

School Discipline Reimagined: Centering Black Students in Discipline Policies

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Background of the Problem

- Educational system was built on a white supremacist framework (Givens; 2016; Love, 2009; Monroe, 2005; Tosolt, 2020)
- Racial bias has contributed to more severe punishments against Black students (Dumas, 2018; Love 2019).
- Exclusionary discipline disproportionately affects BIPOC students (Morris & Perry, 2016; Nowiki, 2018).
- National and state data reveal Black students having the highest suspension rates (California School Dashboard, 2021; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019a)
- In California, for the 2019 school year, Black students had the highest percentage of out-of-school suspensions, four times higher than their white peers (California School Dashboard, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

- In California, during the 2020 school year, Black students had highest suspension rate at 6.8%.
 - In 2019, the suspension rate was 8.8%
- Black students are disproportionately suspended and there is a need to understand what schools can do to develop culturally responsive practices to account for anti-Blackness in school discipline practices.

Purpose of the Study

In 2017, four public school districts in the same county had the highest suspension rates for Black male students (Wood, Harris III, & Howard, 2018). Follow-up report, detailed the disproportionate suspension rates of Black students in one of the school districts, stating that the district relied too much on suspensions (Wood, Harris III, & Qas, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to explore the successful discipline practices implemented at schools to provide a counternarrative to the disproportionate discipline practices of Black students. This study focused on elementary school site administrators' approaches to student discipline and parental perception of school discipline practices and policies.

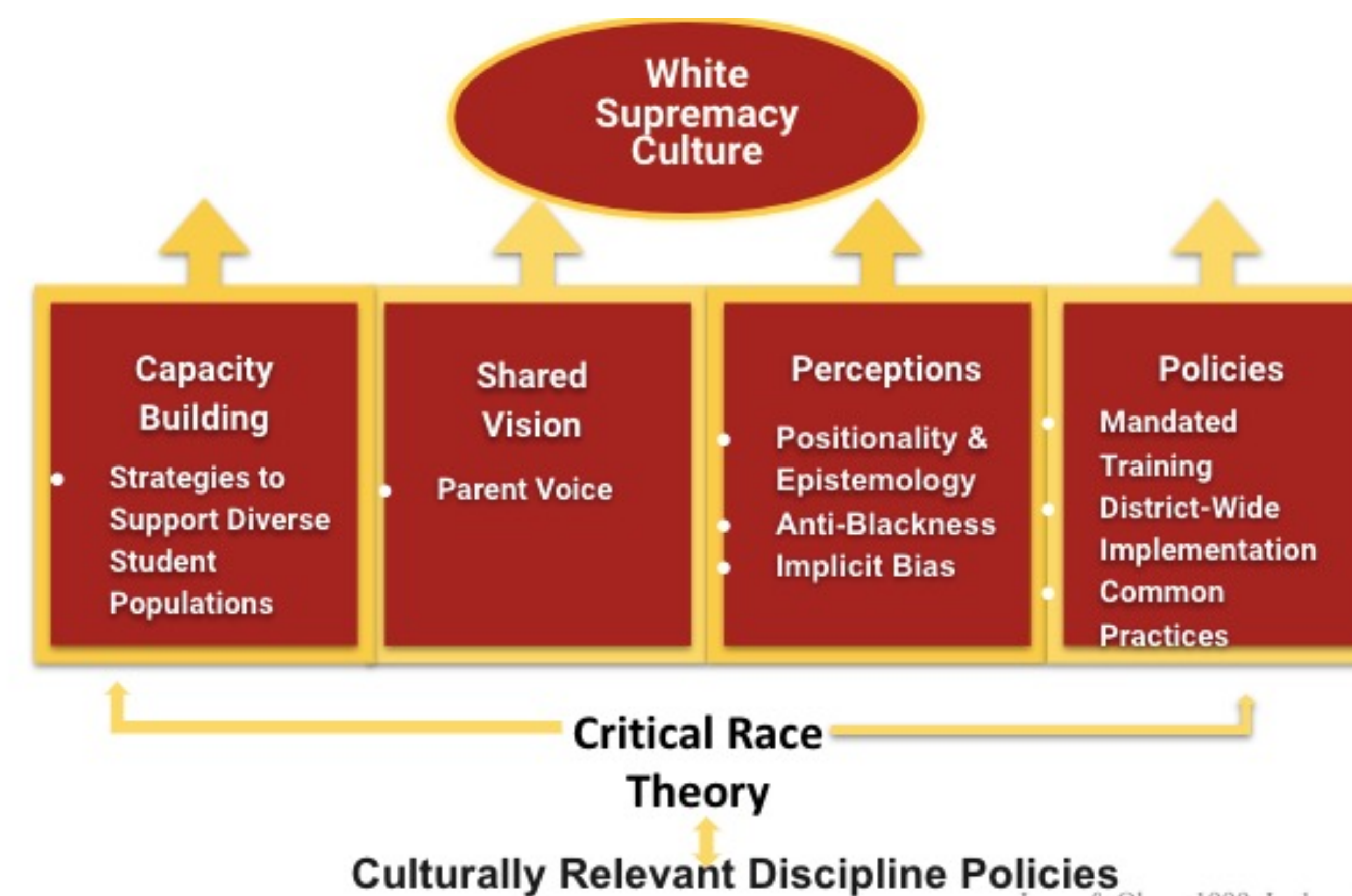
Research Questions

1. What measures do schools put in place to create positive outcomes in student discipline?

2. What culturally responsive strategies do principals use in their discipline practices for Black students?

3. What do Black parents of Black students say about school discipline practices and how those practices impact their children?

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Method of Study

- Convergent parallel mixed methods design

Sample and Population

- Principals and Black Parents of Black Students in 4th-6th grade

Instrumentation

- Surveys and interviews

Data Collection

- Document Analysis for context, Interview responses recorded to audio device, and surveys collected on Qualtrics

Findings

Research Question 1

- There is variance in the support provided by the district and the implementation of supports at the site level.
- Implicit bias has contributed to the disproportionate discipline practices of Black students.
- There is variance in the design of plans that principals have implemented to support the behavioral needs of students.

Research Question 2

- Building leadership capacity in anti-racist and culturally responsive practices provides better outcomes for Black students.
- Implementation of alternatives to suspensions provides behavioral supports for Black students.

Research Question 3

- Positive perception of trusting staff and respecting cultural values of Black students.
- Negative perception of the how Black students are treated.

Limitations

- Small sample size
- Self-reported data
- Researcher Bias
- Participant recruitment

Conclusions

- A need for principals to be intentional about centering their Black students in their discipline policies.
- Alternatives to suspension not only keep students in school, but they can support with social emotional development.
- A need for school districts to implement anti-racist, anti-Black policies to address the implicit bias that educators can have towards Black students.

References

