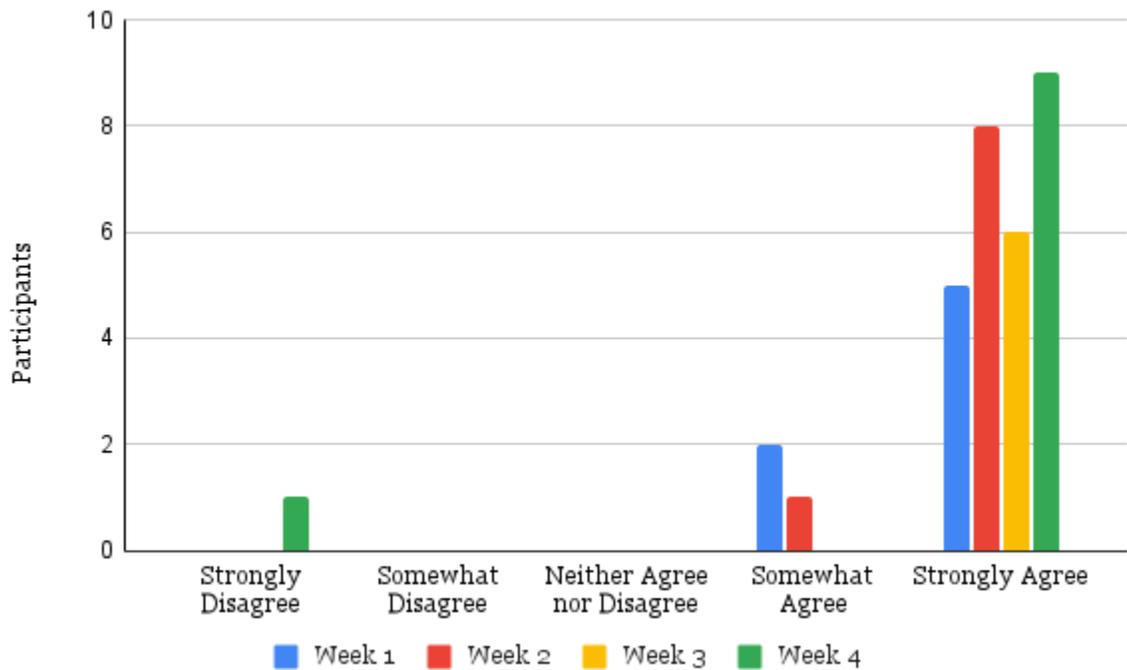
As stated above, to assess the effectiveness of the professional development sessions, I asked for process measure survey items after each session. The survey items included a question asking participants to indicate the specific session they were participating in and their assigned

number for this study. This helped to distinguish between different sessions and organize the data accordingly. The aim was to measure participants' knowledge of the session content, evaluate the quality of the sessions, and gauge their interest in the content. Emphasis was placed on gathering data specifically related to the session content, with the ultimate goal of developing a high-quality professional development program.

The analysis revealed several findings related to process measures. By the end of week 4, all participants (100%) reported strongly agreeing with the statement, "This session will impact my interaction with Black male students." Furthermore, 80% expressed somewhat agreed with this statement. I found consistent data regarding the need for email reminders, indicating that it is easy to send them out and ensure good session participation. However, some participants reported inconvenience with the session location, suggesting that it may need to be varied next time. When asked if the location from where the session was conducted was central in their school, 80% responded with a definite yes. By week 4, 80% of participants responded with a definite yes when asked if they liked the session format. Additionally, by week 4, 100% of participants agreed that the slated agenda for the sessions were followed. Figure 11 displays the process measure results for the appropriate length of the session. Findings indicate for weeks 1-3, a majority of reported sessions were an appropriate length of time. In week 4, 90% of participants reported sessions were an appropriate length of time, with 10% of participants strongly disagreeing.

Figure 11

Results from Process Measure: Appropriate Length of Session



Over the course of four weeks, we collected data from participants regarding their experiences. When asked about the convenience of the chosen time, 56% strongly agreed and 43% somewhat agreed. Similarly, when questioned about disturbances during the sessions at their locations, 85% reported that there were definitely no disturbances, while 15% stated that there were probably some. In terms of comfort in the room during the sessions, 42% of the participants felt extremely comfortable, 15% felt extremely uncomfortable, and 43% reported feeling somewhat comfortable. Finally, when asked about their satisfaction with the session format, over the four-week period, 29% of the participants probably responded yes, while a majority of 72% definitely responded yes.

I used the Delve tool to analyze participant responses regarding their personal definitions of mentorship. Several themes emerged from the qualitative analysis (Saldaña, 2021). During the

analysis of participants' responses to the question of how to improve the process, several themes and patterns emerged.

First, participants expressed overall satisfaction with the process, highlighting its effectiveness, thorough preparation, and the value they gained from the sessions. One participant shared, "I think the process is well-prepared and organized. It is very convenient for all participants considering the varying schedules of all participants." Another participant mentioned, "I think it's run very smoothly; I have enjoyed it the past couple of weeks." This positive perception of the process was consistently observed among the participants. Second, the virtual meeting format received positive feedback, as participants acknowledged and appreciated its convenience in accommodating their diverse schedules. This preference for virtual meetings indicated a desire to continue utilizing this format in the future.

Participants stressed the importance of taking practical steps and implementing targeted strategies to improve black male student performance and increase the involvement of black male adults. One participant specifically mentioned, "Greater focus on practical steps to improve black male student performance and practical steps to garner black male adult participation." This theme highlighted the need for focused interventions and initiatives in these specific areas to address the identified challenges. Finally, participants emphasized the importance of timely reminders for enhancing engagement and attendance. The value of providing reminders to ensure active participation and maximize attendance rates during the sessions was a recurring theme among the participants.

When asked how the session changed their thinking regarding Black males in education, participants shared insightful reflections that aligned with key themes. One participant noted, "This session reminded me that tokenism is a reality for many Black males in education. Also, I

was encouraged to put my best foot forward because people are watching me; my actions and attitudes (good or bad) can have an effect on other Black males in Johnston County Schools." This response aligns with the theme of highlighting the reality of tokenism and emphasizing the importance of authentic representation and positive role modeling.

Another participant shared, "I will share information about the JOCO Teach, which in turn, I can share with my students about opportunities in the teaching profession." This statement reflects the theme of sharing opportunities and considering different perspectives as the participant plans to pass on information about teaching opportunities to their students.

Additionally, a participant expressed, "It has really made me be more appreciative of the fact that I have the opportunity to serve as a Black Male Educator. It has allowed me to take a more reflective and sobering look at my practices and how I can better impact students in my role. Also, it has increased my desire to do my part to help the next generation of students and encourage black male students." This response aligns with the themes of appreciation for the opportunity to serve as a Black male educator, reflection on practices to enhance student impact, and a commitment to supporting and encouraging black male students.

These participant statements reinforce the key themes that emerged from the analysis, demonstrating increased awareness of tokenism, a focus on sharing opportunities and considering different perspectives, and a deepened commitment to making a positive impact. The session effectively influenced participants' thinking, fostering a sense of responsibility and emphasizing the importance of authentic representation, addressing tokenism, and providing mentorship and support for Black male students in education.

Balance Measure

As stated above, in this study, questions 13-15 of the post-mentorship survey items were

used as balance measures to identify any unintended consequences of the improvement initiative. Balance measures assess potential negative impacts resulting from improvement initiatives (Hinnant-Crawford, 2018).

Figure 12 presents the results of two questions posed to the participants. The first question asked, "Did these sessions make you consider leaving this profession?" Out of the 9 participants, the responses were distributed as follows: 66.7% strongly disagreed, 11.1% somewhat disagreed, and 22.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. The second question asked whether the participants missed out on any major life events during these sessions. Approximately 90% of the participants expressed that their involvement in these sessions did not result in any missed life events.

Figure 12

Results from Balance Measure: Leaving the Profession and Major Events

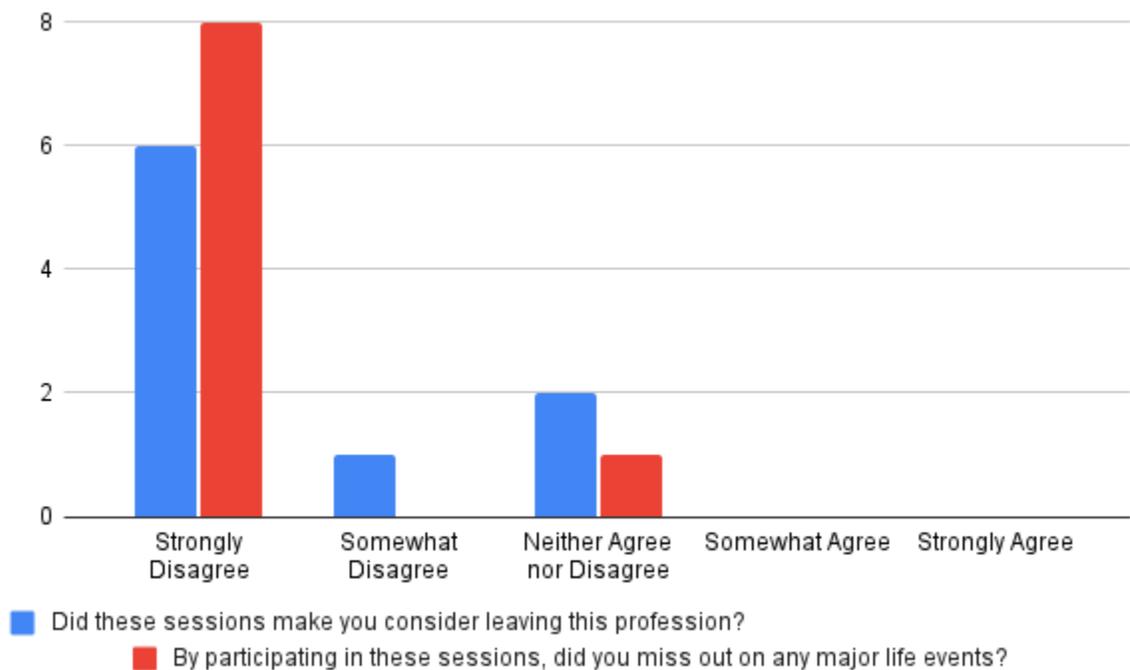
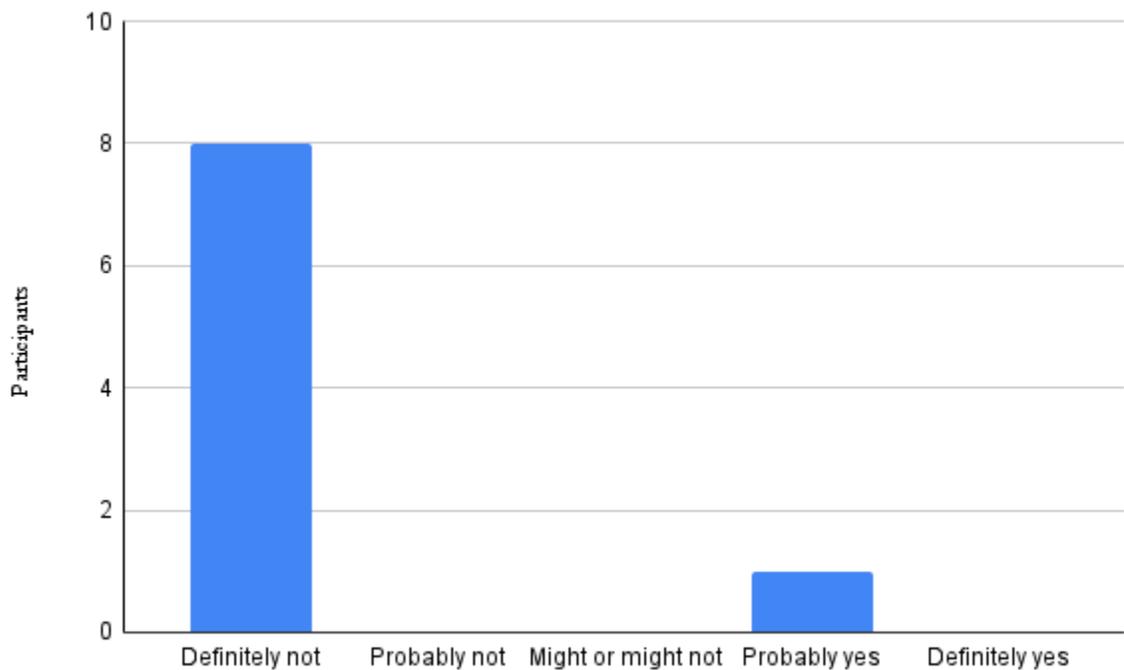


Figure 13 displays the responses when participants were asked, 'Did these sessions interfere with your work, family time, or other outside work obligations?' 90% of the participants expressed that it did not. As a result, from the data from the balance measure survey items, there were no unintended consequences.

Figure 13

Results from Balance Measure: Family, Work, and Outside Obligation



Outcome Measure

As stated above, the outcome measure answers the participants' perspectives after all sessions allowing for a comparison of their initial and final perceptions (Hinnant-Crawford, 2018). In this study, the outcome measure compared pre-mentorship survey items and post-mentorship survey items responses to assess changes in the participants' knowledge regarding my study and to track their progress throughout sessions.

The post-mentorship survey items aimed to assess participants' perspectives regarding the need for mentorship and support for Black males in the district, the qualifications of individuals to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession, the perception of being mentored as an educator, the willingness to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year, the recognition of mentorship as a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students, and the perception of mentorship and support as a Black male educator in the district.

As I analyzed the responses of participants in the pre-mentorship and post-mentorship survey items, I found several key findings. When participants were asked, "I feel qualified to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession," there was a notable shift from 33% strongly agreeing in the pre-mentorship survey items to 56% in the post-mentorship survey items. Regarding the statement, "I feel mentored as a Black male educator," in the pre-mentorship survey items, 4 out of 9 participants (44%) either strongly or somewhat disagreed that they had been mentored. However, by the end of the intervention, 11% (or 1 in 9) strongly or somewhat disagreed. Indicating participants' perceptions of mentorship increased throughout this study. Furthermore, in response to the statement, "I feel mentored as a Black male educator," there was a transition from 11% disagreement to 0% disagreement. Therefore, at the end of this study, 100% of participants reported that mentorship is a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students, which is a positive change. Finally, when asked if participants felt more supported in the district compared to the pre-mentorship survey items, 56% reported feeling more supported by the end of this study. This suggests a positive trend in terms of perceived support among the participants. It implies that the sessions during this study had a positive impact on the participants' sense of support within the district.

Figure 14 displays the outcome measure survey, which asked the participant, "This session will impact my interaction with Black male students?" was initially identified as a process measure but was, in essence, an outcome measure. Inadvertently, this measure was placed under the wrong category, ending up in the process measure instead of the intended outcome measure.

Figure 14

Results from Outcome Measure: Mentorship and Support

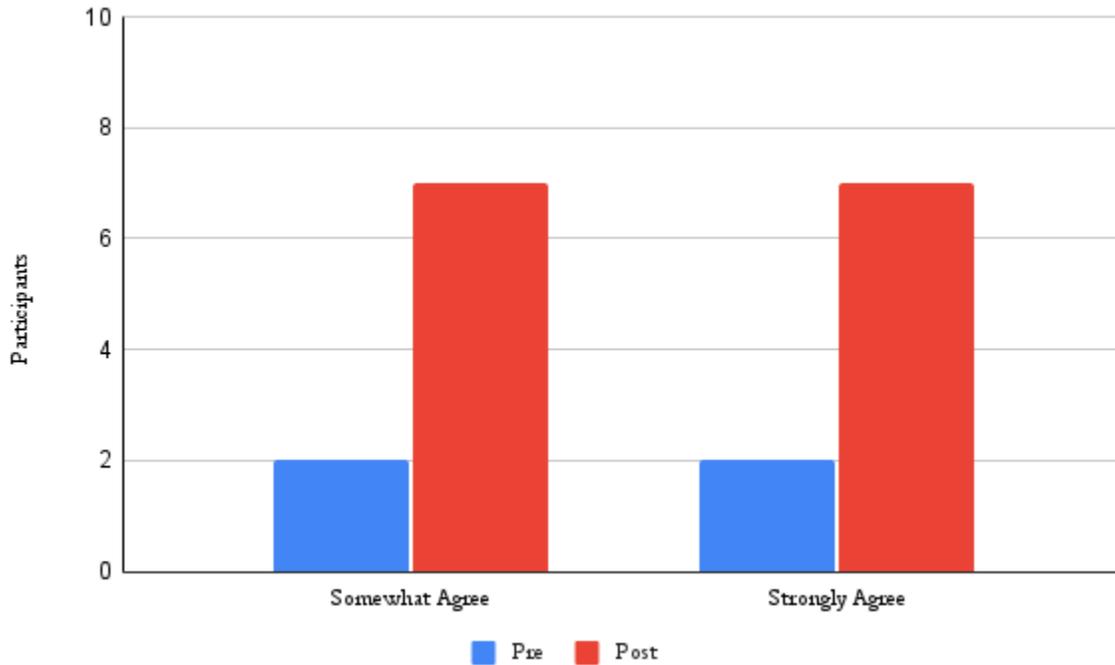


Figure 15 illustrates the participants' perception on if they feel qualified to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession there was a notable shift from 33% strongly agreeing in the pre-survey to 56% in the post-survey.

Figure 15

Results from Lead and Recruit Black Males into Teaching

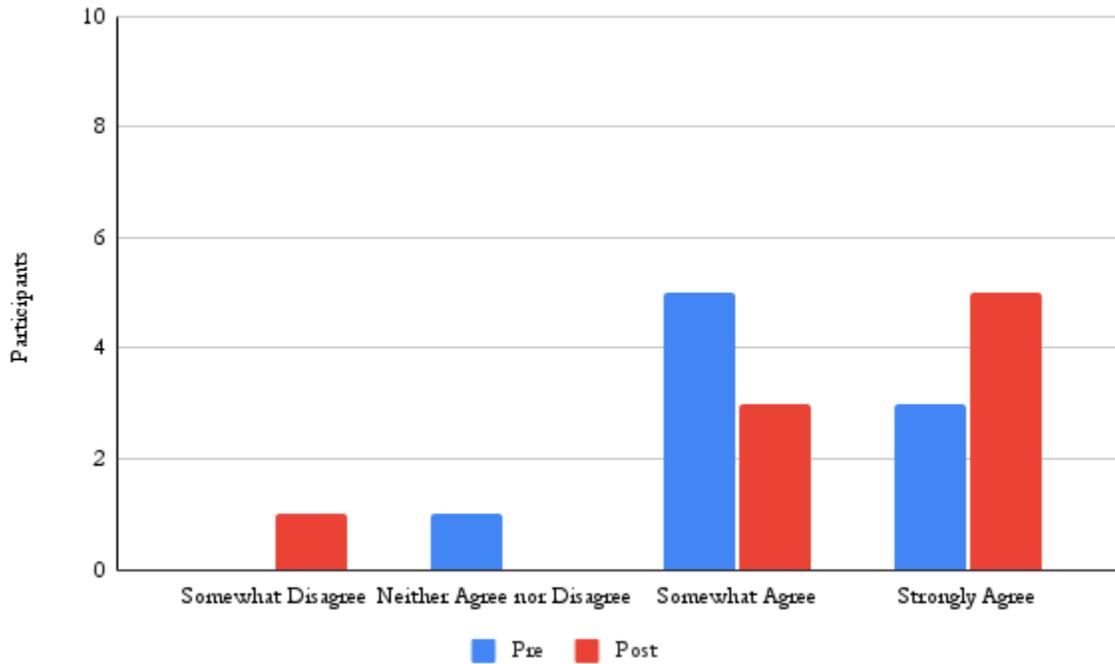


Figure 16 illustrates in pre-mentorship survey items, that 20% of the participants somewhat agreed they feel more supported in the district than they did before, while 80% of participants strongly agreed with the statement. The response rate remained the same in the post-mentorship survey items.

Figure 16

Results from Outcome Measure: Perception of District Support

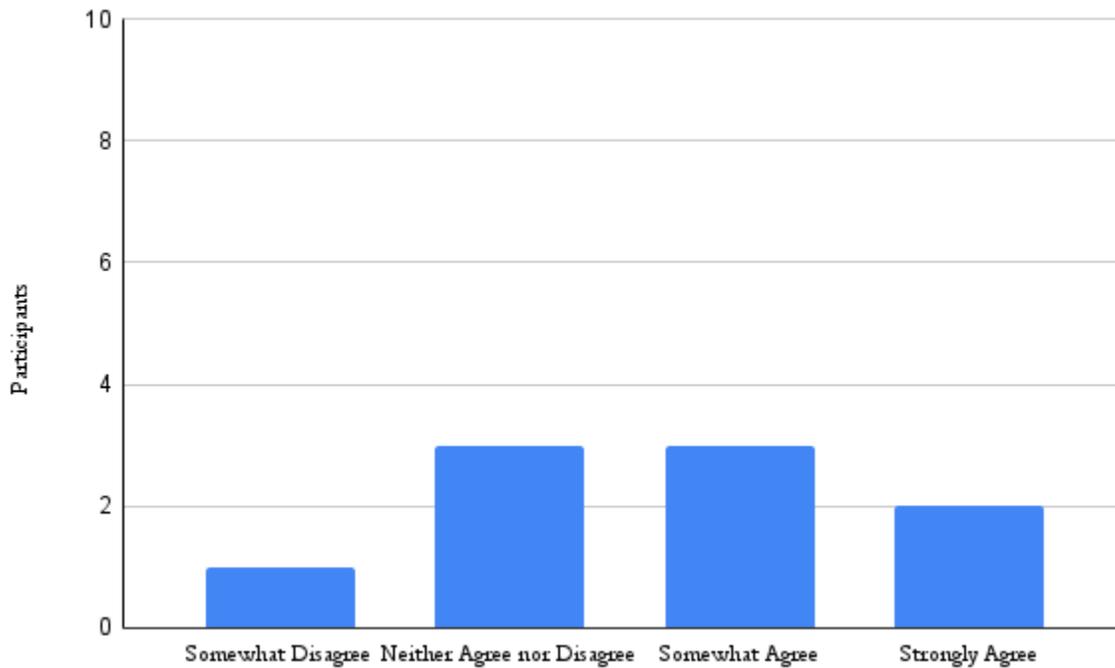
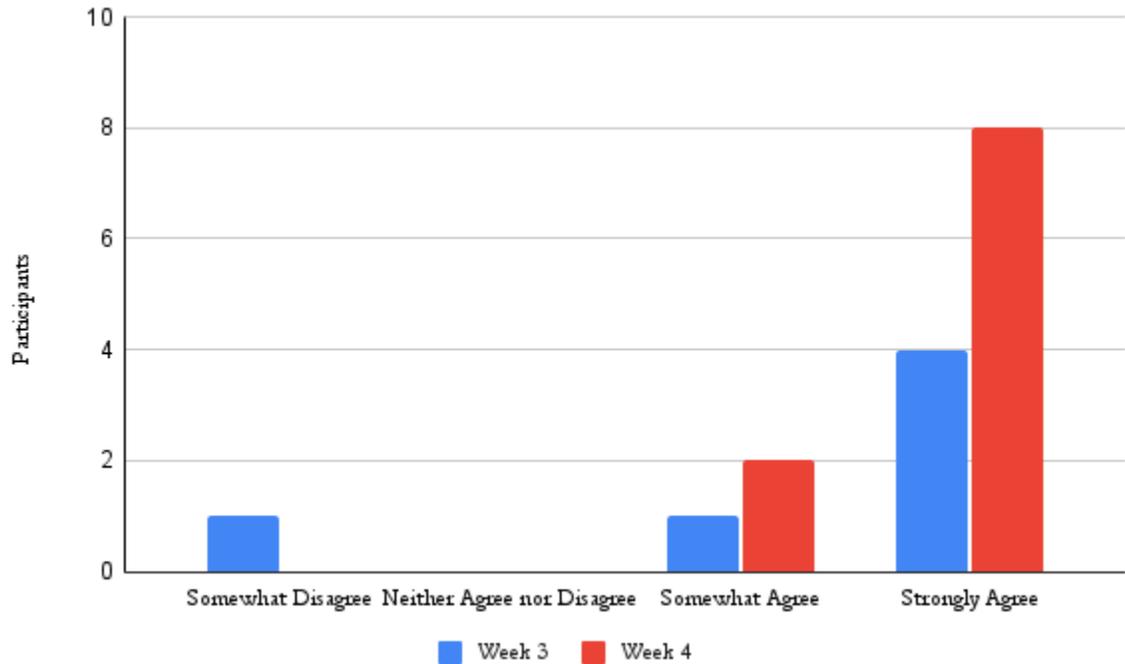


Figure 17 displays the process measure results for increased interaction with Black Male students. By week 4, 80% of participants reported they had increased interaction with Black male students. Figure 4 only includes weeks 3 and 4 because the question in reference was asked during those specific weeks of the process measure survey.

Figure 17

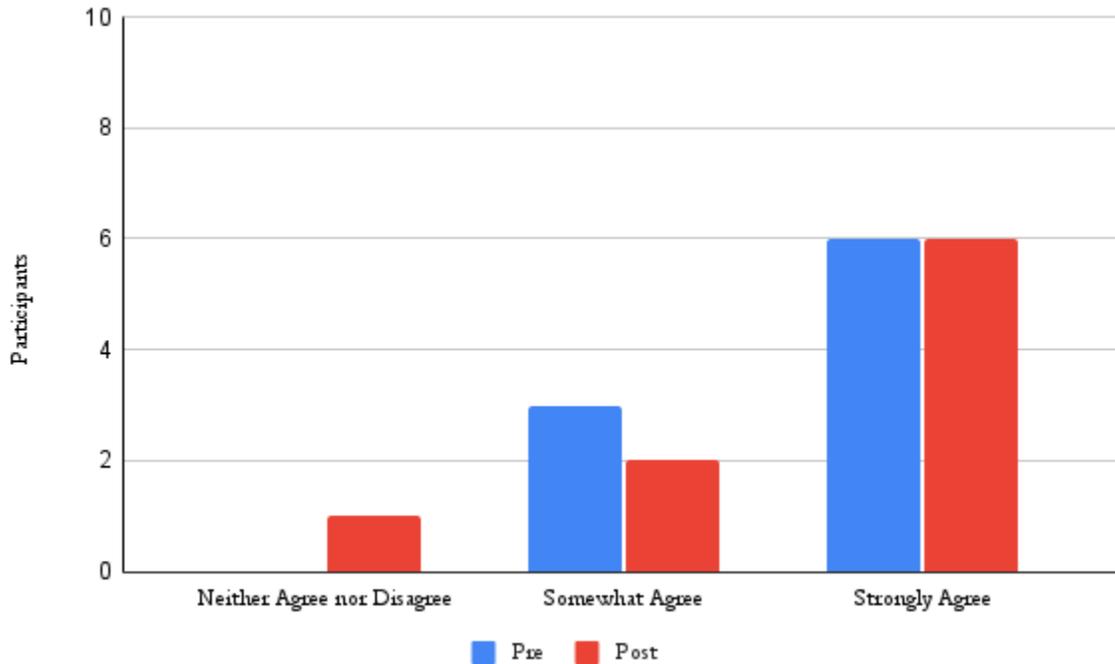
Results from Outcome Measure: Increased Interaction with Black Male Students



The response rate remained the same in the post-mentorship survey items. Similarly, when asked about participants' willingness to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year, the data showed that 80% of the participants would be willing to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year. In the pre-mentorship survey items, a total of nine participants reported agreement, with three participants somewhat agreeing and six participants strongly agreeing. Figure 18 below illustrates key outcome measures.

Figure 18

Outcome Measure: Participate in Black Male Mentorship Group (throughout the year)



Using the Delve tool, the participant responses were examined and analyzed to identify common themes in their personal definitions of mentorship. Several recurring themes emerged, reflecting the participants' understanding of mentorship. The analysis revealed that participants defined mentorship as a process involving transfer, guidance, support, knowledge, and personal growth. These themes encapsulated their understanding of the role and the importance of mentorship in their professional lives. The presence of these consistent themes in both the pre and post-mentorship survey items suggests that the participants' perspectives on mentorship remained stable throughout the study.

When asked, "What is your belief now on mentorship?" one participant stated, "The need for Black male educators has always been underrated. Pouring into proven systems and programs, that work must continue. Developing data that leads to new answers is also a viable

solution to this issue. I think the real answer will have to include multiple approaches to resolving the issue. Incentives, reinforcing/continuing programs that already get results, continuing forums that seek out new ideas, and more." Another participant mentioned, "My belief on mentorship is that it is a responsibility for all educators, but for Black male educators specifically. Mentorship is not just vital, needed, or a requisite. Mentorship cannot be separated from the idea of 'doing everything in your power' to help young people. We teach students, but we need to go the extra mile. The extra mile is mentorship. At the same time, mentorship should not be seen as something 'separate' or 'extra' in education. Mentorship must be seen - even on the policy level - as an element without which we cannot be successful." Finally, another participant stated, "Mentorship is very vital and critical to the success of an individual. It is essential to ensure others will fully feel nurtured and supported as they seek to learn, grow, and develop and become successful in their endeavors."

These quotes provided valuable insights into the participants' perspectives on mentorship, particularly its importance for Black male educators and the broader educational context. Key themes that emerge include the underrated need for Black male educators, the importance of proven systems and programs, the multi-faceted approach required to address mentorship needs, the responsibility of mentorship for educators, the integration of mentorship into education at all levels, and the vital role mentorship plays in fostering success. These themes collectively emphasize the participants' belief in the necessity of mentorship and its integration as a fundamental element in education.

The provided information suggests that the mentorship sessions had a positive impact on the participants, as evidenced by various outcome measures. Notable changes were observed in participants' perceptions and beliefs concerning mentorship and support for Black male

educators. Specifically, participants' perception of their qualifications to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession improved, with a noteworthy increase in the number of participants strongly agreeing. Moreover, participants expressed a heightened sense of being mentored as Black male educators and acknowledged the indispensability of mentorship as a skill for teachers of Black male students. The sessions also fostered a greater feeling of support within the district among participants and facilitated increased interaction with Black male students. Additionally, participants demonstrated their willingness to continue engaging in mentorship activities in the long term. The analysis of their responses consistently revealed themes associated with mentorship, underscoring participants' professional lives.

Implications

The findings of this study informed us how we could approach building the capacity of Black male educators to serve as mentors. These results have important implications for how we implement practices and policies in education. In the upcoming section, we will delve into the practical implications of the study and provide recommendations for educators based on these findings. Additionally, we will outline potential avenues for future research in order to further our understanding of this critical topic.

Implications for Practice

Establishing a network of support for Black educators is of utmost importance for schools and districts, as it directly contributes to their ability to mentor Black youth and positively impact their educational experiences. The scarcity of Black male educators, who comprise only 2% of the workforce, underscores the urgency of this matter (NCES, 2022). By offering professional development opportunities and ongoing support, districts can enhance the skills and knowledge of Black educators, equipping them to serve as mentors and role models

for Black students. Notably, 80% of the Black male educators in this study expressed their willingness to participate in a Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year.

Similar to White and Wright's study (2018), it is pivotal for this network of support also to prioritize the recruitment and retention of more Black and Brown teachers. A diverse teaching force fosters better cultural understanding and connection with students from similar backgrounds. During this study, 50% of the participants felt qualified to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession. By intentionally recruiting and creating pathways for aspiring Black and Brown teachers, schools and districts can promote representation, address racial disparities in education, and provide students with educators who can relate to their experiences.

Implications for Policy

Effective policy implementation is major for school districts to provide robust support to Black educators and cultivate an inclusive learning environment (Howard & Lyons, 2021). Their research demonstrates the impact of deficit ideology on the educational experiences and outcomes of Black male students, resulting in lower engagement, decreased academic achievement, and a higher likelihood of disciplinary action (Howard & Lyons, 2021). Building on previous research, intentional mentoring programs have shown promise in increasing representation in the teaching force and promoting educational equity. By the end of the program, 56% of participants reported feeling more supported in the district. These personalized mentoring initiatives address the specific challenges faced by minoritized youth.

It is essential to acknowledge that a deficit-driven approach to education, as described by Gorski (2016), hampers progress by focusing on students' limitations rather than recognizing their abilities and potential. To empower and uplift minoritized youth, these

programs shift the focus towards their capabilities and achievements. Robinson and Clardy (2011) emphasized the importance of challenging deficit thinking and actively encouraging teachers to adopt a more culturally responsive mindset.

To communicate the value of educational opportunities for minoritized youth, school districts should allocate resources to these programs and prioritize their implementation. This reinforces the message that the educational needs of all students are valued and supported through policy. Furthermore, intentional mentoring initiatives hold potential in increasing the representation of minority teachers by offering support and guidance to aspiring Black educators. By embracing and nurturing such initiatives, school districts can create an environment where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive.

This study revealed that 80% of participants expressed the belief that mentorship and support specifically for Black males in the district are necessary. By establishing policies that connect Black educators with networks, resources, and growth opportunities, districts can foster a sense of belonging, address retention challenges, and create a more diverse teaching workforce.

Effective school district policies should include clear guidelines and funding systems, collaboration with community organizations, mentorship training, evaluation frameworks, and targeted initiatives for recruitment and retention. Incorporating these elements ensures that intentional mentoring programs and support for Black educators become essential to educational equity efforts. Additionally, policies informed by critical race theory, as advocated by scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, can address systemic racism, promote equity, and create inclusive curricula that accurately represent the experiences of Black people. By fostering critical consciousness and anti-racist action through policy, districts can challenge

and dismantle racist systems, foster inclusion, and provide culturally responsive education for all students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Recommendations for Practitioners

Based on the findings of this study, Black male educators see a need for mentoring and support for themselves as minoritized educators as well as for Black male youth. This study revealed that 80% of participants expressed the belief in the necessity of mentorship and support specifically for Black males in the district. This highlights the importance of developing program structures, setting goals and objectives, and aligning mentoring initiatives with broader educational strategies. It is noteworthy that by the end of the program, 56% of participants reported an increased sense of support in the district.

Teachers can act as mentors themselves, building positive relationships with minoritized youth and supporting mentoring programs within their classrooms. They also provide guidance on career exploration and college preparation and advocate for the needs and aspirations of minoritized youth. Together, these educators can create an environment that promotes equitable opportunities, addresses systemic barriers, and empowers minoritized youth to pursue their goals and aspirations through intentional mentoring practices.

Critical race work in the K12 world calls for a commitment to social justice and dismantling racism, marginalization, and other forms of oppression. hooks (1994) posited that inclusive and engaged pedagogy is a practice of freedom. Moreover, an aspect of our vocation as educators and leaders is sacred and spiritual. It is a calling that can liberate educators and students – helping them realize and enact human identities more fully.

My calling in K12 is not merely to provide educational access to aspiring educators but to share in their intellectual and spiritual growth. hooks (1994) asserted education should be

provided in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of the students we serve. Providing conditions where learning can begin most profoundly and intimately is essential. Nurturing positive relationships with students from marginalized communities is vital to their education. Understanding how social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, and schooling background) inform mentoring is essential (Carter Andrews & Castillo, 2016).

The rate of cultivation among Black male teachers in JCPS has not been addressed nor identified. Black male teachers must see themselves. This suggests that it is key for Black male teachers to have visibility and representation within the faculty and staff of the school system, as this can have a positive impact on their sense of belonging and identity. By recognizing the importance of self-reflection and seeing themselves reflected in the teaching workforce, it implies that Black male teachers can serve as role models and mentors for students, particularly those from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds. It is inspirational for Black male students and teachers to have role models and mentors with similar backgrounds. Studies show that diversity in education improves intellectual engagement and self-motivation and challenges the views to which our students are accustomed. The lack of Black male teachers is not just a problem at JCPS; this problem stretches far and wide in K-12 education (Sekou, 2021).

Directions for Future Research

As a result of this work, future research might address the disparity of Black male educators on the recruitment and retention of Black female educators. Specifically, my research will aim to explore the effectiveness of mentoring programs in promoting the recruitment and retention of Black female educators. Furthermore, future research might address the disparities among Brown educators as well.

While it is widely acknowledged that the underrepresentation of Black male educators contributes to the overall underrepresentation of minorities in teaching, further examination is needed to understand the specific impact on the recruitment and retention of Black female educators. This research will add knowledge to the field as we address this disparity, providing valuable insights for the development of targeted strategies and interventions that enhance the representation of Black female educators.

In addition to focusing on Black male and female educators, it is equally important to investigate and develop interventions for Brown educators. By examining the unique experiences, challenges, and opportunities specific to Brown educators, this research can shed light on the factors influencing their recruitment and retention. Such insights would enable the development of tailored approaches and programs that effectively address disparities and support the representation and success of Brown educators in the teaching profession.

For future researchers, it is essential to include balance measures earlier in the study to ensure that discussions on topics such as tokenism or racial disparities do not lead to negative impacts. By incorporating balance measures, researchers can proactively address potential biases or unintended consequences that may arise from their investigations. This approach strengthens the research methodology and helps ensure that the study remains objective, ethical, and sensitive to the potential impact on individuals or groups involved.

Future research should focus on exploring the experiences of Black male youth who enter the teaching force, aiming to understand their motivations, challenges, and experiences within the education system. This research can provide insights into strategies for recruiting and supporting more Black males in the teaching profession. Additionally, further investigation is needed to assess the specific impact of Black male youth teachers on mentoring Black males

in JCPS, including formal and informal mentoring relationships. Long-term studies should be conducted to measure the effects of initiatives promoting the entry of Black male youth into teaching on the representation of minority teachers within JCPS. Finally, identifying best practices and developing policy recommendations can maximize the impact of Black male youth teachers on mentoring and diversity in JCPS and inform district-level policies and programs.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, I discuss the limitations associated with the measures in this study. It is important to acknowledge these limitations to provide an understanding of the scope and potential impact of my findings. I relied on self-perceptions as a data source, despite the well-known limitations and lack of reliability associated with self-report measures. Additionally, I did not assess the sense of belonging within the field or in participants' current schools. Furthermore, there were unanswered data, such as information about participants beyond their primary teaching responsibilities. I further explain the limitations of this study's instruments and the constraints imposed by the limited data available.

Reliability of Self-Report Measures

One important limitation of this study is that I relied on self-perceptions as a main source of data. This approach is not without its shortcomings, as research consistently indicates that self-report measures can be influenced by biases, social desirability, and inaccuracies in recall (Schwarz, 1999). This means that the accuracy and reliability of my findings may be somewhat compromised. It is key to exercise caution when interpreting the results and acknowledge the potential disparities between self-reported data and actual behaviors or attitudes. Additionally, Schwarz shed light on the impact of social desirability bias, where

participants may feel compelled to provide socially acceptable responses rather than authentic reflections of their thoughts and behaviors. It underscores the importance of being mindful of this bias and taking measures to mitigate its influence when analyzing findings.

It is essential to address the limitation of unanswered data points within this study. Despite our best efforts, certain aspects, such as participants' involvement in activities beyond their primary teaching responsibilities, were not adequately addressed, resulting in missing data. This could potentially impact the interpretation of the results and limit the study's findings. As researchers, it is important to acknowledge these data gaps and recognize their implications, allowing for an understanding of the study's limitations.

Absence of Sense of Belonging Assessment

One limitation of my study is the lack of measurement for participants' sense of belonging within their respective fields and current schools. Sense of belonging is a critical construct that can impact individuals' experiences and outcomes. By not including this assessment, I may have overlooked an important variable that could provide valuable insights into the participants' overall well-being and professional satisfaction. Future studies could incorporate measures to capture this aspect adequately.

Data Confidentiality

It is relevant to acknowledge the potential influence of the data being confidential and not anonymous, along with my role as an administrator in the district, which may have impacted participants' responses. The unequal power from my administrative position could have resulted in participants being reserved in offering genuine and candid feedback, potentially impacting the authenticity and depth of their responses. Moreover, the assurance of data confidentiality might not have completely eased concerns about potential repercussions,

resulting in participants being less forthcoming in their answers. These factors should be considered when interpreting the study's findings.

Unanswered Data Points

Additionally, the researcher being in a position of power in the district might have influenced participants' responses, as they knew their identity could be identified. This raises concerns about the potential for response bias. Another limitation is the presence of unanswered data points within this study, specifically regarding participants' involvement in activities or subjects beyond their primary teaching responsibilities. Despite our best efforts, these aspects were not adequately addressed, resulting in missing data that could potentially impact the interpretation of the results and limit the generalizability of the study's findings. It is important to acknowledge these data gaps and recognize their implications for this study's validity and reliability.

The study is specifically focused on utilizing survey items data due to limitations in time and resources. The scope of the study is delimited to analyzing survey items data collected from the participants. The goal is to gain insights into participants' perceptions and experiences by relying solely on survey items data. Survey items are considered an efficient method for data collection. However, it is key to acknowledge the potential limitations of this approach. In future research, incorporating additional data sources, such as analysis of the curriculum, session content, and implementation, could provide a understanding.

Duration

One limitation of this study was its short duration. With such a brief timeframe, it is possible that some changes may not have been observable. Considering the quick nature of the four-week professional development session, it is understandable that the potential for

noticeable changes within that time frame might be limited. If the study had been conducted over the course of a year, with monthly sessions lasting 90 minutes each, it is likely that more tangible differences would have emerged.

Additionally, the study was conducted during a specific time period, namely a four-week period at the end of the academic year. Furthermore, the sessions were conducted online and took place in the evening hours. These contextual details are relevant to consider when interpreting the results and understanding the potential impact of the study's design on the observed outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to build the capacity of Black male educators to mentor Black male youth into the field of education. I was able to increase participants' capacity by developing and leading professional development sessions. I provided information; invited guest speakers who are experts in the mentoring field to share their insights, experiences, and best practices; offered peer collaboration by encouraging Black male educators to collaborate and share their experiences, challenges, and successes with other like-minded Black male educators; and established mentoring networks where Black male educators can connect, learn from one another, and share resources - fostering continuous learning and growth.

The insights gained from this initiative could assist the district in establishing a mentoring program that provides additional support to underrepresented subgroups, thereby addressing the pressing need for greater diversity among teachers in JCPS. Furthermore, the findings of this intervention may also drive positive social change. By gaining a deeper understanding of how to meet the needs of all students through the mentoring program, JCPS could enhance the overall educational experience of all students of color. Consequently, this

improved experience could contribute to an increase in the number of Black male teachers, fostering a more inclusive and diverse teaching force in JCPS.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Dear Educator,

We are writing to invite you to participate in a research study conducted by Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. at Western Carolina University. The study aims to build Black male educators' capacity in JCPS, to mentor Black male youth into the teaching profession.

We are seeking participants who are Black male educators in JCPS. Your participation in this study will involve attending four virtual professional development sessions to increase your capacity to mentor Black males in your own school context. You will be asked to take part in four weekly sessions that will last 1.5 hours and participate in weekly surveys at the end of each session.

If you agree to participate, we will ask you to email me at tobiashocutt@johnston.k12.nc.us, so I may send you a calendar invite to our first session. The study will take approximately one month.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation in the study at any time without any penalty.

Please let us know if you are interested in participating by May 12, 2023. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 919-605-8582 or email me at tobiashocutt@johnston.k12.nc.us.

Thank you for considering participating in this study.

Sincerely,
Tobias D. Hocutt

Appendix B

Western Carolina University IRB Letter of Approval



Graduate School
and Research

DATE: 18-May-2023

TO: Heidi Von Dohlen
FROM: IRB

PROJECT TITLE: 2023-04-30-01, Addressing the Disparity of Black Males Educators:
Building Capacity for Mentoring Programs

SUBMISSION TYPE: IRB Request for Initial Review of Research

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: 18-May-2023
EXPIRATION DATE: 17-May-2024
REVIEW TYPE: Designated Member Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited Review Category 7

Thank you for your submission of IRB Request for Initial Review of Research materials for this project. The IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Designated Member Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 828-227-7212 or irb@wcu.edu. Please include your protocol number and project title in all correspondence with this committee.

Appendix C

Johnston County Public School Letter of Approval



P.O. Box 1336
2320 US 70 Business HWY East
Smithfield, NC 27577
Phone: 919-934-6031
Fax: 919-934-2586
www.johnston.k12.nc.us

May 4, 2023

Western Carolina University
1 University Way
Cullowhee, North Carolina 28723

Attn: Garrett Davis, Compliance Officer for IACUC, IBC, & IRB

Dear Officer Davis, Institutional Review Board, and Disquisition Committee:

As Western Carolina University student and Johnston County Public Schools (JCPS) employee Tobias Hocutt is completing his doctoral disquisition tentatively entitled Addressing the Disparity of Black Male Educators: Building Capacity for Mentoring Programs, he will be recruiting, onboarding, and mentoring Black male educators in the school district. The purpose of the initiative is to address the underrepresentation of black males in the teaching force at JCPS by building Black male educators' capacity to mentor Black male youth into the teaching profession. His application to the school district was received, reviewed, and approved. Further, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Nicholas King has granted permission for Mr. Hocutt to contact and recruit JCPS personnel for participation.

Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cherry Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Cherry Johnson, Ed.D.
Director of Research and Grant Development



Appendix D

BOC Google Classroom

☰ "BOC" (Building Our Community) Stream Classwork People Grades ⚙️ ⋮ 



"BOC" (Building Our Community) ✎ Customize

 **Meet** ⋮

[Generate link](#)

 [Announce something to your class](#) ↕

Class code ⋮

roxm47f 🔗

 **This is where you can talk to your class**

Use the stream to share announcements, post assignments, and respond to student questions

[⚙️ Stream settings](#)

Appendix E1

Weekly Agenda

BOC Weekly MEETING AGENDA

Interest Meeting

DETAIL :

Date — May 2, 2023 —
Location — Virtual —
Theme — Interest Meeting —
Goals — Decision —
Moderated By — Tobias Hocutt Sr. —

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Introduction — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Overview

- Purpose (P.O.P, how it will be formatted, why them)
- Platform
- Norms/Expectations (non-negotiables)
- Dates & Time
- Q&A
- Decision (if some decide to go through the program, I will send them a link with a calendar invite along with the week 1 agenda)



Appendix E2
Weekly Agenda

BOC Weekly MEETING AGENDA

Session 1: Shared Stories and Experiences

DETAIL :

Date — May 9, 2023 —
Location — Virtual —
Theme Shared Stories and Experiences
Moderated By — Tobias Hocutt Sr. —

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Introduction — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Overview

- Building a community
- Understand positive self-esteem and a strong sense of identity
- Support the needs of the participants

Action Steps

[Click for Survey](#)



Appendix E3
Weekly Agenda

The graphic features a dark green background with a yellow sunburst icon in the top right. A circular inset image shows a man in a plaid shirt leaning over a desk to assist a woman in a purple shirt. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with yellow and white colors.

BOC Weekly MEETING AGENDA

Session 2: HBCUs Experiences

DETAIL :

Date — May 16, 2023 —

Location — Virtual —

Theme — HBCUs Experiences —

Moderated By — Tobias Hocutt Sr. —

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Introduction — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Overview

- Explore how these schools are supportive and culturally affirming environments for black male students.
- Explore different services to help black male students succeed academically and professionally
- Support with resources (networking)

Action Steps

[Click for Survey](#)

Appendix E4
Weekly Agenda

BOC Weekly MEETING AGENDA



Session 3: State of JCPS

DETAIL :

Date — May 23, 2023 —
Location — Virtual —
Theme **State of JCPS**
Moderated By — Tobias Hocutt Sr. —

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Introduction — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

- Overview
- Learn the meaning of tokenization, intersectionality microaggression
 - Explore how tokenism plays in the Black culture
 - Examine how microaggression affect Black male students

Action Steps

[Click for Survey](#)

Appendix E5

Weekly Agenda

The graphic features a dark green background with a yellow sunburst icon in the top right. A circular inset image shows a man in a plaid shirt leaning over a desk to assist a woman in a purple shirt. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with white and yellow colors.

BOC Weekly MEETING AGENDA

Session 4: Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program

DETAIL :

Date — May 30, 2023 —

Location — Virtual —

Theme Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program

Moderated By — Tobias Hocutt Sr. —

MEETING AGENDA

Welcome — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Introduction — Tobias D. Hocutt Sr. —

Overview

- Create presentations according to grade level (elementary, middle, high) to present to faculty/staff in participants.
- Explore and understand mentorship.
- Support with resources

[Click for Survey](#)

Appendix F

BOC Google Slides of the Sessions

Session 1:

“BOC”
(Building Our Community)

Session 1: Shared Stories and Experiences

Quick Activity:
Write a positionality statement on you and the students that you serve by answering these questions

What is your age	What is the age of the majority of your students	What is the age of the minority of your students
What is your race	The race of the majority of your students	The race of the minority of your students
What is your socioeconomic status	What is the socioeconomic status of the majority of your students	What is the socioeconomic status of the minority of your students
What is the ability of yourself	What is the ability of the majority of your students	What is the ability of the minority of your students
What is the language spoken at home by you and your family	What is the language spoken at home by the majority of your students	What is the language spoken at home by the minority of your students
What is your country of origin	What is your country of origin by the majority of your students	What is your country of origin by the minority of your students
What is your religious background if any	What is the religious background of any of the majority of your students	What is the religious background of any of the minority of your students

Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives
Goal: To understand positionality and to create a community

Learners will:

1. Understand the concept of positionality
2. Recognize your own positionality
3. Understand positionality can influence teaching and learning in the classroom
4. What is community
5. How can we build a community at our schools for black male students



What is Community?

Share your experience of being an educator in JCPS

How can we build a community at our schools for black males

What is Positionality?

Close Out:

Share your story with a White educator in their local school context. At the start of session two, we will debrief about sharing our experiences as Black male educators as well as discuss our White colleagues' comments and reactions.

Session 2:

“BOC”
(Building Our Community)

Session 2: Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program

Close Out:

Educators are to share what they learned in the session with an educator within their building.

Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives

Goal: To critically evaluate materials and resources in developing a mentoring program

Learners will:

1. Importance of mentoring
2. Components of an effective mentoring program
3. Strategies for maximizing the mentoring experience
4. Sustaining support beyond mentoring



Welcome



Dr. George Nofin
Director of Black Male Initiative/Call Me
MiSTER Program
College of Education
Grambling State University

Session 3:

“BOC”
(Building Our Community)

Session 3: State of JCPS

Exploring Tokenization

- Define and explain the terms “tokenization”
- Provide examples of tokenization related to being a Black male educator in JCPS.
- Facilitate a open discussion by asking participants to share their thoughts, reactions, or personal experiences related to tokenization.

Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives

Goal: To understand the State of JCPS

Learners will:

1. Understand the demographics of JCPS
2. Understand the meaning of tokenization and microaggression
3. Recognize what change they can make in JCPS



Close Out:

Educators are to share what they learned in the session with an educator within their building.

Understanding JCPS Demographics

- Shared demographic data on JCPS educators and student
- Brief discussion about the diversity within JCPS and the significance of understanding these demographics for creating an inclusive environment.

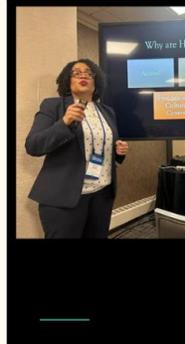
Session 4:

“BOC” *(Building Our Community)*

Session 4: Educational Opportunities

Stacey Sowell, PhD

Vice President for Enrollment
Management and Student Affairs ·
West Virginia State University



Instructional Goals and Learning Objectives

Goal: To understand the diversity and richness of HBCUs

Learners will:

1. Provide educators with a understanding of the various educational opportunities in our district, in-state, and out of state networks
2. Recognize the JoCo Teach Program regarding their mission and vision
3. Recognize the diversity and richness of HBCUs



Suzanne Sweat

JoCo TEACH Coordinator



Appendix G

Driver Measure Survey (1st and 3rd Sessions)

ID: What is your random number assigned to you for this study?

This is session number _____.

Q1 List three major ideas you have learned in these past sessions and rank them in order of importance.

Q2. What one thing challenged or changed your thinking or perspective from these sessions?

Q3. What mode of delivering content or structure of the learning sessions have you liked the most?

Q4. What mode of delivering content or structure of the learning sessions should be changed to make these next sessions better?

Q5. Have these sessions made you question your worth, value, and future in the district, and in the profession about whether you feel mentored?

Q6. This session provided a sense of community for me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q7. This session provided a sense of mentorship for me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8. I made connections with other teachers in this session.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9. I have made a connection with a teacher I have never met before in these sessions.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q10. Did this session challenge or change your practice as an educator? If so, how?

Appendix H

Process Measure Survey

ID: What is your random number assigned to you for this study?

This is session number ____.

Q1 Was the length of time for this session appropriate for content and discussion?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q2 Was the time of the session convenient for you?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q3 This session will impact my interaction with Black male students.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q4 How has this session changed your thinking regarding Black males in education?

Q5 What suggestions, if any, do you have to improve the format of these sessions?

Q6 I believe Black male teachers are tokenized in the education system.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q7 How often do you feel that black male teachers are hired or promoted in the education system primarily to fulfill a diversity quota rather than based on their qualifications and experience?

- Never
- Rarely

- Occasionally
- Often

Q8 The district values the contributions of Black male teachers as much as those of other teachers.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9 Have you observed instances in which black male teachers are hired or promoted to meet a diversity quota rather than based on their qualifications and experience?

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often

Q10 Black male teachers are at a disadvantage when it comes to being hired or promoted in the education system.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q12 I have heard someone make a comment or joke that perpetuated a stereotype about Black male teachers in the education system.

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often

Q13 I have seen a Black male teacher being treated differently or unfairly by students or colleagues because of their race or gender.

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often

Appendix I

Post Mentorship Survey

ID: What is your random number assigned to you for this study?

This is session number ____.

Q1 Write your personal definition of mentorship in one sentence.

Q2 What is your belief on mentorship?

Q3 I feel there is a need for mentorship and support for Black males in the district.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q4 I feel qualified to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q5 I feel mentored as a Black male educator.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q6 I would participate in Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q7 I consider mentorship to be a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students.

- Strongly disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8 I feel mentored and supported as a Black male educator in the district.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9 Did any information in these sessions make you consider leaving the teaching profession?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q10 I plan to speak with individual Black males about entering the teaching profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11 I plan to implement a mentoring program at my school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q12 Please describe how you may mentor Black males in the future.

Q13 I would be willing to do additional training to develop more leadership skills to go and do some recruiting of Black males into teaching.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q14 I plan to continue communicating with the people from these sessions.

- Strongly disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q15 I have felt mentored/supported through these sessions.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Appendix J

Pre- Mentorship Survey

ID: What is your random number assigned to you for this study?

This is session number ____.

Q1 Write your personal definition of mentorship in one sentence.

Q2 What is your belief on mentorship?

Q3 I feel there is a need for mentorship and support for Black males in the district.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q4 I feel qualified to lead and recruit Black males into the teaching profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q5 I feel mentored as a Black male educator.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q6 I would participate in Black male mentorship/network group throughout the year.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q7 I consider mentorship to be a necessary skill for teachers of Black male students.

- Strongly disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8 I feel mentored and supported as a Black male educator in the district.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9 Did any information in these sessions make you consider leaving the teaching profession?

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q10 I plan to speak with individual Black males about entering the teaching profession.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11 I plan to implement a mentoring program at my school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q12 Please describe how you may mentor Black males in the future.

Appendix K

Study Consent Form

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled “ Black Male Underrepresentation in the Teaching Force” This study is led by Tobias Hocutt, scholar-practitioner at Western Carolina University. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Heidi Von Dohlen at Western Carolina University, Department of Education.

What the study is about

This study aims to address the underrepresentation of Black males in the teaching force in Johnston County Public Schools in North Carolina, by building Black male educators’ capacity to mentor Black male youth into the teaching profession.

What we will ask you to do

Your active participation and open mindset are requested for the upcoming weekly sessions, which require your online presence. These sessions consist of four training sessions spread over a four-week period. The first session focuses on sharing personal stories and perspectives as Black male educators in JCPS. The second session centers on evaluating the effectiveness of a mentoring program, while the third session explores the current status of JCPS. The fourth and final session aims to explore diverse educational opportunities. During these sessions, participants will engage in icebreaker activities, attend diverse presentations, contribute actively to small group breakout discussions, and collaborate in sharing and synthesizing information. A Q&A session will follow, and participants will receive their weekly action plans before completing the accompanying survey. The sessions are scheduled for every Tuesday and will last 1.5 hours each. It is expected that you attend all four sessions and complete the weekly survey at the end of each session.

Risks and discomforts

I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research. Your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday Internet use.

Benefits

You will be able to equip, recruit, and develop young Black males who want to enter the teaching force by working as a mentor in this program. With your presence, you will be able to make a positive impact on a global issue with the underrepresentation of Black males in the teaching force. With your help, we can mold and motivate our students to apply themselves to reach high academic achievement goals and shed a positive light on becoming an educator.

Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security

To maintain confidentiality, all my files about this study will be encrypted computer-based files in my password protect drive on my computer. All personal identifiers from this study will be removed and replaced with a unique pseudonym for each participant's documents. There may be times when the participant's likeness/image will be included in the researcher's artifacts (publications, presentations, and other promotional purposes). By signing this, you are granting the right to make, use and publish your likeness/image in whole or in part in media forms now known (slides).

Please note that email communication is neither private nor secure. Though I am taking precautions to protect your privacy, you should know that third parties could read information sent through email.

“Participation in research may involve some loss of privacy. We will do our best to make sure that the information about you is kept confidential, but we cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your personal information may be viewed by individuals involved in the research and may be seen by people including those collaborating, funding, and regulating the study. We will share only the minimum necessary information in order to conduct the research. Your personal information may also be given out if required by law, such as pursuant to a court order. While the information and data resulting from this study may be presented at scientific meetings or published in a scientific journal, your name or other personal information will not be revealed.”

Taking part is Voluntary.

Your involvement in this program is voluntary. You may choose to discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you uncomfortable.

If you have questions

This study's leading researcher is Tobias D. Hocutt, Sr. graduate student at Western Carolina University. Please let me know if you have any questions. You may contact me at tobiashocutt@johnston.k12.nc.us or at 919-605-8582. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for WCU at irb@wcu.edu or by calling 828.227.7212.

I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for five years beyond the end of the study.

Appendix L

Descriptive Survey

ID: What is your random number assigned to you for this study?

This is session number ____.

Q1 What is your age?

- 24-28
- 29-35
- 36-42
- 43-47
- 48+

Q2 Please read the choices below and choose the one that best describes the setting where you are currently a professional teacher?

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

Q3 Would you say that you teach a majority of Black children (i.e., over 50% of your class(es) are Black children)?

- No
- Yes

Q4 Did you attend an HBCU?

- No
- Yes

Q5 How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- 0-3
- 6-9
- 9-12
- 12-20
- 20+

Q6 Have you mentored students before?

- No
- Yes

Q7 Please select the school level that you currently work in.

- Elementary
- Middle
- High School

Q8 Please select what subject you teach or participate in.

- English
- Social Studies
- Science
- Math
- CTE
- PE
- Elective
- Student Services
- Other

Q9 Did you grow up with both parents in your home for all or the majority of your childhood (birth to 18 years old)?

- No
- Yes
- Prefer to not answer

Q10 Please choose the option that best describes your parents/guardian's net combined annual income when you were in middle school and high school.

- \$125,000 or more
- \$100,000 - \$124,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- Less than \$50,000

Q11 Please choose the statement that best describes the amount of personal interaction (that you can remember) you had with Black male educators.

- I had frequent personal interaction with Black male educators
- I had some personal interaction with Black male educators
- I had very little interaction with Black male educators
- I had no personal interaction with Black male educators