

Reenvisioning Family–School–Community Partnerships: Reflecting on Five Years of Dialogues on Race Programming Within an Urban School Community

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Abstract

Race dialogues have the potential to promote shared family–school–community partnerships and equity in urban educational practices. Participation in dialogues allows for diverse school community stakeholders to engage in courageous conversations and reflect on how racial power dynamics affect students and families within the school community. We sought to explore how dialogues conducted among school community members may impact school climate and promote educational justice. Critical Race Theory in Education guided dialogues programming and analyses. Semistructured interviews with 11 participants were conducted and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings revealed a variety of participant experiences and learning qualitatively differed by racial identity and depth of personal engagement in the dialogues. Although the race dialogues supported personal growth, connection, trust, and a sense of commitment to school improvement for many, participants described several barriers to change, including time constraints and varied commitment to educational justice. Implications of dialogues and their impact on family–school–community partnerships are described.

Key Words: dialogues on race, urban education, family–school–community partnerships, school transformation, critical race theory in education

Introduction

Disparities in academic achievement persist in urban education, with low income and youth of color disproportionately represented among “underperforming” students (Burchinal et al., 2011; Lewis et al., 2008). Schools in large metropolitan locations with socioeconomically and culturally diverse student populations tend to have limited access to educational programming and resources (Milner & Lomotey, 2014). Barriers to access in urban education are perpetuated through hegemonic practices that arise as a consequence of systemic oppression and racism, which contribute to negative mental health and academic outcomes (Bryan, 2005). Rather than placing the responsibility for academic success solely on youth and families, transforming urban schools to promote meaningful learning experiences and positive youth development requires a reenvisioning of collaborative support from a variety of school, family, and community stakeholders (Mellin et al., 2015).

We describe findings from five years of conducting race dialogues focused on building cultural awareness, promoting antiracist attitudes and practices, and developing a shared vision among school community members, including parents, teachers, and administrators. The race dialogues program, theoretically grounded in critical race theory, included a series of five sessions carried out each year with a diverse group of school community members with the goals of eliminating educational inequities and implementing an action plan for school transformation. Informed by findings from qualitative content analyses, we describe a shared vision for family–school–community partnerships that moves beyond traditional top-down, hierarchically imposed collaborations to a more horizontally shared praxis of engagement that supports holistic development of youth and promotes positive school climate.

Theoretical Foundation

Race dialogues are guided by the notion that individuals with diverse racial and ethnic identities can join together to construct a pathway toward shared understanding and improvement (Hammack & Pilecki, 2015). The first step in achieving a joint sense of agency involves developing awareness and understanding of the impact of race on experiences of racism, power, and privilege (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Yull et al., 2014). Critical Race Theory in Education (CRTE) and its five basic principles serve as the theoretical foundation that guides the implementation of race dialogues (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solorzano, 1997). The first principal of CRTE emphasizes the fact that racism is ubiquitous and acknowledges the importance of the ways in which race and racism intersect with other types of oppression, including class, gender, national

origin, sexual orientation, and other identities. These intersections are unpacked to understand individuals' unique experiences in school communities.

The second principle of CRTE focuses on the importance of challenging pernicious discourses by dismantling educational practices of colorblindness and race neutrality. Such practices that favor the White mainstream cultural values of rugged individualism and structural determinism often result in sustaining institutional racism and make it challenging to change the status quo (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Race dialogues aim to allow group members to recognize how a colorblind approach has marginalized oppressed communities (Yull et al., 2014). A main objective of the race dialogues involves building awareness of structural determinism, such as the practice of using deficit-based perspectives to substantiate racial achievement gaps in education. The third principle of CRTE highlights an emphasis on social justice advocacy to dismantle racism and empower marginalized communities. The fourth principle of CRTE emphasizes the need to develop experiential awareness through the sharing of narratives and stories in order to understand individuals' lived experiences of racism and oppression. Once race dialogues participants achieve a sense of greater racial consciousness, they become mobilized to collectively create a shared action plan for school improvement (Solorzano, 1997).

The fifth principle of CRTE emphasizes the importance of understanding historical and interdisciplinary perspectives as they relate to dynamics of power and oppression and reducing inequities in education. In following a CRTE approach, race dialogues participants are encouraged to share about their personal identities and experiences associated with race, racism, oppression, and privilege. An increased awareness and appreciation for differences among race dialogues participants facilitates greater trust and mutual understanding amongst group members and thereby facilitates collaboration in developing shared action plans focused on educational equity (Cook et al., 2017; Dessel et al., 2006).

Literature Review

Successful family–school–community partnerships require democratic collaboration and shared decision making (Bryan & Henry, 2012). A shared vision to drive decisions can be achieved by meaningful, collective parent and community engagement. This approach to shared decision making creates a foundation from which invested stakeholders can reach identified goals (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Mellin et al., 2015). Developing partnerships based on mutual collaboration reenvision the way schools typically partner with families and communities. Rather than seeking involvement from parents to carry out

requested tasks prescribed by educators (top-down approach), family-school-community partnerships reconceptualized as participatory collaborations promote meaningful, democratic engagement with broad, distributed levels of participation. Research suggests that when diverse families and community members come together and become actively engaged with schools, collaborative partnerships are likely to develop that are characterized by equity and cultural responsiveness (Auerbach, 2009).

Institutionalized Racism in Education

Racially marginalized groups have often been disadvantaged by practices and policies within the U.S. educational system. For example, English Language Learner (ELL) students, the majority of whom are of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019), have been found to have higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, lower college completion rates (Gil & Bardeck, 2010), and are overrepresented in special education (Artiles et al., 2005). Children from racially marginalized backgrounds are more likely to experience racism in schools compared to any other environment (Mansouri & Jenkins, 2010) and often have greater difficulty accessing resources in schools, such as extracurricular activities (Rubin et al., 2006).

Sources of educational disparities are inextricably tied to the sociopolitical system of White supremacy whereby any failure of students of color to achieve academically are problematized as individual deficiencies rather than understood as the outcome of systemic and institutional policies (Leonardo, 2013). A widespread manifestation of racism in schools is the disproportionate application of exclusionary discipline practices to students of color (Skiba et al., 2011). Institutional racism in education manifests in subtle ways and thus is difficult to recognize and eliminate (Briscoe, 2014). Educators' limited awareness of racial biases often cause academic practices that reinforce racial inequities and contribute to the achievement gap (Bryan, 2005). For example, in an effort to project a nonracist approach, White educators may implement culturally responsive pedagogical practices but fail to engender critical discourse or authentically engage in antiracist education (Leonardo, 2013).

Engaging in race dialogues helps to build horizontally structured family-school-community partnerships that can address inequitable educational practices. Participation in race dialogues allows for parents, school personnel, and community stakeholders to engage in courageous conversations and reflect on how racial power dynamics affect students and families within the school community (Singleton, 2015). In order to facilitate meaningful engagement, parents must have the opportunity to share their stories and engage in two-way conversations (Ferlazzo, 2011). Engaging self, appreciating differences,

reflecting critically, and building alliances are primary processes that take place during the dialogue process (Gurin et al., 2013). Creating a space for alliance building and empathic perspective taking through dialogue may improve school climate and allow individuals to explore tensions together in ways that prioritize shared voices and experiences (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Nagda et al., 2006).

Researchers have explored the impact of race dialogues, also referred to as intergroup dialogues and courageous conversations. According to Dessel and Rogge (2008), intergroup dialogues are defined as “a facilitated group experience that may occur once or may be sustained over time and is designed to give individuals and groups a safe and structured opportunity to explore attitudes about polarizing societal issues” (p. 201). Dialogues focused on race provide group members the opportunity to share experiences related to race, racism, and privilege from each individual’s unique perspective in a safe and structured environment (Singleton, 2015). Critical race scholars, however, caution the uncritical acceptance of developing a “safe forum” for dialogue. They emphasize the need to recognize that such spaces are often equated with comfort for White individuals and that they may represent a symbolic form of violence for people of color (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). In fact, race-based conversations are never fully safe for individuals of color when Whites are present, and thus dialogue facilitators must strive for the development of “brave” spaces that involve risk-taking and discomfort (Arao & Clemens, 2013). Giving voice to individuals who experience disempowerment in school spaces through antiracist dialogue creates a foundation for building solidarity among school, family, and community members (Bal et al., 2014; Barrett, 2010).

Researchers have documented transformative outcomes among participants who have engaged in race dialogues, where participants have developed greater racial self-awareness and understanding of social and cultural differences (Ford, 2012). Muller and Miles (2016) found that engaging undergraduate students in intergroup dialogues resulted in a significant reduction of colorblind racial attitude and an increase in empathic perspective taking, including perceptions of commitment among group members and a decrease in avoidance. Increases in intergroup member understanding, relationships, and collaboration have also been found after implementation of seven weeks of dialogues among college students (Thakral et al., 2016). Similarly, Nagda (2006) found that participation in intergroup dialogues strengthened participants’ communication processes, including the appreciation of differences, self-reflection, and alliance building.

Race dialogues provide group members the opportunity to increase awareness of implicit biases and appreciate differences while exploring possibilities for social change (Hays et al., 2010). Dialogue facilitators are recommended

to intentionally seek participants with diverse social identities as a means to foster a welcoming space and to reduce the likelihood of members feeling marginalized (Burnes & Ross, 2010). Diverse membership also allows individuals to learn from one another's experiences and promotes shared decision making (Ratts et al., 2010). In addition, facilitator roles include advocating for social justice and challenging members to engage in courageous conversations about participants' lived experiences of racial inequity or privilege (Singh & Salazar, 2010). Through such advocacy efforts, Lopez-Humphreys and Dawson (2014) found that dialogues members had significantly increased engagement in actions focused on promoting social justice one year after participation.

Systemic racism and inequitable educational practices occur in part due to educators' limited multicultural awareness and understanding of social power dynamics (Castillo et al., 2007; Constantine, 2002). Race dialogues provide a forum for parents, caretakers, and educators to share their experiences of race and racism in the school community, thereby providing a foundation toward building multicultural awareness, critical racial consciousness, and a commitment to fighting against racism. Although topics related to race and racism are challenging to discuss in an open, honest manner, race dialogues provide a forum where individuals can process their experiences and work toward promoting greater equity in schools with guidance and support (Rush, 2011; Singleton, 2015). Dialogues programming therefore helps lay the groundwork necessary to establish collaborative partnerships between school community stakeholders as a first step toward solving school disparities and transforming schools.

Whiteness in Schools

Malat, Mayorga-Gallo, and Williams (2018) define Whiteness as a "system that socially, economically, and ideologically benefits European descendants and disadvantages people in other [racial/ethnic] groups" (p. 1). This inherited system of social advantages pervades U.S. public life and institutions, including finance, housing, health care, workplaces, and schools (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014; Page & Thomas, 1994; Sleeter, 1993; Wyly et al., 2012). One of the most obvious ways Whiteness is institutionalized in U.S. schools is through overrepresentation of White individuals in K–12 school leadership and teaching positions. Approximately 80% of U.S. public school K–12 principals and 83% of teachers are White, despite the fact that over 50% of public school students are of color (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Boser, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

Whiteness can also act as a barrier to meaningfully discussing and confronting these racial disparities in schools. White Americans often experience

strong emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, and shame in response to racial dialogue, which they may cope with through avoidance, denial, or minimization (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; D’Andrea & Daniels, 1999; Kordesh et al., 2013; McConnell, 2015; Utsey et al., 2005). Furthermore, there is a contradiction between White Americans’ cultural values of freedom, equality, and individual worth and the early lesson Whites learn that some groups—that is, people of color—are lesser than, fear-provoking, and to be avoided (Sue, 2011). This incongruity creates an unsettling dissonance that further contributes to Whites’ unease with racial discussions and ultimately results in a “conspiracy of silence” in regard to racial issues (Sue, 2005, 2011). In implementing interracial racial dialogue programming, it is thus important to acknowledge the presence of such phenomena and the ways in which they can serve to derail racial dialogue and related efforts to work toward racial equity in schools.

Purpose

Dialogues offer an opportunity to foster collaborative relationships and decision making among diverse school community constituencies. Researchers have found that participation in dialogues promotes growth in racial awareness, leading to community-driven change in local schools, communities, and nonprofit settings (e.g., Cook et al., 2017; Ford, 2012). However, limited research has explored how school-based race dialogues conducted among parents, caretakers, and educators in urban school settings can promote positive school climate and educational equity. Additional research can aid in understanding the ways in which diverse school community stakeholder engagement in yearly race dialogues programming can improve school climate and promote educational justice over time. The following research questions (RQ) were explored: (a) How do participants perceive their experience engaging in the race dialogues? (b) Do participants perceive the race dialogues as a catalyst for promoting positive school climate and educational justice?

Method

Dialogues Framework and Delivery

The curriculum was designed and implemented based on the tenets of CRTE (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solorzano, 1997). The dialogues sessions were conducted over a period of five weeks with ongoing school change efforts across five consecutive school years. The participants met weekly for two-hour sessions for five weeks and subsequently engaged in post-dialogues planning meetings later in the school year to carry out action plans. Each year of implementation, the fifth dialogues session included an open session where attendees

from previous years of dialogues programming could attend a reunion session. On average, approximately 75 participants attended these reunion sessions.

The race dialogues sessions follow a structured curriculum developed by the YWCA that includes race awareness- and social action-focused activities, intergroup discussion prompts, and objectives (see Table 1). The first session includes introductions and establishing guidelines and expectations while prioritizing equal, horizontal relationships and building trust among dialogues participants. After building a sense of trust, being willing to experience discomfort, and engaging in risk-taking, group members share personal experiences of race and racism in their school communities (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). The beginning sessions focus on ensuring the group creates a shared meaning and vision of the dialogues in order for participants to form a commitment to social justice action (Nagda et al., 1999).

The subsequent sessions allow for participants to step out of their comfort zones and explore their different experiences related to race and racism. Research has found that differentiating commonalities and differences between group members and mutual learning about different groups has allowed for members to engage in the perspective taking of others (Gurin et al., 2002, 2004). Participants may share how subtleties of race and racism impact the school community, which gives the participants from privileged backgrounds the opportunity to understand the challenges their fellow group members often encounter on a daily basis (Halabi, 2000).

In the concluding sessions, the group focuses on creating a shared vision and identifying action steps to reach their vision. The dialogues program incorporates opportunities for members to plan projects that promote change and can be carried out over the course of the school year. It is important for members to realize that they have a voice and therefore can create change, both within themselves and in their communities (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). In creating an action plan, group members should discuss barriers to reaching their goal and how to overcome those barriers. The dialogues conclude with reflection and celebration that allows members to process experiences and acknowledge new understandings (Nagda et al., 1999).

Table 1. Sample Intergroup Dialogue Intervention: Foci and Activities

Session Number and Name	Session Focus
1. Who am I?	Participants fill an empty network diagram with words that describe who they are as individuals, and are asked to mark the words that are most important in defining who they are today in racial terms. Following this activity, participants reflect on their backgrounds.
2. Opportunity Walk	Participants stand on one line, shoulder to shoulder. Over a series of statements, they are either stepping forward or back in response to the statement. By the end of the activity, participants are most likely spread out in front of and behind the initial line, at various distances. At this point, they are invited to look around and share their impressions on others' positions, life trajectories, and their own.
3. Fish Bowl and Affinity Groups	Participants are asked to form small groups based on the racial or ethnic groups they self-identified with in session one. Participants reveal personal experiences related to race and ethnicity. They also reflect on what is most gratifying and most difficult about belonging to an individual's particular group.
4. Dynamics of Race in the Community	Participants engage in a conversation about how social, workplace, educational institutions, and other common dynamics in their day-to-day life are impacting their community, inside and outside of the school, when related to race or ethnicity. Small groups then identify a shared vision for the future in the form of concrete steps that they could take to improve dynamics of race and promote educational justice within their school community.
5. Taking Action	The dialogues series culminates with the group developing an action plan to address a race-related issue that negatively impacts their community. The plan considers barriers and entryways, as well as the participants' sphere of influence. Moreover, participants define concrete steps to take action.

Research Team

The research team included partners between a community-based organization (the YWCA) and a higher education institution. Two staff from the

YWCA collaborated with university researchers, including a faculty member and graduate student. The team came together with the shared goal of promoting educational justice for communities of color. Acknowledging our privileged identities as White researchers from a public university, we sought the knowledge and expertise of our YWCA partners who are individuals of color. Mirroring the dialogues, we embarked on our research collaborative as a shared partnership, in which members of the research team worked closely together from the inception to completion of the investigation. The YWCA staff carried out the race dialogues sessions across the years and conducted interviews to explore the impact of their work. The YWCA staff also partnered with the university researchers for assistance with evaluating dialogues program outcomes.

Participants

Over the five years of programming, an average of 17 participants, including parents, teachers, and administrators, engaged in the race dialogues each year. Participants engaged in five sessions of dialogues during the year, with many also participating in culminating activities. This continuity helped to foster relationship building and trust. Over the course of the five years, participants from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds engaged in the dialogues sessions: 45% White ($N = 38$); 39% African American ($N = 33$); 10% Latino/a ($N = 9$); 5% other ($N = 4$); and 1% Asian ($N = 1$). These participants were informed and recruited to engage in the race dialogues through email communication from the family outreach coordinator and school principal.

Interview participants included eight parents, one teacher, and two administrators. The interview participants engaged in the race dialogues sessions during one or more of the previous five years of programming (current year: $n = 4$; one year ago: $n = 1$; two years ago: $n = 2$; three years ago: $n = 1$; and four years ago: $n = 3$). The parent participants reported race/ethnicity as White ($n = 4$), Black or African American ($n = 3$), and Latina ($n = 1$). Parent participants reported a diverse range in education levels, from obtaining an associate's degree to obtaining a master's degree. Reported annual household income of parents ranged from approximately \$35,000/year to \$125,000 or more/year. All three of the school professionals (teacher and administrators) reported race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian. The teacher and administrators reported having received graduate degrees. Reported annual household income ranged from \$100,000 to \$125,000 or more. See Table 2 for demographics.

Table 2. Demographic Information

Participant Gender	Role	Race/Ethnicity	Children Race/Ethnicity	Partner's Race/Ethnicity	Education	Employment	Annual Household Income
Male	Parent	Non-Hispanic White	Multiracial	African American	BA/BS	Not working	100,000–125,000
Female	Parent	African American	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Female	Teacher	Non-Hispanic White	Not reported	Not reported	MA, MS, MBA	Employed FT	75,000–100,000
Female	Parent	Non-Hispanic White	Biracial	African American	Associate's degree	Not working	100,000–125,000
Male	Parent	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic White	MA, MS, MBA	Employed FT	35,000–45,000
Female	Parent	Latina	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
Female	Administrator	Non-Hispanic White	Not reported	Not reported	Professional degree	Employed FT	100,000–125,000
Female	Administrator	Non-Hispanic White	Not reported	Not reported	MA/MS/MBA	Employed FT	125,000+
Female	Parent	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic White	MA/MS/MBA	Employed FT	125,500+
Female	Parent	African American	African American	African American	MA/MS/MBA	Employed FT	125,000+
Female	Parent	African American	African American	African American	MA/MS/MBA	Not working	125,000+

Study Site

The race dialogues were conducted at an urban public K–8 school located in the Northeastern U.S. The school’s participation in the race dialogues program was voluntary and part of a districtwide effort to address concerns related to the achievement gap. At the time the interviews were conducted, 458 students were enrolled, of whom 40% were from economically disadvantaged households, and 18.6% were identified as ELLs. Reported racial and ethnic backgrounds of students included 40.4% Latino, 33.4% African American, 21.2% White, 2.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.4% multiracial, and 0.4% Native American.

Procedure

Permission was obtained by the university’s Institutional Review Board to recruit participants and learn about their experiences in the race dialogues and to explore outcomes of participation on promoting positive school climate and educational justice. Interview participants were recruited using purposive sampling (Schutt, 2015), and we sought to recruit a diverse representation of dialogues participants across the years of dialogues implementation.

Participants ($N = 85$) who previously participated in the race dialogues conducted at a K–8 urban public school were contacted by email (three outreach attempts) and asked to participate in an interview regarding their experience with the dialogues and perceptions of their impact on the school. Of the 85 participants, 10 emails were undeliverable. In total, 11 participants agreed to engage in semistructured individual interviews with a YWCA research team member, resulting in a 15% response rate. The purpose of the study and informed consent form in Spanish and English was provided in writing and verbally at the time of recruitment. Participants were informed that their involvement was strictly voluntary and notified that they could decline participation at any time without consequence. The YWCA research team member conducted interviews at a location of the participant’s choosing, which included their home or the K–8 school. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes each, were audiorecorded, and later transcribed.

Measure: Interviews

To explore the impact of the dialogues, individual, semistructured interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and administrators asking them to reflect on their experience in the dialogues and perceptions of their impact on school climate and educational justice. Researchers used a protocol consisting of 12 main questions and related follow-up questions. See the Appendix for the full interview protocol.

Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was employed to conduct analyses of transcribed interviews (Schreier, 2012). Qualitative content analysis provides flexibility (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and permitted the researchers to focus on participants' perceptions and contextual experiences, rather than reach an objective understanding. The researchers employed deductive analyses to identify themes related to research questions with a focus on capturing authentic, shared experiences between participants.

The first step of qualitative content analysis involved developing a coding structure from transcribed interviews. The research team engaged in a detailed process of describing and interpreting meaning of participants' experiences using question-based codes (Saldaña, 2013) to focus data analyses related to the research questions: (a) What themes emerged related to participants' experiences in the race dialogues? (b) What themes described the impact dialogues made on promoting educational justice? The researchers ascribed meaning to the themes to understand participants' experiences and make sense of responses to interview questions. In an effort to understand the multiple perspectives and experiences of participants, multiple readings of transcribed material were conducted.

The analyses were completed in stages, involving two investigators and triangulation of the data. The first stage consisted of reading transcribed data in their entirety multiple times to become immersed in the data. Notes were documented beside material that held significance for participants related to their experience in the dialogues and within the school community. The second stage involved reexamining the transcribed material and making notes to identify emerging themes, taking care to recognize the relationship between participants' own words and researchers' interpretations. The third stage consisted of conducting further analyses and clustering meaning units together to form conceptual similarities or clusters of themes. Triangulation between investigators was conducted to verify researcher interpretation of qualitative data, following an iterative consensus process until agreement of identified themes was reached (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Results

Qualitative content analyses revealed a rich understanding of participant experiences as multifaceted and diverse. The complexities are reflected in the data as the participants discussed the ways they were engaged and impacted. The coding frame included four main themes, each with its own set of subthemes to

inform our understanding of participants' perceptions of dialogues (RQ 1) and perceptions of the dialogues' impact on school climate and educational justice (RQ 2). The four main themes included: (a) participant experiences and learning varied depending on racial identity and depth of personal engagement; (b) increased sense of connection among parents and staff through awareness of cultural identities; (c) commitment to racial equity must be embodied in members' belief systems, representative parent leadership, and continued action; and (d) barriers to change include the school community not prioritizing racial equity, continued racism and segregation, and time constraints.

Theme 1: Participant Experiences and Learning Varied Depending on Racial Identity and Depth of Personal Engagement

This theme speaks to differences in participant experiences of the dialogues program according to their racial identity and level of engagement, which are related. These differences are depicted in the following subthemes: (a) depth of personal engagement and risk-taking influenced participant experiences and learning; (b) perceptions of dialogues' novelty and impact varied depending on participant racial identity; and (c) things can get tense: discomfort with racial dialogue elicited different responses from participants from acceptance to anxiety, depending on racial identity.

Depth of Personal Engagement and Risk-Taking Influenced Participant Experiences and Learning

Participants reflected on how the choice to “hold back” during the dialogues—either from discussing painful topics such as police brutality or engaging more honestly and fully in activities and conversation—influenced group dynamics and learning. White participants in particular noticed that engaging more deeply in the dialogues resulted in a greater sense of investment and learning. One White parent stated, “I learned a lot and...I wasn't somebody who was a parasite or something like that, there to observe...I feel like I had to get involved.” A White administrator commented on the need to balance respect for the experiences of participants of color with a willingness to take risks and share her perspective, remarking,

Sometimes earlier in my career...I would hold my stories back 'cause I'm just a White person. I would rather value other people's story, and I think that I learned to see the value of my story as well and try to bring it into the circle without bringing it over other people's stories.

The extent to which participants held back from disclosing their true thoughts during the dialogues seemed to vary by race. One African American parent stated, “I don't think I was holding back; I think some people might

have...from my recollection, people of color in that meeting definitely didn't hold back." A White parent noticed how holding back enabled participants to avoid discomfort, remarking,

People were holding back a little bit...I felt as if there were racial dialogues that could take place that would involve more discomfort and more stress, but maybe would end up being more healthy at the end....If we had had conversations... about the police brutality it may have been more uncomfortable.

Such remarks highlight the lost opportunities for connection, learning, and change that can arise when racial dialogue participants, particularly White participants who may be less inured to racial stress (DiAngelo, 2018), do not openly engage in dialogue programming.

Perceptions of Dialogues' Novelty and Impact Varied Depending on Participant Racial Identity

Several participants—White participants in particular—found the dialogues to be “eye-opening,” resulting in increased awareness about the impact of race in community members’ lives. A White administrator discussed how she incorporated her learning from the dialogues into her parenting practices, stating,

I actually remember learning a lot as a parent, and I applied it when my kids got a bit older about how do I talk to my kids from a very early age about race...it was very helpful for me as an early parent.

A White parent remarked that the dialogues made “people conscious of what surrounds them and other people[s] experiences. It makes them conscious of what they're thinking and not even saying.” An African American parent stated, “I definitely think the session was very eye-opening for people whether you were Black, White, Asian, whatever the case may be. It helped us think about the topic in a different context than we are used to.”

However, some participants of color felt that the material covered in the dialogues was not new and did not challenge participants to think critically about racial equity. One Latina parent remarked that her involvement in the dialogues did not result in a “new level of awareness,” while an African American parent stated, “I don't know if [the dialogues] had any impact on me. This wasn't a new conversation for me.” She continued:

I don't know if they know what racial equity means from the dialogues, honestly... [Asking] what food is important to you as a culture? In this kind of general way, these are easy conversations. Some people might be somewhat uncomfortable, but they aren't as challenging...as when you

actually [engage] with the idea of what does it look like for your child who may be a child of color versus your child who is not?

This participant raised an essential consideration in the development and implementation of race dialogue programs, one which antiracism/antioppression researchers Corneau and Stergiopoulous (2012) identified when they wrote that “diversity” programs can end up “celebrat[ing] multiculturalism without tackling power dynamics related to race” (p. 276). Given White Americans’ lack of practice with mixed racial dialogue, or “race talk,” and the ensuing discomfort, sense of threat, and heightened emotionality that can often result, race-related dialogue can easily slip into the more comfortable realm of cultural topics (Sue, 2013), as described by the participant above.

Things Can Get Tense: Discomfort With Racial Dialogue Elicited Different Responses From Participants, From Acceptance to Anxiety, Depending on Racial Identity

In their reflections, participants of color and White participants with mixed race families tended to acknowledge the inevitability of discomfort in interracial dialogue, particularly for White participants. One White parent of a biracial child stated, “I’d say that it makes sense to make yourself be a part of something that you wouldn’t necessarily do and that you may...have uncomfortable situations as part of these dialogue groups.” An African American parent reflected:

When you’re sitting down talking about race and, in particular, you have White people and people of color in the room, I would imagine that White people can feel like they have to be on the defensive...so I think they needed the time and space to really feel comfortable with the people that were in the room.

In contrast, a White parent discussed his concern about tension and disagreement arising in the context of racial dialogue:

I guess I was worried that some of the conversations may end up revolving around tense subjects or subjects where people would disagree and people might argue...worried that there may be other conversations that I participated in where the issue of ethnicity and race came up and people became upset at each other...I guess there was a bit of a discomfort sometimes—just having to work a little bit, having to think in ways that I was not used to.

These findings are in keeping with a body of research which has shown that when White Americans confront issues of racism and White privilege, they often experience distressing emotions (D’Andrea & Daniels, 1999; Kordesh et

al., 2013; McConnell, 2015; Utsey et al., 2005) that can result in defensiveness, detachment, or avoidance of race-related reflection and dialogue (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Utsey et al., 2005). Depending on how these reactions are handled by facilitators and White participants, they may serve to stifle honest conversation and shift attention away from the experiences of participants of color and intergroup dialogues' aim of pushing for racial equity and toward White participants' "emotional needs" (Srivastava, 2006, p. 69). Some antiracism group programs, such as the UNtraining, address these emotional responses directly in order to prepare White participants to remain compassionately engaged with self and others in the midst of contentious racial dialogue, that is, to be better equipped to sit with the discomfort the White participant above described without becoming defensive, shutting down, or turning away (The UNtraining, 2013).

Theme 2: Increased Sense of Connection Among Parents and Staff Through Awareness of Cultural Identities

A number of participants discussed having strengthened relationships with school leadership and gained new cultural insight as a result of the dialogues, as conveyed in the following subthemes: (a) Participants learned about the nuances of their own and others' cultural identities and (b) Dialogues fostered varied levels of trust in administrators.

Participants Learned About the Nuances of Their Own and Others' Cultural Identities

White participants and participants of color both discussed learning more about participants' cultural identities during the dialogues. One African American parent stated, "The exercise was eye-opening for both White folks who do not necessarily have thought themselves as having European roots or just a mixture of all these different countries, or even within Black [communities] there's different levels of how people identify themselves culturally." Interestingly, White participants' comments on this subject tended to be other-focused or specifically focused on the identities of participants of color rather than on White identity. One White parent stated that her "biggest takeaway" was "learning about others and what their perception of their cultures were." A White administrator stated, "just knowing when someone is African American or from an island you don't necessarily know. Are they Haitian-Creole, are they from Cuba, what is their actual heritage...having the opportunity to learn more about their individual culture is always a learning opportunity...[that] I appreciate." This racial and cultural focus on the other aligns with earlier stages in Helms's (2017) White racial identity theory; Helms (2017) described

how, as Whites develop an antiracist identity, they shift from disregarding their Whiteness to “localiz[ing] race in people of color” (p. 719) toward recognizing their Whiteness and their “own and other Whites’ role in perpetrating and maintaining [racism]” (p. 720). A more explicit focus on Whiteness within race dialogue curricula may be helpful in laying the groundwork for such shifts.

Dialogues Fostered Varied Levels of Trust in Administrators

Most participants observed that the dialogues contributed to an increased sense of connection to and trust in school administrators, due to their willingness to engage in the dialogues on a personal level. One White administrator felt that her and her principal’s participation in the dialogues was “humanizing” and allowed stakeholders of different racial backgrounds to feel “more comfortable accessing me, sharing struggles with me, [and] working through challenges with me, because we had the chance to engage on a very personal level.” A White administrator remarked that her involvement provided a “platform...[for] parents to be able to openly talk to me and feel that sense of community starting with me.” An African American parent confirmed this view, stating that, “it was beneficial for me to have the principal and assistant principal being in the dialogues with us...[making] themselves accessible and...part of the group...I feel like I have an actual relationship with [the principal].” However, not all participants perceived the dialogues as a catalyst for connection. One African American parent shared, “I can’t say that there’s been any...connection that was furthered through the dialogues.”

This subtheme suggests that school racial dialogues may in some cases help improve relationships between White school administrators and parents of color, although it should be noted that perceptions of parents of color were mixed on this topic. Theoharis and Haddix (2011) found that White urban principals who had been successful in increasing racial equity in their schools shared common characteristics and strategies: they had done significant prior “intellectual and emotional work...around race” (p. 1333), spoke frankly about racial issues in discussions with staff, and focused on building relationships with families of color. In the context of these findings, this subtheme suggests that administrator-inclusive race dialogues can serve as an important facilitator of increased racial equity in schools through the mechanisms of racial consciousness-raising amongst White administrators and strengthened relationships between these administrators and parents of color.

Theme 3: Commitment to Racial Equity Must Be Embodied in Members' Belief Systems, Representative Parent Leadership, and Continued Action

Participants identified a number of determinants of increased educational justice, some of which are already present in their communities in varying degrees, and some of which are not, including the following subthemes: (a) Need for fundamental changes in community members' personal belief systems and a deeper and more practical understanding of the meaning of racial equity; (b) Representative leadership and outreach matters; parents of color must be supported in taking on leadership positions; and (c) There is a need to shift from conversation to concrete action and continuous hard work.

Need for Fundamental Changes in Community Members' Personal Belief Systems and a Deeper and More Practical Understanding of the Meaning of Racial Equity

One African American parent stated that it would be valuable for:

...people to understand what racial equity looks like...and think about doing it not in such an isolated venue, through the dialogues. If you really want to impact someone to change, people should really know what it looks like in practical terms.

One Latina parent remarked:

You can do whatever initiative you want, but at the end of the day inequity is perpetrated by people's core beliefs, and unless there's a shift in how people truly view others, it doesn't matter what initiative they implement at surface level; we have to dig deep and make changes into our belief system in order to get the equity.

Representative Leadership and Outreach Matters; Parents of Color Must Be Supported in Taking on Leadership Positions

An administrator described an instance in which parents of color banded together to run for the school's parent council as a direct outgrowth of connections made in the dialogues program. She noted that this resulted in "the first time ever" that the "school parents council had more parents of color on it than White parents, and actually...matched what represented the kids." Participants also suggested that communication and outreach to families must be personalized and attentive to families' different racial and cultural backgrounds.

There Is a Need to Shift From Conversation to Concrete Action and Continuous Hard Work

One African American parent observed the disconnect that can sometimes occur between conversation and action:

We need to identify what the issues are and then identify what the concrete steps are. Kind of talking in general terms about race, equity, ethnicity, and inclusion and all of these things just in big broad terms doesn't necessarily get you to an end. It's a nice conversation, but it doesn't necessarily lead to action.

Another African American parent felt that the dialogues were successful in helping participants translate their discussions and activities into action:

I think the facilitators were great about having two sessions about action, and one thing is to sit and talk about what's wrong, but you really do have to have someone or something that spurs you to take the next step, and that was certainly built into the dialogues that we had.

Other participants proposed specific ideas about how to facilitate the ongoing work of racial equity advocacy after the dialogues. One suggested building a community of program alumni in order to support the sustained momentum of racial equity work; another advocated for continuous monitoring of, critical reflection about, and planning in response to school data on student outcomes by race, special education needs, and other factors. Scholarship on antiracist/antioppressive organizational change supports participant feedback on the importance of continued and committed action. Moffatt and colleagues (2009) observed that antioppression work within organizations should be viewed as a process rather than a single intervention, and that stakeholders must recognize that this process will involve "ongoing struggle" (p. 50).

Theme 4: Barriers to Change Include School Community Not Prioritizing Racial Equity, Continued Racism and Segregation, and Time Constraints

Participants noted a number of barriers to changing school racial climate, including the following subthemes: (a) If racial equity is not deeply valued and continually prioritized by all members of a school community, meaningful change will not occur; (b) Overt racism, racial segregation, and social exclusion persist within participants' school communities; and (c) Time constraints, felt more acutely by working parents, make sustained engagement with racial equity advocacy and other school activities difficult.

If Racial Equity Is Not Deeply Valued and Continually Prioritized by All Members of a School Community, Meaningful Change Will Not Occur

The school administration's continued prioritization of racial equity was considered to be a key determinant of its advancement. In some cases, participants observed that school leadership was not sincerely committed to true racial equity and systems change, but rather approached engaging with racial issues as if they were just checking off a box. One Latina parent stated, "the impact [of the dialogues] is never going to be realized because it's not something that the leadership wants, so although they allow for it to happen, they're not really supporting it...they don't genuinely want racial equity." She continued, "the intentions of the school aren't to change. It's not to level the playing field and welcome all. That's just so they can check off a little cross box so they can say they made an effort, even though it's not genuine." Relatedly, one African American parent highlighted how disparities in parent buy-in can likewise undermine race dialogue efforts, stating, "I think certainly it is a concern for parents of color, but I don't necessarily know that White parents are thinking about or concerned about it." Their experiences affirm scholars' call for shared, sincere commitment to racial equity among White parents and parents of color alike (Arao & Clemens, 2013; Cook et al., 2017).

Participants also highlighted the need for the school's ongoing commitment to racial equity; one teacher stated that when the previous principal—who had been a champion for racial equity—left, these issues "fell on the back burner." Indeed, Leonardo and Porter (2010) emphasized the need for continued clarity of intention in antiracism work; they suggested that transformative change requires that such efforts be motivated by a sustained commitment to eliminating inequities rather than a desire to "check a box" or to appear not racist.

Participants also conveyed their sense that they were part of a small group with a big responsibility, and that this imbalance was unsustainable. One African American parent stated, "I think it's always a challenge because [it's] the same families that are engaged and willing to do the work." Another African American parent noted, "When my group went through [the dialogues], we committed to parents' council meeting, taking on leadership roles. That entailed a lot of time and a lot of heavy lifting, of energy. People did it for two years before they quit." Participants suggested that it might be possible to increase involvement and buy-in by sharing successes from the dialogues program with the wider school community, clearly communicating the benefits and terms of involvement, and extending personal invitations from peers.

Overt Racism, Racial Segregation, and Social Exclusion Persist Within Participants' School Communities

This was reflected in complaints participants had heard from other parents about their school's shift to "full inclusion" classes and changing student demographics, the continued formation of relationships "inside the racial lines," and observations about differences in how community members are treated according to race. A Latina parent stated, "You'll be told something like 'if you volunteer at events, you can't bring your children.' But then other families are allowed to bring their children, and that's ok."

Time Constraints, Felt More Acutely by Working Parents, Make Sustained Engagement With Racial Equity Advocacy and Other School Activities Difficult

A White administrator remarked,

We have a lot of police officers and firefighters and mail carriers, a lot of people who work different shifts, long days; it's by virtue of the professions that our families are in that to some extent dictates their ability to participate.

An African American parent described the challenges she faced in participating in the dialogues, stating,

Really, it was just scheduling for me. Most of the meetings are obviously in the evening, and they happen to be one of the days of the week when my kids have activities after school, so it was difficult for me to get there.

Discussion

The race dialogues provided a forum for school community members, including parents, caregivers, administrators, and teachers, to share about experiences of race and racism and work together to create a shared vision and goals for change. Open discussions on experiences of race and racism can provide opportunities to promote equity in urban school communities (Cook et al., 2017; Rush, 2011). In the present study, the dialogues created a venue for individuals to engage in courageous conversations about race and racism and define concrete steps to take action in their community. Our study sought to explore participants' perceptions and experiences of the dialogues as well as whether participants perceived the dialogues as a catalyst in promoting positive school climate and educational justice.

Using qualitative content analysis of the semistructured interviews, participants' experiences and learning varied based on racial identity and depth

of personal engagement in the dialogues. Many participants described an increased sense of connection, trust, and greater awareness of cultural identities. Indeed, the dialogues process may facilitate social change through encouraging collaborative and participatory relationships among school community stakeholders (Dessel et al., 2006). The shared communication that unfolded during the race dialogues sessions aided in promoting a sense of positive school engagement and horizontal relationships between parents, teachers, and administrators. These findings support prior research that suggests that race dialogues can increase communication and collaboration between families (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Cook et al., 2017).

Overall, the dialogues helped to increase a sense of commitment toward educational justice through the school community's ongoing and collaborative engagement. However, perceptions of impact varied, with White participants expressing concern about the potential for tension and disagreement, while participants of color and White participants with interracial families acknowledged the discomfort the race dialogues engendered with less apprehension. In addition, participants expressed the need for authentic commitment to racial equity that is embodied in belief systems and implemented through shared responsibility and action-oriented leadership.

Fundamental changes are needed for school community members to achieve a more practical understanding of racial equity and a deep sense of commitment that is widely prioritized by all members of the school community. A couple of participants expressed dismay at the lack of genuine commitment to racial equity and systems change, with the act of holding race dialogues presented as if school leaders were just checking off a box. Leonardo and Porter (2010) urged educators to emphasize the importance of conducting dialogues with the goal of attaining a sense of solidarity among school community members, where understanding and confronting racism, rather than appearing less racist, is the driving force. Indeed, participants identified several barriers to change and engagement, like those described by Leonardo and Porter, including ongoing marginalization and segregation of families, time constraints restricting the ability to carry out action plans, and the failure to prioritize racial equity. Although participants were impacted differently by the race dialogues, participants described the importance of race dialogue work given the possibility for promoting educational equity and transformation.

Delgado and Stefancic (2012) suggested that dialogues of this nature are a critical first step in increasing awareness of racism. Although several participants in this study expressed growth in personal awareness and understanding others' cultural identities, the responses of participants of color and some White participants suggest that the extent to which White participants developed an

understanding of the impact of racism and privilege is somewhat limited. The responses of participants of color and recognition on the part of some White participants that the more deeply discomfiting racial issues, such as police brutality, had been avoided suggest that the dialogues may only represent a first step in a longer journey toward antiracist consciousness and identity for many of the White participants. The willingness to be vulnerable, authentically share, and openly acknowledge the ways that White individuals are racist are key components of transformative race dialogues (DiAngelo, 2018). However, Whites' ability to stay open and engage in painful racial dialogue takes what DiAngelo (2018) calls "racial stamina" (p. 2), which requires sustained involvement and practice over a longer period of time. So, although a single racial dialogues program may not be enough to transform White participants' racial consciousness, it may represent an important first step on the road to building racial stamina.

Although the dialogues supported personal growth, connection, trust, and a sense of commitment to school improvement, participants described several barriers to change. Newcomer families and families from racial minority backgrounds continued to encounter racism and marginalization within the school community. Numerous researchers document how racism in schools causes parents and families of color to continue to feel unwelcome, oppressed, and marginalized in their school community (Reece et al., 2013; Yull et al., 2014). As a result, parents may demonstrate reluctance to participate in school activities and events that aim to build school climate. Educators may then misinterpret the lack of engagement as parent disinterest in their children's education, thereby sustaining deficit perspectives that blame parents for children's underachievement (Guo, 2006). It is imperative to actively engage parents in shared conversations with educators by ensuring an open and collaborative forum is created (Bryan & Henry, 2012). In addition, time constraints are important to consider (McWayne et al., 2004), as reflected in participant feedback. Opportunities for school engagement must be meaningful for parents and allow for flexible scheduling of events and carrying out action plans for school improvement.

Participants also identified the importance of deep, authentic commitment to educational justice and action-oriented leadership as essential to promoting positive school climate and educational justice. Khalifa (2012) found that when a school principal is actively involved in social initiatives that benefit the school community, such as the race dialogues, the academic and social lives of students improve. Conducting race dialogues that include school administrators and teachers as equal partners with parents demonstrates a first step toward shared commitment to school improvement. Cook and colleagues

(2017) found that the underrepresentation of administrator and teacher participation in their dialogues may have contributed to participants' sense of low expectations for school improvement and perceptions of feeling undervalued. Although administrators and teachers actively participated in the race dialogues and the present study, changes in administrative leadership occurred which may have compromised the school community's commitment to racial equity. Thus, it is imperative that district-level leaders identify racial equity as a chief and long-term priority of school improvement and actively communicate these efforts during times of administrative changes.

The themes of commitment to school improvement alongside the barriers to change, resulting from racism, marginalization, time constraints, and need for authentic, action-oriented leadership, may also reflect the relationship that a school's culture has on school climate. Acevedo-Gil (2016) suggested that there are multiple school cultural factors that influence school climate, including schoolwide policies, educational practices, and educator beliefs, which intersect in unique ways to influence climate. The lived experience of school climate is complex and varied; however, it is possible that providing a brave forum for open discussion, awareness building, and perspective taking, such as through race dialogues, may help facilitate positive school climate in urban settings. Researchers examining outcomes of conducting intergroup dialogues have identified decreases in conflict in schools and community settings (Miles & Kivlighan, 2012; Nagda et al., 2006). Further research that examines the impact of creating "brave" spaces in conducting race dialogues on school climate is needed, particularly with respect to understanding how school climate relates to promoting educational justice.

Limitations

Although these community dialogue series have been implemented over several years at a large urban K–8 school with many participants, this study only represents a small sample that is unique to one urban school community. Our conclusions related to the impact that race dialogues have on promoting positive school climate and educational justice have been drawn from a pool of 11 participants, even though there were an average of 17 individuals who participated in the dialogue series each year. Thus, the present study participants may have had unique experiences that differed from other previous dialogues participants. Relatedly, the sample of interviewees included an overrepresentation of White participants (64%) in comparison to the percentage of White participants (45%) who engaged in the race dialogues. The disproportionate representation of the interviewee sample by racial group when compared to the overall race dialogues participants is another limitation of the present study.

Although parent interviewees included proportionate representation, there was an underrepresentation of administrators and teachers of color. Consequently, qualitative findings, particularly in relation to school leaders and educators, offer limited understanding of the impact of race dialogues in urban schools.

Implications for Family–School–Community Partnerships

Building a school climate that overcomes structural barriers and promotes transformative change must address the ways that various contextual and sociopolitical factors interconnect to impact personal and familial experiences (Leonard, 2011). Collaborative family–school–community partnerships have been found to help maximize academic and social outcomes and are related to improved/more equitable student outcomes (Bryan, 2005). More specifically, in schools that foster shared communication and collaboration between families and the school community, students have improved attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), increased test scores, better retention rates (Darch et al., 2004; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999), and are more likely to graduate from high school on time (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). How to best facilitate family–school–community partnerships that promote positive youth outcomes necessitates a willingness to engage in brave dialogues as a first step.

Future research investigating the relationship between intergroup racial dialogues and racial equity-focused systems change in schools and other organizations is needed. Although our findings suggest that racial dialogues can serve as one tool in the fight for racial equity in schools, they should be viewed as a starting point, not an end point. Furthermore, it is important to frame race dialogues programs appropriately, that is, with an explicit focus on racial and social power as it manifests within the school community and the dialogues groups themselves, including making Whiteness visible, and an emphasis on the larger goal of institutional and policy change (Kendi, 2019). Without this frame, race dialogues discussions may become overly personal (e.g., overly focusing on individual White participants' emotional reactions) and in so doing deflect attention away from antiracist action and change (Srivastava, 2006). Thus, in working toward transformative change, it behooves dialogues facilitators to attend to the different ways that cross-racial/ethnic groups approach race-related dialogues, such that White participants move beyond feelings of detachment and avoidance and participants of color do not remain solely responsible for eliminating racism in schools and communities. In this way, all participants of race dialogues more equitably strive toward demonstrating a shared and honest commitment to racial equity.

Nurturing shared partnerships in which each partner has an equal voice is essential to promoting social justice (Bryk et al., 2010; De La Garza & Kuri, 2014) and eliminating systemic barriers that inhibit student learning (Steen & Noguera, 2010). Opportunity gaps have been found to decrease when strong, collaborative partnerships are formed, with all partners sharing the same vision (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010). These reenvisioned, horizontally structured partnerships promote collective action through creating access to more resources (Mellin et al., 2015) and maximizing student outcomes, strengths, and resiliency (Bryan, 2005). Conducting race dialogues can facilitate the development of meaningful partnerships among school community stakeholders, where a foundation of collective decision making can drive school improvement.

Conclusion

Race dialogues provide a brave forum where parents, caretakers, administrators, staff, and teachers can come to together to share experiences, develop a vision, and carry out action plans for school improvement. They can strengthen meaningful school–family collaborations that can catalyze school community members to promote educational justice and positive school climate in urban school settings. In the present study, participants appreciated the opportunity to build connections and trust, develop personal growth, build critical racial consciousness, and strengthen commitment for school improvement. Engaging in dialogues of this nature conducted among diverse school community members that focus on promoting educational justice and breaking down barriers to school engagement can provide the forum necessary to facilitate meaningful family–school–community partnerships. The results of the present study are just a beginning step toward exploring the potential impact of conducting school-based race dialogues in urban schools. Further research is needed to explore how dialogues programming can be improved to better support positive school climate and educational justice outcomes.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

1. What was it like for you to participate in the dialogue series?
2. Since completing the dialogue series, have you been able to take action in promoting racial equity in your school?
 - a. If so, what have you been able to do?
 - b. If not, why not?
3. Have you experienced any barriers to taking action? Please describe.
4. Your group came up with a list of intended efforts. Did the group make any of the efforts?
5. Do you think your action efforts are making an impact? Please describe.
 - a. If not, what is standing in the way? And, what would help to implement your action plan?
6. What is your comfort level in talking with teachers or parents (particularly those from different racial/ethnic backgrounds)?
7. Has your comfort level in talking with teachers or parents changed over the years? Was there a difference from before the dialogues to after the dialogues?
8. What behaviors have increased your sense of comfort in talking with teachers or parents?
9. Talk about some of the connections you have made with teachers or families, particularly those who are racially/ethnically different from you.
10. What ideas do you have for improving the school and children's experiences?
 - a. What role would you want to take in making these changes or improvements?
 - b. Is that role feasible or attainable? What is needed so that the change can occur?
11. Overall, please describe your engagement with parents at the school.
 - a. Has it changed in any way since engaging in the dialogues? Please describe.
12. Overall, please describe your engagement with the school teachers and administration.
 - a. Has it changed in any way since engaging in the dialogues? Please describe.