Leveling the Discipline Dynamic:

Black Girls and Latinas Make Sense of How to Navigate School Resource Officers and Security Guards in High Schools

By

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## Dedication

To the nine inspiring young women who honored me by sharing their stories and experiences

And

To my children, Zachary, Brody, and Taylor - you are my world!

**Acknowledgments**

This experience is, by far, the most difficult adventure I have undertaken in my life. And while there have been many times I have questioned both my sanity and ability to persist, there are several people who have helped me along the way and without whom I would have faltered.

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**Abstract**

This qualitative study explores the retrospective sensemaking of Black[1] girls and Latinas in their interactions with school security guards and School Resource Officers (SROs). Seven Black women and two Latinas participated in the study. Additionally, district data around SROs and discipline were analyzed for the five school districts in which the nine participants attended. This included seclusion and restraint statistics, evaluations of the SRO programs, student handbooks, and discipline data. The data were analyzed using white institutional space, multiracial feminism, and the sensemaking theory. The research questions guiding this inquiry were: (1) How do Black girls and Latinas make sense of their interactions with SROs and security guards when they were in high school? (2) How do these Black girls and Latinas make sense of how students with different characteristics were treated by SROs and security guards? (3) How do Black girls and Latinas make sense of how they and other students navigated interactions with SROs and security guards?

School district documentation (including handbooks, seclusion and restraint data, discipline data, and district evaluation of their SRO programs) demonstrate a landscape of ambiguous rules and consequences where students of color are more subject to repercussions. Evaluations of the SRO programs reflect an understanding by some districts of the deficiencies in the program but a continued use of SROs in a flawed system. Further findings included the understanding of the power associated with being a favored student which primarily entailed being white, affluent, or a student athlete. Additionally, there is a leniency in the boundaries of professionalism afforded to SROs and security guards, but there are relationship inhibitors

[1] Throughout this dissertation, I have made an active choice to capitalize Black but not to capitalize white when describing the girls. This is because the concepts of white and whiteness have an assumed dominance that does not need to be given center stage. Instead, the significance of Black girls and Latinas needs to be demonstrated as the central focus.

created through elements such as the uniform, specifically the gun and handcuffs. Furthermore, the females recognized the importance to their safety of being quiet and polite and the impact of being viewed as “ghetto” or “ratchet”.

*Keywords*: School Resource Officer, Black young women, Latinx young women, discipline, interactions, strategies, sensemaking

## Chapter 1:

## Introduction

Over the past decade, School Resource Officers (SROs)[2] have been in the news for using unnecessary excessive force to deal with students. In Oklahoma, an SRO hit a male high school student for taking an “aggressive stance” when confronted about being in the hall without a pass (Prickett, 2015). In South Carolina, an SRO flipped a Black female student to the floor and dragged her across the room in an argument over her cell phone (Associated Press, 2016). In North Carolina, an SRO slammed an 11-year-old to the ground (CNN, 2019). In New Mexico, a female student sustained a minor concussion after an SRO pushed her against the wall and then held her to the ground for throwing milk on the ground (Rahim, 2019). Incidents such as these have caused many individuals to question the purpose of having police in schools. For several years, some groups in numerous communities have called for the removal of SROs from schools. The political and social influences that led to an increased presence of police in schools are discussed later in this paper; however, the reaction by movement activists to George Floyd's murder in May of 2020 pushed some school districts to take action in the removal of police from schools. School boards in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Denver, Colorado; and Madison, Wisconsin all voted to remove SROs from their school districts (Buisman, 2020; Faircloth, 2020; Thomas, 2020). Other districts, such as in Chicago, Illinois, reformed their program, removing officers from 17 of the high schools but leaving officers in others (Pathieu & Gallardo, 2020); however, many school districts have opted to continue their contracts to have SROs in their buildings.

In 2023, the Wisconsin Assembly voted on a Republican bill to mandate SROs into schools in the state that experienced a “high number of crimes” (Associated Press, 2023) which was determined to be a school that had “more than 100 incidents in a semester, and at least 25 of

[2] SROs are sometimes called Educational Resource Officers (EROs).

those result in an arrest" (Associated Press, 2023). The crimes that apply would be "homicide, sexual assault, burglary, robbery, theft, battery, possession or use of illegal drugs, firearm possession and disorderly conduct" (Beck, 2023). The bill further designated that the officer who is hired must be armed. Proponents of the bill indicated that the motivation is reducing violence in the schools. Opponents see it as an attack on the Milwaukee School District and the Madison Metropolitan School District, two of the Wisconsin Districts that removed SROs from schools after the murder of George Floyd. Interspersed between crimes that invoke a reaction (such as homicide and sexual assault) are more ambiguous infractions (e.g., possession or use of illegal drugs, which includes marijuana and alcohol) and disorderly conduct, which is a subjective offense. Another bill set to be put into effect in the 2024/2025 school year would mandate that "public and private schools to track how often students commit crimes on school property" (Fannon, 2023). The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) would report on these numbers, thus highlighting the political interest in and influence on discipline in schools.

**The Carceral State of Schools**

There is a fair amount of ambiguity around the activity, purpose, role, job description, and latitudes afforded to SROs. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) argues that no one knows precisely how many SROs are in public schools because there is no requirement for schools, police departments, or SROs to register this information anywhere (NASRO, n.d.). The National Center for Education Statistics (2018) indicated that in the 2015–2016 school year, 42 percent of public schools had an SRO present at least one day a week. The role or job description of the SRO is not clearly defined. NASRO promotes that the SRO has three focus areas in their position within a school: teacher, informal counselor, and law enforcement officer (Lambert & McGinty, 2002; Lynch et al., 2016; National Association of

School Resource Officers, n.d.). SROs focus on activities that more closely resemble a security officer's focus (Lambert & McGinty, 2002). Bracy (2010) indicated that while the SRO's role has guidelines, very little is known about the way these guidelines are assumed and what consequences they may have for the students.

As school districts look to provide safety to their students, SROs are viewed as both a means for keeping students safe and a mechanism for putting students in the crosshairs of the law. Ultimately, situating SROs in schools provides an increased possibility for an adolescent's behavior or activity to be handled by a police officer rather than a school employee (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Piggott et al., 2018). There are extensive studies that link Black and Latinx students to the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) in far greater numbers than their white and Asian peers; however, the studies around the specific interactions between SROs and Black and/or Latinx individuals are limited (Annamma et al., 2014; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Simmons, 2009; Rocque, 2010; Wallace et al., 2008).

**School-to-Prison Pipeline**

The research on the STPP, through which school infractions lead to mass incarceration, covers a monumental scope of information (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Hoffman, 2014; Pesta, 2018; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al., 2002). While specific themes and concepts are consistent in the research providing a substantial overlap, many nuances are discussed with less consistency. The depth and breadth of the forces driving the STPP are much more expansive and extensive than the incarceration of Black and Latinx students for incidents that, historically, would have been classified as misbehaviors; never would they have been addressed with suspensions, expulsions, or arrests (Annamma et al., 2014; Hoffman, 2014; Marsh, 2019; Monahan et al., 2014;

Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Simmons, 2009; Skiba et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2018; ).

As these behaviors become criminalized, the repercussions for making a mistake increase exponentially. Students who are penalized for subjective infractions, such as disrespect or defiance, are at a greater exposure for being arrested. Wun (2016b) highlighted how the normal actions of a Black girl put her at risk: "...her vulnerability and desire for attention – real or imagined – are premises for criminalization and are grounds for punishment" (p. 748).

Actions embellished by the media and propelled by politicians, enhance parental fear of something abhorrent happening to their child[ren], such as a school shooting, thus thrusting the carceral state in schools forward. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2017) looked at the accuracy of this fear: "Media coverage of several heinous school shootings intensified the belief - contrary to actual crime trends - in a growing threat of juvenile violence and propelled the federal push for police in schools beyond urban centers" (p. 8). Add to the parental concern the apprehension of educators and administrators, with the hindsight afforded after a tragic school event, of being perceived by the public as not having done enough to stop the occurrence.[3] This trepidation has permitted adults to disregard common sense and a deeper understanding of the facts and instead react with fear and emotion to advocate for a more significant police presence in schools to the detriment of all students, but predominantly Black and Latinx students.

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[3] This information was gleaned from a public comment during a Madison Metropolitan School District (DWSD) School Board meeting. During a discussion regarding the use of school resource officers, an older white male suggested to the board that if they voted to remove SROs from the DWSD, and there was another incident similar to Columbine but in Madison, everyone would look at the school board and this decision.

Several layers need to be disentangled in order to understand the impact of the confluence that constitutes disproportionality in discipline (Annamma et al., 2014; Hoffman, 2014; Kupchik, 2010; Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2008), removal of students from schools (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Peguero et al., 2017; Pesta, 2018), entrance into the STPP (Clark et al., 2017; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Payne & Brown, 2017; Rocque & Snellings, 2018; Simmons, 2009), and later incarceration (Barnes & Motz, 2018; Marsh, 2019). While Black male and Latino students have been the focus of many studies, recognizing the impact on Black girls and Latinas is an understudied area that this study aims to fill. Areas that have been studied specifically regarding Black girls include their adultification (Morris, 2019), their inclusion in the school-to-prison pipeline (Morris, 2012), the impact of school discipline policies (Wun, 2016a), and their punishment in schools (Wun, 2016b). These studies focus predominantly on students who are currently in high school. My study focuses on the retrospective sensemaking of Black girls and Latinas. Participants ranged from just having graduated from high school to being graduated for eight years.

## Definitions

### *School Resource Officers*

SROs have officially been part of the educational system since as early as the 1950s with the first SROs on record being located in Flint, Michigan. These officers' job was to improve the relationship between the police and the youth of the area (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Lambert & McGinty, 2002). The increase in school shootings in the 1990s caused school and criminal justice officials to escalate the measures used to ensure school safety, including metal detectors, video surveillance, zero-tolerance policies, and integrating SROs into schools (Brown, 2006). Congress passed the Safe Schools Act of 1994 which directed the Secretary of Education to

“make competitive grants  to eligible local educational agencies” (Safe Schools Act of 1994, 1994).  to help to ensure school safety The expansion of the SROs’ placements was directly related to preventing school shootings and keeping schools safe (Curran et al., 2018; Mallett, 2016), but their implementation most prevalently impacted minorities and those living in poverty (Mallett, 2016).

***Security Guards***

Security guards are employed by the school district; they are not police officers. They have no arresting powers. They are responsible for intervening when there is a student who needs to be handled because of their behavior. They are also responsible for patrolling the hallways and the perimeter of the property. Typically, they are encouraged to develop strong positive and professional relationships with students.

***School-to-Prison Pipeline***

There has been a significant amount of research surrounding the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP), sometimes referred to as the school-to-prison nexus,[4] and the disproportionality, specifically of Black males, represented within the pipeline. According to Morris (2012), "The school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) refers to the collection of policies, practices, conditions, and prevailing consciousness that facilitate both the criminalization within educational environments and the processes by which this criminalization results in the incarceration of youth and young adults" (p. 2). The implication of the STPP is the funneling of students, predominantly Black and

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[4]While the STPP focuses on the funneling of Black and Latinx students out-of-schools and into prisons, the school-to-prison nexus is more inclusive as it concentrates on “the policies, ideologies, and local practices that move a select group of young people from schools to prisons” (Meiner, 2011, p. 548). The term *nexus* implies more of a web and less of a direct line when it comes to the components that move students from schools into prisons, and “it captures the historic, systemic, and multifaceted nature of the intersections of education and incarceration” (Meiner, 2007, p. 32). The term has been used interchangeably with the STPP in some publications; however, there are nuances that are considered in the school-to-prison nexus that are not considered in the STPP, such as systemic racism and implicit bias.

Latinx students, into the prison system because of incidents that occur at school. Warren (2021) posits the work to dismantle the STPP began with the collective movement of students and parents working with community organizing groups.

A vast number of studies consider the impact of race on the students who are most significantly affected by the STPP. Annamma et al. (2014) looked broadly at the racial disproportionality of students channeled into the STPP. Marginalized individuals, specifically Black males, are criminalized by school discipline policies, shortening their educational careers and increasing their risk for incarceration (Simmons, 2009). A common finding is that Black students are disciplined in ways that push them into the STPP at a greater rate than any other race (Kupchik, 2010; Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Simmons, 2009; Wallace et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2014; Young et al., 2018). Young et al. (2018) maintained that there is no difference between the punishments inflicted on Black males and the punishments imposed on Black girls, which is pivotal to this study.

### *Black Girls and Latinas*

The term “girls” can encompass a considerable variation in age. For this study, the term encompassed any individual who self-identified as female and fell between the ages of 18 years old and 26 years old. The variations in age contained within this grouping will be addressed in the data collection and data analysis. Connie Wun and Monique Morris predominantly focused on students currently in high school in their studies.

## Inclusion of SROs and Security Guards

There is a curious dynamic between the role of the SRO and that of the security guard and the way that they are perceived by students. Both have specific job requirements, and occasionally, they are asked to work together. For many of the participants in this study, while

the security guard was doing the same thing that the resource officer was going to do or making the same request, the students took the request or the action better when they interacted with the security guard. Whether it was because the security guards worked to develop relationships with the students or because most of the security guards were people of color, students were more open to their suggestions and interventions. Furthermore, there were some instances where participants really had to stop and think about which members of the staff constituted the officers and which constituted security guards. It appeared to be a blurred area in the system. Including both the SRO and the security guards in the study really demonstrated the significance of relationship development to the participants and also the lack of clarity assigned to each role[5].

**Rationale and Significance of the Study**

SROs are placed in school buildings to create the image of a safe environment; however, their presence can establish a dynamic where adolescent misbehavior is construed as criminal and carries with it criminal repercussions that alter the trajectory of students' lives (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015; Fitzgerald et al., 2019). Furthermore, not all students believe the presence of law enforcement enhances the educational environment. The feeling of being "imprisoned" by all of the safety machinery (Shedd, 2012) and the stress, anxiety, and trauma of direct and indirect police contact (Legewie & Fagan, 2019) impact student's, specifically Black student's, ability to learn and educational outcomes. The disproportionate discipline of Black and Latinx students due to the insertion of SROs into schools are well documented (Annamma et al. 2014; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Rocque, 2010; Simmons, 2009; Wallace et al., 2018), but there are a limited number of studies that focus on Black girls and Latinas perspectives and sensemaking

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[5] When it came to relationships, the lack of clarity created issues such as interactions that bordered on inappropriate.

regarding their interactions and their peers' interactions that they witness with SROs and security guards.

This study is different from other research inquiries because rather than looking at how the interactions between SROs and Black and Latinx girls transpire (Chan et al., 2019; Curren et al., 2019; May et al., 2018; Ryan et al., 2018; Thurau & Wald, 2010; Wolf, 2014), this study looked at the girls' retrospective sensemaking regarding interactions they experienced or witnessed (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Jackson, 2002; Theriot, 2016). Furthermore, there is limited research with this demographic retrospectively relating incidents they experienced at a younger age. The benefit of this method of narrative is that the participants are able to recall events they encountered at a younger age but evaluate the experience through a lens that is enhanced by time and maturity.

I began my inquiry by researching the intersections of Black girls and Latinas with SROs to determine what it was about this population of individuals that increased the likelihood of an interaction resulting in disciplinary action. Inspired by Monique W. Morris' book, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*, I began looking for articles that addressed the discipline of Black girls. In my reading, I realized that Latinas are also very rarely mentioned, and so I included them in my inquiry.

**Research Questions**

1. How do Black girls and Latinas make sense of the interactions they had with SROs and security guards when they were in high school?
2. How do Black girls and Latinas make sense of how students with different characteristics were treated by SROs and security guards?

3. How do Black girls and Latinas make sense of how they and other students navigate interactions with SROs and security guards?

This study considers these questions and seeks the perspective of Black females and Latinas for their perspectives.

# Chapter 2:

# Literature Review

In this chapter, I present an overview of the research related to the impact of SROs on how Black girls and Latinas are disciplined in schools and the subsequent consequences of that discipline. The first section discusses the factors that created an environment wherein SROs were requested to be in schools. The second section considers the history and purpose of SROs in schools. The third section addresses the influence of discriminatory discipline procedures and the STPP. Next, I analyze white perceptions of Black and Latinx culture and behavior. The final section of the chapter presents an examination of the school-based discipline of Black girls and Latinas. A review of the literature encompassing the atmosphere of discipline in schools and the factors that impact the interactions between SROs and Black girls and Latinas provides foundational information for my study.

## History of the Expansion of Policing, Exclusionary Discipline, and the Criminalization of People of Color

Many factors paved the way for police presence in schools. When combined, these factors created the perfect storm for the formation of the school-to-prison pipeline. Politically, there were programs initiated by various Presidents that led to greater scrutiny of Black and Latinx individuals and secured more significant penalties for them. President Kennedy's anti-delinquency program led to President Johnson's War on Poverty that placed Black individuals under heavier supervision. President Johnson initiated the War on Crime, which included the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act that directed $400 million toward building robust law enforcement. President Nixon introduced drastic sentencing reforms and incentivized prison development whose focus was not structured through legislation, but through

political campaigns and subsequent funding. Between 1969 and 1973, "federal aid to state and local law enforcement grew from $60 million to almost $800 million. One of the principal conduits for these funds has been the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA)" (Speiglman & Cooper, 1975). Additionally, Nixon supported the supervisory role of police in American cities.

President Ford focused on repeat offenders, looking to process them quickly and to extend their sentences for as long as possible. President Carter focused on crime control and security. President Nixon initiated the War on Drugs (Hinton, 2016).

Then, in 1994, President Clinton created the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA), tying federal funding to the requirements for a school to expel for one year any student who brought a gun to school and to refer that student to the juvenile justice system. GFSA was later changed to include all weapons (Kafka, 2011), but the initiative pushed zero-tolerance policies to center stage as an approach to discipline in schools.

Zero-tolerance policies were implemented first in reference to guns, then to weapons in general, and ultimately were specified to each school district to include a multitude of policy infractions (Sughrue, 2003). Moreover, as zero-tolerance policies became more commonplace in schools, society became less forgiving of crime, based on political platforms described above. These evolving approaches to discipline at the federal level ultimately manifested in societal support for being tougher on those who make mistakes, even children. Furthermore, a 1998 amendment to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 promoted the use of SROs in schools. Structurally and legislatively, the path of the STPP had been paved.

The role of schools has adapted to reflect the changes in society. Pivotal to this change is the focus on discipline and control of students' bodies rather than the education and growth of

their minds. The shift of focus started with the desegregation of schools. As schools became more diverse and there was the concern by white individuals of neighborhoods integrating, there came a more fixed focus on safety. In hindsight, urban crime, race and class inequality, and community control became focal as white communities worked to maintain jurisdiction over who was and who was not permitted to take up certain space.

> The centralization of school discipline and the increased use of law enforcement personnel on school campuses occurred at a time in which school officials, community activists, politicians, educators, and many others were struggling over a range of issues - including segregation, community control, teacher unionism, school funding, urban crime, and race and class inequality. (Kafka, 2011, p. 9)

The urge to control Black bodies laid the groundwork for schools to incorporate law enforcement. As schools' functions transformed under the guise of creating a safe learning environment and limiting educators' disciplinary responsibilities, schools incorporated more stringent, punitive policies that were handled outside of the classroom and ultimately did not serve the learning community's best interest. Discipline was no longer educational but was now punitive (Kafka, 2011). Instead, Irby (2014b) posited that the discipline systems utilized in schools act “as nets of social control” (p. 513).

One final element that impacted the expansion of policing and exclusionary discipline and led to the criminalization of people of color was the fear expressed by white people about the integration of schools and the racial transformation in communities. As neighborhoods became increasingly diverse and as Black individuals sought justice and liberation, racial tensions rose, promoting the belief that police presence was necessary to keep the peace. In some areas, the student rights movement brought police to school campuses (Kafka, 2011). Combined with a narrative that bolstered the perception that Black individuals were more apt to commit crimes than their white counterparts, the promotion of the mindset that Black individuals were inferior

to whites academically and morally provided a rationale for their portrayal as criminals. According to Muhammed (2010), "The idea of black criminality was crucial to the making of modern urban America" (p. 272). Ideas about Black criminality can influence behaviors. For example, Diamond and Lewis (2019) posited that most people want to do the right thing and operate with "the best intentions…Yet, widespread cultural beliefs and pervasive racial stereotypes about all groups penetrate deeply into school buildings and shape interactions" ( p. 851).

**The Role and the Influence of SROs in Schools**

The literature discussing the impact and influence of the SROs' presence on the school environment and school discipline is diverse, mixed, and contested. While there are individuals who perceive that schools are safer with an SRO present, there is evidence that Black and Latinx students feel less safe with SROs in schools.[6] The relevant literature covers a multitude of topics and contains a great deal of nuance surrounding SROs in schools. Wolf (2014) studied the decision making process around determining arrests, while May et al. (2018) analyzed the increase in arrests for less serious offenses. Ryan et al. (2018) considered how SROs are now handling more discipline issues and enforcements of school policies, while Fisher & Hennessy (2016) and Theriot (2009) investigated how the presence of an SRO provides an connection between students and the juvenile justice system and the impact this has on arrests. Although most SROs report not being involved in school discipline, a majority of them are involved in subtle ways dictated by their relationship with the school staff, school district and law enforcement policy, their own belief systems around discipline, and the population of students

[6] During the public comments at the DWSD School Board meetings, members of the DWSD student body who identified as Black, Hispanic, and Asian repeatedly stated that the presence of School Resource Officers made them feel unsafe.

served. Additionally, as SROs spend more time and take a more active role in education, there is a greater draw for them to participate in disciplinary action (Curran et al., 2019). With this exposure comes a more significant opportunity for students to be arrested for behaviors that once fell under school discipline.

Other studies have sought to understand the conditions that determine how SROs undertake school discipline (Chan et al., 2019; Curran et al., 2019; Thurau & Wald, 2010) and the social control exercised by SROs (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). While police officers generally regulate their behavior to some extent because they are in a school and not among the general public, they are afforded a great deal of discretion. Additionally, SROs are being utilized to maintain social control over students, and there is legislation that provides them greater scope in their roles. So-called "disturbing school" legislation, now found in 22 states, criminalizes disruptions in the classroom and is the perfect mechanism through which SROs can maintain control of students (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Some states, like South Carolina, are seeing the error of these ways and overturning the law (Walsh, 2023).

Further studies look at students' feelings and perceptions about SROs (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Jackson, 2002; Theriot, 2016; Theriot & Orme, 2016), the impact of the presence of SROs on students' rights (Bracy, 2010), the likelihood of an SRO being in a school based on the race and ethnicity of the students (Lynch et al., 2016; Maskaly et al., 2011; Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018), and the evidence that schools with a more significant population of low income students of color are more likely to have an SRO (Lynch et al., 2016). Interestingly, Theriot (2016) found that the more contact a student has with an SRO, the more likely they are to speak positively about the SRO. Students cite fairness, helpfulness, and competence as the attributes they associate with SROs; however, Theriot also found that the more contacts students

have with SROs, the less connected they are to the school environment. The paradox of students' reduced connection to schools with greater SRO contact is potentially explained by the SRO handling major safety incidents, such as gangs or drugs, leading students to feel safer with an SRO. However, students also witness SROs issuing citations for things like disorderly conduct, which leads students to feel less connected to the school and concerned that this could happen to them as well.

The liberties granted to an SRO are also impacted by school administrators' perceptions of the SRO. Wolfe et al. (2015) found that when it came to SROs, principals equate fairness with legitimacy as an authority figure. Once identified by the administration as an authority figure, SROs were given additional access to student interactions, establishing a dynamic where the SROs' treatment of staff and students creates a perception of legitimacy by administrators who empower the SRO and "perceive them as a tool for improving school safety, and trust their intentions" (p. 127). At this point, SROs, seen as compelling, legitimate, and an authority, may be permitted by administrators to interact in situations that would not otherwise require an officer's intervention.

As discussed later in the literature review, schools are constructed using white norms, and these norms drive the culture in each school (Altman, 2006; Miller; 2015; Nayak, 2011). It is the culture of the school that dictates, in part, what is considered acceptable and what is considered deviant. Irby (2014b) postulated that what is acceptable and what is deviant can change. These changes will alter the way actors in that environment will now interact with the situations they encounter. For individuals who focus solely on compliance, such as SROs, what they once punished they might now overlook, and what they once overlooked, they might now punish. Irby (2014b, citing Becker, 1973) regarded the role of rule enforcers, as SROs are classified, as those

who focus on compliance with the rules created by others: "When rules are changed, the officer punishes what was once acceptable behavior just as she or he ceases to punish behavior that has been made legitimate by a change in the rules" (p. 516).

The punishable offenses create what Irby (2014b) identified as a "school discipline net" (p. 517). This is "a socially constructed, contested, and symbolic 'space of trouble' that a student falls into when he or she behaves outside of the normative expectations of a school setting" (p. 517). The wider the metaphorical net, the more students can be found guilty of breaking the rules; the more profound the net, the greater punishment that can be inflicted. With this analogy, schools with smaller "nets" in both breadth and depth will have fewer students cited for behavior that can put them on the radar of the STPP.

**The Impact of Discipline**

Suspensions and expulsions have permeating consequences. Mittleman (2018) determined that once children are suspended, their trajectories change. A school suspension doubles the odds that a student will get arrested. Children who are suspended end up having more behavioral issues. Additionally, children who are suspended by the age of 12 are more likely to have interactions with the juvenile justice system by the time they are 18 years old (Novak, 2019). Monahan et al. (2014) contended that students who are suspended or expelled from school have a greater chance of getting arrested within the same month. This is particularly true for students who have not had a history of behavior issues. Peguero et al. (2017) demonstrated how school punishments contribute to Latino students dropping out, and indicated how improving school justice and fairness can ameliorate the risk of dropouts. Furthermore, removing students from school via out-of-school suspensions to alleviate issues within the school may create new issues outside of school (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015).

Research has confirmed Black and Latinx students' disproportionality in terms of discipline, removal from schools, entrance into the STPP, and later incarceration. Black students are referred to the office for discipline at a greater rate than any other racial group (Pesta, 2018; Rocque, 2010), and their referrals tend to originate from more subjective infractions of the rules (Skiba et al., 2002). These might be what are interpreted as behavior issues (Rocque, 2010) such as “disrespect” and “perceived threat” (Wallace et al., 2008, p. 49). Once removed from the classroom and moved to the school office, Black and Hispanic students are more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension or expulsion compared to a white student who enacts the same behavior (Skiba et al., 2011). In the case of Black students, Hoffman (2014) cited the abrupt expansion of zero-tolerance policies as a reason for this disproportionality; the implementation of these policies demonstrated a shift in schools’ priorities from disseminating information to controlling children viewed as potentially dangerous (Price, 2009) and usurping social control over adolescents (Irby, 2014b). Ultimately, zero-tolerance policies place SROs in the center of the equation to enforce school discipline (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018).

Besides being impacted more significantly by zero-tolerance policies, schools attended by a substantial population of Black students and lower-income students tend to have higher suspension rates than schools with students from higher incomes and less diversity. According to Kupchik (2010), "the racial/ethnic and social class composition of schools' student bodies can shape perceptions of threat, and distinctions in social capital can influence the discipline process" (p. 309). In other words, schools with a higher population of Black and Latinx students and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch are perceived as schools where there is a greater chance for misbehavior and the misbehavior is viewed as more egregious. Welch and Payne (2010) further discovered that schools with a larger percentage of Black students are not only

more likely to use punitive disciplinary responses, but those schools are also more likely to implement zero-tolerance policies and rely on overly punitive responses.

Several studies have looked at other possibilities for corrective action other than suspensions and expulsions that remove students from the learning environment. Crosby et al. (2018) recommended using trauma-informed care to reduce punishments when looking to reduce circumstances that remove students from a school. Others advocated restorative justice approaches. Using restorative justice is viewed as creating an atmosphere conducive to inclusion and safety (Simson, 2014). Barnes and Motz (2018) proposed that policymakers disable the passageway between race and school-based punishment with a "targeted intervention" (p. 2335). Finally, Fenning et al. (2013) suggested developing more equitable repercussions by coordinating school-based efforts with School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Supports.

**Disproportionality of Discipline**

Given the disproportionality in the apportionment of discipline, it is vital to analyze the SRO's role in this process. The research on SROs' impact on the STPP primarily finds that the presence of an SRO increases the likelihood of adolescent behavior being criminalized. Studies have found that schools with SROs have an increase in arrests (Counts et al., 2018; Theriot, 2009). The presence of an SRO is also correlated to an increase in the perception of safety as SROs focus on incidents involving violence, property damage, drugs, or weapons (Owens, 2017). Some of the crimes classified as violent crimes may not be as intense as that term implies. On campuses where there is an SRO, there are arrests for violent crimes that "could be reasonably characterized as scuffling, rather than acts of life-threatening violence" (Owens, 2017, p. 34). However, what seems to happen is that adolescent behavior is criminalized, and SROs are a convenient means for schools to manage student behavior. In schools where there is

an SRO, students are five times more likely to be charged with disorderly conduct (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Counts et al. (2018) clarified that the increase in the number of arrests was around incidents that were once considered school discipline issues and handled by school teachers and administrators. They pointed to the lack of clarity around the role and purpose of an SRO as an indicator of potential misuse of the position: "If SRO programs are going to be effectively used to impact school climate positively, administrators need to be proactive in implementing the recommendations outlined by government, policing, and educational organizations" (p. 426). Ryan et al. (2018) asserted that with an SRO in a school, there are more significant opportunities for negative interactions, which could lead to youth being sent into the juvenile justice system.

Not all studies found that the presence of an SRO added to the likelihood of criminalized adolescent behavior. May et al. (2018) found no differences in referrals in schools where there is an SRO and in schools without an SRO. However, this only applies when status offenses—defined as "a noncriminal act that is considered a law violation only because of a youth's status as a minor. Typical status offenses include truancy, running away from home, violating curfew, underage use of alcohol, and general ungovernability" (Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Program, 2015)[7]—are removed from consideration. All the same, these offenses represent involvement between SROs and students.

Finally, a study by Pigott et al. (2018) found no correlation between an SRO's presence and an increased chance of removal of students from school or their entrance into the criminal justice system. Instead, they found that "it is the working relationship between SROs and

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[7] Removal of status offenses eliminates all interactions that began with a small infraction that grew into a larger offense. This is the equivalent of doing a study to look at the number of Black and Latinx drivers that are pulled over for one offense, but eliminating all of the interactions that started with something smaller, like having a tail light out or changing lanes without signaling. While the initiation into the interaction may have been different, the end result was similar.

security guards that may reduce the overall levels of serious violence on campuses, not the mere presence of SROs" (p. 136), noting the importance of differentiating between sworn-SROs and non-SRO sworn officers and unsworn security guards. Instead, they credit the increased punitive actions by schools to lack of discretion by school administrators and the use of zero-tolerance policies.

**White Perceptions of Black and Latinx Culture & Behavior and the Value Assigned**

When understanding the impact of SROs on Black girls and Latinas, it is paramount to recognize the beliefs and assumptions that create schools' learning environments and the significant impact of whiteness on the culture that is prominent in schools. The following section explains the cultures present in schools and how those cultures are perpetuated. Additionally, it offers research on Black girls' and Latinas' behaviors that, while culturally appropriate, differ from the white norm. This section presents research that considers the impact of white Eurocentric norms as the standard that depicts learning and respect and the impact of those norms on Black girls and Latinas whose behavior is heavily influenced by their culture. This is not to insinuate that Black girls and Latinas are the only individuals influenced by their culture; everyone's behavior is impacted by his or her own culture. Simultaneously, however, everyone is subject to the guidelines set forth by white culture.

Whiteness is a characteristic that connotes privilege. Based on several definitions, Schooley et al. (2019) defined whiteness as "a multidimensional construct that envelops racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences most prevalently, but not exclusively, related to white people and the privileged position white people embody in a racially hierarchical society" (p. 532). There is cultural capital and symbolic capital in being identified as white (Wallace, 2018), and the concept of whiteness as the norm is encapsulated into almost every aspect of our

society. According to Miller (2015), “They [messages about whiteness as normalized] were, quite literally, *everywhere* sustained by simultaneous messages that conveyed systematic oppression and degradation of blackness through token symbolism and negative emotions" (p. 149, italics in original). Whiteness carries with it a certain amount of power and places white individuals at an advantage. In their study, Diamond and Lewis (2019) found, "White middle-class parents were able to take full advantage of their various forms of capital (financial, cultural, social, and symbolic) to gain advantages for their children, and their children were granted more freedom of movement and the presumption of innocence by virtue of these same forms of capital" (p. 851). Franklin et al. (2006) explained white privilege as the benefits that come with being white. Since an individual's skin color starts at birth, white individuals accrue benefits such as unearned resources or power over their lifetimes, keeping white people in an advantaged space. White privilege is at the center of the inequities found in schools and drives the perpetuation of white, normative culture.

The white normative culture in schools instills expectations, either consciously or subconsciously, for how successful students will behave. In turn, those behaviors equate, to some extent, with who will achieve success and who will not. Moore (2020) asserted, “The mechanisms of white institutional space, historical and contemporary, result in the channeling of institutional material and ideological resources disproportionately to Whites, while simultaneously veiling the mechanisms of racial power that accomplished this racist outcome” (p.1957). Nayak (1997) pointed to whiteness as a practice in establishing a “white norm” and highlights this as a location of power and privilege. Wildhagen (2011) considered how this plays out in the high school setting, noting that even when white students and African American students come from the same socioeconomic backgrounds and hold education in equal value, the

white students are perceived as more committed to the school. Wildhagen stated, "In this way, culture would play a role in the perpetuation of inequality in academic outcomes between White and African American students…" (p. 459). White normative culture is rooted in cultural racism. Franklin et al. (2006) defined cultural racism as how the dominant group's preferences become an inherent part of what is accepted and not accepted: "Cultural racism is the result of the privileged group's power to determine values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices so that they become legitimate expressions of its culture" (p. 11). Cultural racism driving white privilege leads to the components that constitute white normative culture. Diamond and Lewis (2019) recognized how racialized meaning impacts the consistency with which rules are enforced, guaranteeing some students access to rights and privileges while denying others.

One problematic aspect of setting up white behavior as the norm is when the behaviors of other individuals, such as Black girls and Latinas, are then viewed as wrong or negative because they do not fall within these parameters. Epstein et al. (2017) outlined the assumptions made about Black girls when they are compared to white girls who are the same age. Black girls are seen as needing less nurturing and less protection, and being supported and comforted less. Black girls are also seen as more independent and as knowing more about adult topics and sex. These assumptions hold profound implications when considering the interactions of Black girls with others and the repercussions for their actions.

These assumptions have led to stereotypes that have been ingrained in the public through the media. Sapphires and jezebels or hoochies are three conventions placed on Black girls and women fostering pejorative connotations such as tough, angry, bossy, loud, pushy, hostile, confrontational, seductive, promiscuous, hyper-sexualized, or ghetto (Collins, 1987; Morris, 2007; Muhammed & McArthur, 2015; West, 1995). These images of Black women impact Black

girls in greater ways than the stereotypes they elicit. Collins (2019) posited that they are used to keep social hierarchies normalized; controlling images are "part of the fabric of power relations" (p. 79). Regarded through this lens, Black girls in school settings are viewed as disruptive, disobedient, and defiant, thus leading to greater chances of being subject to discipline (Annamma et al., 2019), and more attention being placed on their manners and conduct than their academic growth (Morris, 2007).

White normative culture does not just impact Black individuals. Ramos-Zayas (2001) posited that for the Latinx population, whiteness is seen as a paradox to emulate and mock simultaneously. There is a desire to have the privilege afforded to white people while at the same time thinking that this privilege makes white people bland and boring. Latinx individuals have recognized the privilege of whiteness and argue that "whites have no culture" (Ramos-Zayas, 2001, p. 89). With whiteness as the status quo, Latinas who strive to embrace their culture deal with social repercussions. Assumptions about Latinas rooted in stereotypes are deeply held. Lopez (2013) pointed out that the media portrays negative roles for Latinas, presenting them as maids, housekeepers, and nannies, and characterizes them as submissive and obedient. These characterizations set up a dynamic in which Latinas are more vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation. Hernandez (2009) offered a different view of Latinas, arguing that Latina girls' exaggerated stereotype is conceived in comparison to middle-class, white girls. In this comparison, Latina girls' bodies are seen as "out of control," aligning with the portrayal of Latinas as "emotional" and "sexually excessive" (p. 66). Taylor et al. (2007) outlined dominant narratives of Latina girls that include early sexual activity, early pregnancy, low academic performance, and failure to graduate. They also highlighted stereotypes of "lacking trust, betrayal, and competition in relationships with boys and with one another" (p. 157). Juxtaposing

these two narratives provides little space for Latinas to discover their own identities. When wearing clothes that accent their figures, they are portrayed as cheap rather than as individuals who are embracing their non-normative sexuality (Hernandez, 2009).

With whiteness as the norm, any behaviors of Black girls and Latinas that are culturally appropriate but fall outside of the white norm have the potential to be seen as behavior problems; thus, they can lead to interaction with an SRO. There are repercussions for Black girls and Latinas' behavior being viewed as deviant, especially in the context of SROs' presence in schools, as explored in the literature below.

**The Disciplining of Black girls and Latinas**

The discriminatory pattern of discipline imposed on Black girls and Latinas is not an area of research that has received considerable attention. Typically, Black males and Latinos draw the research focus as they appear to suffer more significant discrimination because they are both punished more often and more harshly. Morris (2007) posited this "leaves young Black women on the sidelines" (p. 490). Crenshaw et al. (2014) demonstrated this position's fallacy as they compared white and Black boys' and girls' suspension rates in Boston and New York. In New York, Black girls are 10 times more likely to be suspended than white girls, while Black boys are five times more likely to be suspended than white boys. In Boston, Black girls are 12 times more likely to be suspended than white girls, while Black boys are 7.4 times more likely to be suspended than white boys. The literature review on Black girls and Latinas' discipline is critical because this discipline is one factor that connects them to the STPP, and it also demonstrates a gap in the research.

Understanding the divergence in disciplinary consequences experienced by Black girls and Latinas and those experienced by white girls or Black males or Latinos is essential to

discerning the discrimination and oppression they face. Girls who are Black or Latina face two kinds of oppression. The first form of oppression is based on their classification as female. The second form of oppression is connected to their identification as either Black or Latina and can be seen in the similarities between the discipline consequences they experienced and those experienced by Black males and Latinos. Very few studies consider both of these kinds of oppression. Black girls are typically punished for not acting more like white girls, speaking to their oppression as women, because this is set as the norm for feminine behavior. Additionally, they are policed in a similar manner to how Black males are policed, speaking to their oppression as members of the Black race (Crenshaw et al., 2014; Wun, 2018).

There is not a great breadth to the studies conducted around the discipline of Black girls and Latinas. In this area of inquiry, there are more studies on Black girls than on Latinas. The first and most prominent part of this section reviews studies of Black girls, and then the few studies that consider both groups, and one study that focuses on Latinas alone.

For Black girls, the most studied area is the subjective nature of the transgression that led to their discipline or the referral for their discipline (Annamma et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2011; Morris & Perry, 2017). The findings indicated that the misdeeds that led to the girls' removal from class or school centered around disruptive behavior, disobedience, aggressive behavior, profanity, defiance, dress code violations, and threatening (Annamma et al., 2019; Morris & Perry, 2017; Wun, 2016, 2018). Morris and Perry (2017) posited that one issue is that the behavior of Black girls violates white, Eurocentric norms of femininity. This deviation from "the norm" places the behaviors of Black girls under scrutiny. In these cases, teachers and administrators have revealed their lack of "understanding of how race and racism affect Black girls' lives" (Annamma et al., 2019, p. 233).

Both teachers and administrators are afforded some level of leniency when it comes to issuing consequences. And while that leniency can be afforded, it often is not afforded to this group of individuals. Additionally, Slate et al., (2016) found disproportionate repercussions: when it came to the consequences issued, there was a clear lack of equity. Slate et al. found that Black girls are subject to a higher rate of out-of-school suspensions and, interestingly, that there was an increase in the number of consequences issued in grades six and nine, both typical transition years for students and a time period when students face a great amount of trepidation. Mizel et al. (2016) found that Black girls, along with boys overall and students who have parents who are less educated, are more likely to be suspended or expelled, but that this could be ameliorated by being prepared for class, spending more time on homework, and having academic aspirations. Each of these factors can be tied to the capital of educated parents; however, what ultimately led Black girls to drop out was a history of grade retention and teacher discipline (Martin & Smith, 2017), which they were more likely to receive than their white classmates. While this study did not go so far as to analyze how the teacher discipline was enacted, other studies have demonstrated that teacher interactions can lead to removal from classes and from school.

Black girls are also less likely to be protected, as one stereotype is that they have a more substantial pain tolerance. Wun (2016a) explained, "Instead of having the privileges and rights granted to whites, which include recognition of their susceptibility and experiences with pain, Black women and girls are positioned to be structurally vulnerable to multiple forms of violence and without protection" (p. 188). This assumption demonstrates Black girls' need to protect themselves; however, this behavior gets them into trouble. Furthermore, Black girls are viewed as oversexualized, so they receive minimal protection from bullying or sexual harassment

because teachers and administrators expect them to stick up for themselves (Wun, 2016a). Instead of defending these students, school personnel expect Black girls to act like adults, and then they also look at them as adults when they punish them.

There is speculation that the acting out of Black girls in schools responds to the violence they encounter outside of school. Wun (2016a) argued the way that Black girls act inside of school is predicated, in part, by the challenges they face outside of school, such as poverty, sexual violence, and domestic violence, combined with an environment that antagonizes them. Their responses to this irritation are seen as disobedient and defiant. For schools to fail to address these issues and punish the girls for their reaction to it is a deficiency on the school's part. Wun (2016a) stated,

> ...according to the girls' narratives, behaviors that were being characterized as forms of disobedience were their way of demonstrating that they had or were suffering some type of violence outside of school. In other words, the girls were being disciplined and punished for the ways that they navigated and responded to exposures to community and interpersonal violence. (p. 191)

Morris (2007) argued that Black girls have learned to be assertive because they are not afforded the same kind of protection from adults as girls of other races.

Studies that included both Black girls and Latinas found some similar results to what has been reported from studies containing only Black subjects. Rocque and Snellings (2018) included Black and Latinx subjects in their study, and their findings confirmed that both Black girls and Latinas receive disproportionate consequences. They determined that Black girls and Latinas who are viewed as unsuccessful will be pushed into the criminal justice system. Wun (2018) determined that for Black girls and Latinas, schools are sites of control and this causes them to become angry and resist. The resistance is potentially what can lead them into altercations with teachers that get them removed from school. Dunning-Lozano (2018) and Wun

(2016a) found that schools use different strategies of surveillance with Black girls and Latinas to create docile bodies. And when they are punished, the consequences are punitive and the interventions are built through the “rehabilitative methods premised on the discursive construction of ‘deficient’ students and families” (Dunning-Lozano, 2018, p. 326).

Black girls and Latinas’ punishment for behaviors in schools is also seen as a way to control their behavior and make them act more "white." Dunning-Lozano (2018) indicated that in the school in which she completed her research, when Black female and Latina students arrived, certain assumptions were made about them: they required disciplinary intervention, knew everything about drugs, knew nothing about science, required social restraining, were weak-minded, and needed to learn to contain their bodies in open spaces. She further established that when she looked at the relationship between intensified surveillance, enforcement, and rehabilitative focus of the school, she recognized a devotion to transforming Black and Latino students who were seen as culturally deficient into obedient individuals. Wun (2018) stated, "Through panopticon structures such as prisons and schools, individuals learn to internalize dominant norms of 'docility' and obedience" (p. 426). Morris (2005) posited, "When [discipline is] directed at historically marginalized student groups, such discipline may only perpetuate their marginalization and inequality in the educational system" (p. 41).

Specifically for Black female and Latinas girls, it is essential to look at how their race converges with their gender and impacts the discipline they receive. According to Goodkind and Miller (2006), "...the focus on gender, without attention to how it intersects with race, ethnicity, and class, risks further marginalizing the young women in the institution. Such an approach also fails to examine gender, racial, and class hierarchies and the social construction of girls'

delinquency" (p. 60). They reiterated, however, that the juvenile justice system has historically worked to maintain gendered norms.

Finally, one study focused solely on the discipline of Latinx girls. Peguero and Shekarkhar (2011) found that Latinx girls do not misbehave any more than white students; however, third-generation Latinx students specifically are more likely than their white counterparts to be punished.

Black girls and Latinas are held to a different standard than white girls by teachers and administrators. Additionally, behaviors that are necessary for keeping themselves safe outside of school get them into trouble inside of school, impacting their relationships with teachers and administrators. Ultimately, these students are punished at a higher rate than white girls.

**Conclusion**

This literature review examines the role of SROs in the discipline of Black girls and Latinas. The introduction explains the political landscape in which police presence in schools has increased. The second section outlined the role of the SRO in schools and the impact that this has on the culture and climate of schools around discipline. The next section contains information about the influence of discriminatory discipline on the STPP. Then, the disproportionality of discipline is analyzed, followed by a review of the way that white people perceive and judge Black and Latinx culture and behavior. Finally, the literature review concludes with a review of the discipline of Black girls and Latinas.

The literature review demonstrates an overall gap in the literature on Black girls and Latinas and the disproportionality in the discipline they receive in school. There is more to learn, and my study provides useful insights into the retrospective sensemaking of Black girls and

Latinas regarding SROs and security guards within high schools. The conceptual framework, as described in the next chapter, will offer a distinctive contribution.

# Chapter 3

# Conceptual Framework

## Introduction

In this chapter, I examine how the lens of white institutional spaces (Moore, 2005), multiracial feminism (Childers-Mckee & Bettez, 2015; Gardner, 2009; Thompson, 2002; Zinn & Dill, 1996), also referred to as multicultural feminism, Foucault's Theory of Discipline (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011; Foucault, 1977; Johnson, 2014; Petersen, 2020), and Sensemaking Theory (Dhaliwal, 2023; Weick et al., 2005) frame my study. In the first section, I explore the development of white institutional spaces through the social construct of race (Bryant et al., 2022; Heere, 2014; Lopez, 2006; Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003; Smedley & Smedley, 2005), the legal construct of race (Lopez, 2006), whiteness (Ahmed, 2009; Hyland, 2005; Lipsitz, 2019; Martin et al., 1996; Mueller, 2020; Welton et al., 2019), and white spaces (Anderson, 2015; Brunsma et al., 2020; Frankenbert, 1993: Garner, 2007; Helmuth, 2019; Hill, 1999). The impact of white institutional spaces is significant to my study because it is the foundation on which education is provided. The behaviors accepted in schools are rooted in white norms and the concept of whiteness as property (Harris, 1993). This ties to my second section of where I will address multiracial feminism. To do this effectively, I will review the work of pioneers in multiracial feminism and exhibit the common research threads and nuances offered by the researchers. Multiracial feminism outlines the effect that culture contributes to the actions and behaviors of Black females and Latinas. Schools are racialized and gendered spaces. Juxtaposing the behaviors of Black females and Latinas to behaviors espoused in white institutional spaces leads to the third section of my conceptual framework where I focus on Foucault's Theory of Discipline and the use of discipline to create and maintain docile

individuals. The final section will focus on the Theory of Sensemaking and how individuals make sense of their experiences. This section will outline the ways in which my participants could perceive their experiences.

Ultimately, schools focus on students' behaviors and the need to control them have come to include the presence of SROs and security guards, adding to the carceral state of schools. While schools have always functioned as white spaces where what is considered acceptable behavior is set by white norms, Black girls and Latinas are more significantly impacted and must make sense of their experiences in this context.

**The Power of Whiteness & White Institutional Spaces**

The concept of race is a fairly new development; however, it was used to justify colonialism and settler colonialism as Europeans began to occupy space in Northern America. In the 1500s, Europeans used the terms "white", "race", and "slave". Upon their arrival to North America, these terms evolved as the American society developed (Historical Foundations of Race). From there, race was ultimately realized as a way that 17th and 18th century society could be structured to categorize Africans as slaves (Lopez, 2006; Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003; Smedley & Smedley, 2005).

Although many people continue to believe that race is a biologically constructed, the concept of race is generated socially (Bryant et al., 2022; Heere, 2014; Lopez, 2006; Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003; Smedley & Smedley, 2005), legally (Lopez, 2006), and politically (Diamond & Lewis, 2015; Omi & Winant, 2015). Omi and Winant (2015) classify race as a "master category" (p. 106) as it is "a fundamental concept that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the United States" (pgs. 106-107).

“White” is a racial category; however, being white holds with it power and capital that is sometimes referred to as whiteness. Whiteness is an elusive concept. Frankenberg (1993) defines whiteness as

> a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination. Naming "whiteness" displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance. Among the effects on white people both of race privilege and of the dominance of whiteness are their seeming normativity, their structured invisibility (p. 6).

Whiteness is multidimensional, and so present as an entity it is almost palpable. It protects the power associated with being white and maintains social inequalities (Welton et al, 2019); it is a form of property that benefits the possessor both with materials and with social advantages. When possessed, whiteness affords the beneficiary the ability to act in a way that denies racial discrimination (Lipsitz, 2019; Mueller, 2020), and it is “an orientation that puts certain things within reach. By objects, we would include not just physical objects, but also styles, capacities, aspirations, techniques, habits” (Ahmed, 2009, p. 154). Whiteness affords privileges and assumptions, like affluence, to being white (Lewis & Diamond, 2015), and those who are white do not feel the need to self-label as they see themselves as the norm (Martin et al., 1996). Instead, white people appear to be oblivious to or “not to think about whiteness, or about norms, behaviors, experiences, or perspectives that are white specific” (Flagg, 1998, p. 957). Flagg refers to this as the transparency phenomenon, and it gives white people leverage because it requires people of color to assimilate. The only criteria necessary to obtain all of the benefits of whiteness is to appear to have white skin.

Whiteness detracts from those who are required to negotiate it. Black individuals, and other individuals of color, are positioned in relation to white individuals; this dynamic requires

them to maneuver in ways the white individuals do not. According to Nayak (1997), "Although Black respondents demonstrate considerable expertise when engaging with whiteness, this process can still incur psychological costs" (p. 58). The juxtaposition of comfort to discomfort is how it feels to mediate whiteness from a position of "other." W.E.B Du Bois described this as "one feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 68). It is a balancing of worlds that white people do not need to endure.

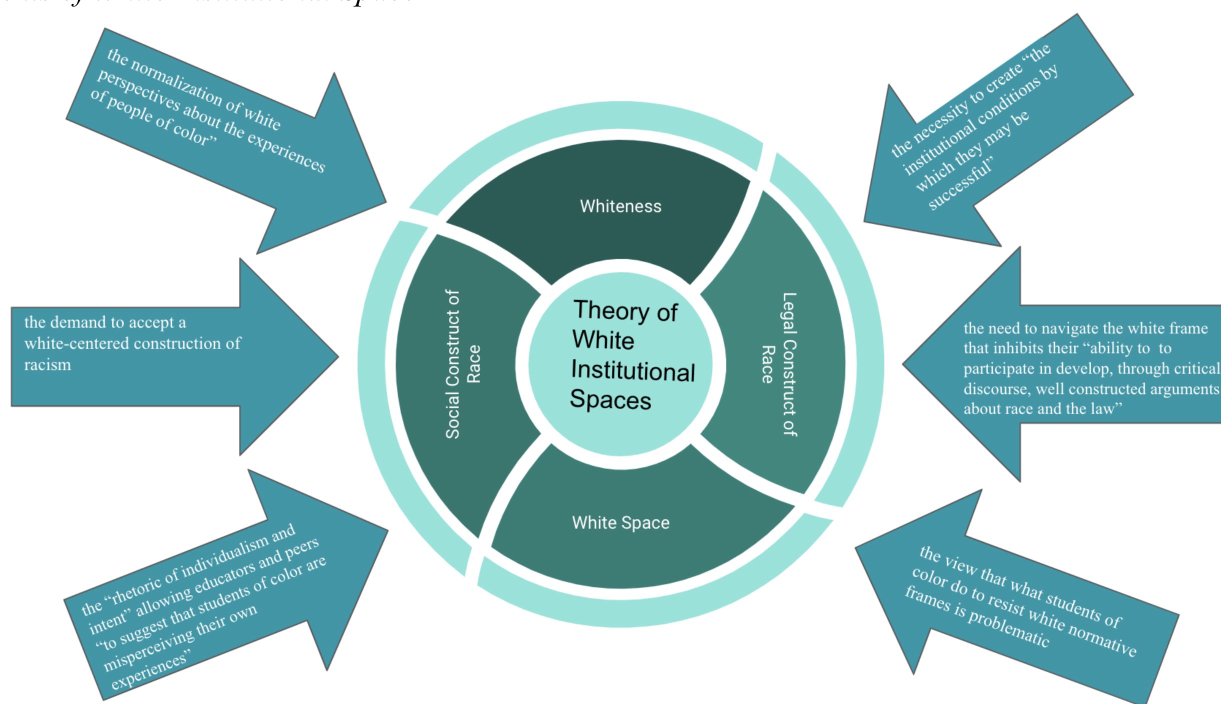
Once race is established, it can be used to characterize who occupies a space and who does not. "White space" is a term with a meaning that is multilayered. It is a social space, and one where "black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalized when present" (Anderson, 2015, p. 10). It is also where white people feel comfortable and invisible but where persons of color are visible or hypervisible, marginalized, and are monitored (Hill, 1999). White space is not a stable or a fixed location, and it can be created wherever white people are located (Helmuth, 2019). Anderson (2015) points out that while white people can avoid black space, Black people and other individuals of color are forced to navigate white space. Furthermore, the inclusion of a person of color into white space does not change the designation; white spaces cannot be altered solely by the presence of people of color.

In the 2017/2018 school year, approximately 79% of teachers in the U.S. were white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), making schools white spaces. Rooted in whiteness, what occurs in white spaces secures the interests of white people and keeps people of color in subordinate positions (Brunsma et al, 2020). This has the potential to impact individuals of color who are being educated by white teachers. While some white teachers of students of color self-report that they are good teachers to their students, this is not always the case. Hyland

(2005) noted that taking on roles such as that of a benefactor or a radical, or denial of one's heritage and whiteness to secure access to another culture, are ways that white teachers of students of color have a negative impact. The perpetuation of specific belief systems through assumptions, acting in ways that demonstrate and entrench whiteness as a race of power, denying race through the use of a colorblind lens, and acting in ways that are seen as radical yet imbibed with self-doubt are all ways that white teachers can be damaging to their students of color. The Theory of White Institutional Space considers all of these notions. It is “a theoretical explication of organizations and institutions focusing on how advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, and meaning and identity get patterned in terms of a distinction between Whiteness and non-Whiteness (Emberick and Moore, 2020, p. 1940).

According to Moore’s (2008) theory, the components incorporated in white institutional space are: “the normalization of white perspectives about the experiences of people of color” (p. 118), the demand to accept a white-centered construction of racism (p. 120), the “rhetoric of individualism and intent” allowing educators and peers “to suggest that students of color are misperceiving their own experiences” (p. 139), the necessity to create “the institutional conditions by which they may be successful” (p. 2), the view that what students of color do to resist white normative frames is problematic (p. 143), and the need to navigate the white frame that inhibits their “ability to to participate in develop, through critical discourse, well constructed arguments about race and the law” (p. 152) (Figure 1). As these components converge, the resulting product creates a space where white individuals are slated to succeed while individuals of color are more apt to struggle.

Figure 1
*Components of White Institutional Space*




While Moore identified these factors in elite law schools, the concept can be applied to all educational spaces as educational institutions are composed of comparable elements.

> The mechanisms of White institutional space are so deeply constitutive of the infrastructure of U.S. organizations and institutions that they become tacit, implicitly understood without conscious thought, normalizing White superiority and successful attainment of institutional resources and characterizing non-White inferiority as normal in these social spaces (Embrick & Moore, 2020, p. 1941).

Additionally, elite law schools have historically excluded people of color which resulted in the ability of white students to acquire both economic and political power. Moreso, the absence of individuals of color allowed the "norms, values, and ideological frameworks that organize these institutions" (p. 27) to be developed solely by white individuals. The same is true for the education system (Moore, 2007).

Whiteness and White Institutional Spaces provides a framework for this study as it provides a lens through which all schools are constructed. As such, schools are spaces where students of color are considered an “other” and, therefore, must learn to navigate. The Black females and Latinas in this study would have had to navigate both whiteness and White Institutional Spaces during, at least, their time in school.

**Multiracial Feminism**

In hindsight, the feminist movement transpired in three waves: the first in the mid-1800s through the 1920s; the second during the 1960s and 1970s; and the third wave, the wave that actively included the concept of race, commencing in the mid-1980s and continuing to the present day (Gardner, 2009). The first wave of feminism dealt with eliminating economic, social, political barriers for women, but it focused primarily on white women's concerns. Black women were included, but their needs were not prioritized. The second wave of feminism focused on white women's dissatisfaction with being trapped in domestic roles. The third wave of feminism, the feminism that was brought forth by white women, contains the beginnings of multiracial feminism as women of different cultures brought to the table the impact of their race on their oppression as women. While women of color participated in the first two waves of feminism, it was not until the third wave of feminism that their oppression, experienced because of race and class in addition to gender, was openly recognized by the movement that was recognized as “the” feminist movement (Gardner, 2009). In this regard, the first two waves of feminism could be identified as white feminism.

In all actuality, at the same time that feminism was coming onto the landscape, Black feminism also established itself on a parallel plane. With the recognition that the feminist movement, driven by white women, focused predominantly on the needs of the white woman,

Black women acknowledged that their needs were not the same, and "thus, the historical evolution of Black feminism in the United States not only developed out of Black women's antagonistic and dialectical engagement with White women but also out of their need to ameliorate conditions for empowerment on their own terms" (Taylor, 1998, p. 235). Each wave of the (white) feminist movement was matched by a wave of the Black feminist movement. While white women could focus solely on women's rights, Black women focused on both the rights of women and the rights of Black people. Black feminist thought required looking at race, class, and gender as components of oppression that are linked to one another; however, it did not start with one element, such as gender, and then add to it other components like race, age, sexual orientation, social class, and religion. Instead, Black feminist thought looked at the combination of how each factor is part of the structure of domination. Black feminist thought also offered Black women a new perspective on their experiences (Collins, 1990).

Like the Black feminist movement, the Chicana feminist movement was also inspired by Chicana girls' oppression both as women and as members of the Hispanic population in a quest for both gender and racial equality. However, this stance put them at odds with some members of the Chicano movement (Garcia, 1997).

Various races situate gender differently. Because my study deals with both Black women and Latinx women, the use of multiracial feminism[8] embodies both populations. Built from social feminist thinking combined with race and ethnic studies (Zinn & Dill, 1996), multiracial feminism provides a lens that acknowledges a system of domination in which power and privilege are associated with both race and gender. For that reason, as Zinn and Dill (1996)

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[8]In this study, the term *multiracial feminism* will be used instead of *multicultural feminism* to emphasize the impact of race as a power system "that interacts with other structured inequalities to shape genders" (Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 323).

explained, racial oppression and gender oppression "offer new theoretical directions for feminist thought" (p. 321). Zinn and Dill further stated, "Our focus on race stresses the social construction of differently situated social groups and their varying degrees of advantage and power" (p. 324). In addition to race and gender, multiracial feminism realizes the impact of class on hierarchies' social construction that impacts power structures: "Multiracial feminism is the heart of an inclusive women's liberation struggle. The race-class-gender-sexuality-nationality framework through which multiracial feminism operates encompasses and goes way beyond liberal, radical, and socialist feminist priorities-and it always has" (Thompson, 2002, p. 349).

The significance of the power associated with race and gender is a critical factor in comprehending how Black and Latinx girls are oppressed by being female and being individuals of color. To conflate race and gender under the same umbrella of oppression without providing deference to each characteristic's oppression negates the nuances of oppression that each component confronts independently. Zinn and Dill (1996) offered the following definition of multicultural racism:

> This perspective (multicultural racism) is an attempt to go beyond the mere recognition of diversity and difference among women to examine structures of domination, specifically the importance of race in understanding the social construction of gender. Despite the varied concerns and multiple intellectual stances that characterize women of color's feminisms, they share an emphasis on race as a primary force situating genders differently. It is the centrality of race, institutional racism, and struggles against racial oppression that links the various feminist perspectives within this framework. Together they demonstrate that racial meanings offer new theoretical directions for feminist thought. (p. 321)

As Black and Latinx girls are oppressed by both their race and gender, recognizing one without the other provides an incomplete analysis.

Through the agency of multiracial feminism, women of diverse races can illuminate the stereotypes associated with their race and gender, such as Black women as matriarchal or

hypersexual, Asian women as passive and exotic, Latinx women as associated with "immigration issues, challenged patriarchal gender roles, and critiqued binary (black/white) conceptions of racial politics," and Native women "concentrating on sovereignty and land rights, genocide, sterilization, and cultural exploitation" (Childers-McKee & Bettez, 2015, p. 2). Due to the construction of these conventions, the landscape onto which the discipline of Black and Latinx girls transpires needs to be acknowledged.

Additionally, multiracial feminism recognizes that the intersection of race and gender produces both opportunity and oppression when combined with class: "Race and class differences are crucial, we argue, not as individual characteristics (such as being fat) but insofar as they are primary organizing principles of a society which locates and positions groups within that society's opportunity structures" (Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 322). A consideration of each characteristic of race, gender/sexuality, and class determines where an individual can fall on the opportunity scale (see Figure 2). In the image, white, affluent males are at the high end of the hierarchy, indicating they receive the most significant amount of access to opportunity. Black, transgender, low-income women are provided as an example of the characteristics that may receive the least amount of access to opportunity. However, this carries assumptions about which groups hold the least amount of capital, and these assumptions are a limitation of the visual. It also provides a more cumulative depiction than the marginalization embodied in the "double jeopardy" theory or model, which posits that an accumulation in the number of categories in which a person is marginalized increases the extent to which they are disadvantaged. While this does hold in some instances, it also negates the influence of power and social contexts (Carbado, 2013; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Therefore, there are occurrences where the cumulative impact of marginalization will be less for someone with more "categories" than someone with

fewer but whose categories carry more weight in the social construct in which they are enmeshed. This is another limitation of the visual; however, Transgender Law Center (n.d.) cited Black, Transgender women as one of the most oppressed groups due to their gender, color, and sexuality. They stated, "Black Trans Women & Black Trans Femmes experience disproportionately higher rates of housing insecurity, police violence, and under/unemployment due to discrimination based on their perceived gender and race" (para. 2). Nonetheless, multiracial feminism incorporates all races, classes, and genders to provide these distinctions (Zinn & Dill, 1996).

These three elements—race, class, and gender—create a hierarchy through which opportunity is afforded. Separately addressing each component acknowledges how white women also oppress women of color. Multiracial feminism further considers the differences in life experiences that impact "alternative ways of understanding the social world and the experience of different groups of women within it" (Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 328).

The term *gender* implies the binary genders of male and female, which are recognized by society and therefore afforded privilege and capital. While Zinn & Dill (1996) acknowledged the impact of gender, with males afforded more capital than females, they do not discuss the role of sexuality and the capital that is associated with an individual's sexual identity and gender identity. Diamond (2002) acknowledged that "gender" and "sex" are used interchangeably in common lingo, but he notes differences between the two terms. Identity provides the lens through which a person affiliates him- or herself: "Sexual identity speaks to the way one views him- or herself as male or female...Gender identity is recognition of the perceived social gender attributed to a person" (p. 323). For this study's purpose, and incorporated into its visuals, I

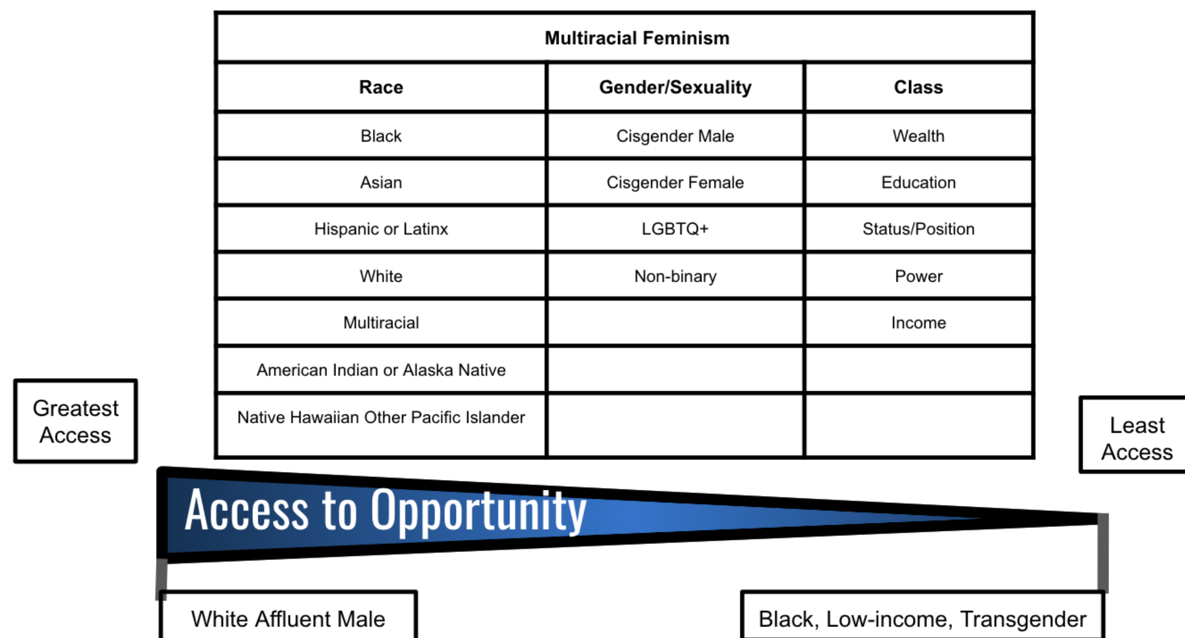
include the notion of sexuality in the grouping of gender. Figure 2 provides a representation of genders and sexualities in that grouping, but it is not all-inclusive.

The capital that is associated with gender identity and sexual identity is a factor that is not addressed in multiracial feminism; therefore, to fully embrace the spectrum of individuals possible within this study and to acknowledge the capital associated with cisgendered heterosexuality, I will expand the category of gender to acknowledge its impact by including categories other than cisgender male or cisgender female. Furthermore, I will include the term *cisgender* to acknowledge this identity's impact in combination with males and females. The four categories included within this study—cisgender male, cisgender female, LGBTQ+, and non-binary—are not inclusive of all sexual identities and gender identities. However, they currently encompass a significant number of designations and demonstrate an understanding of the capital associated with these identities.

There is also capital associated with an individual's class. Class is a descriptor of an individual's position in society and is prescribed by more than just their fiscal value. Other elements of class include an individual's education, status or position, power, and income. In this category, the components carry capital on their own, and they also increase in value as they are combined (Zinn & Dill, 1996). Status and position refer to the type of job a person has and the societal significance of the assignment. Power refers to the ability to use his or her resources to make an action occur.

Figure 2

*Factors of Race, Gender and Sexualty, and Class*



| Multiracial Feminism | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Race** | **Gender/Sexuality** | **Class** |
| Black | Cisgender Male | Wealth |
| Asian | Cisgender Female | Education |
| Hispanic or Latinx | LGBTQ+ | Status/Position |
| White | Non-binary | Power |
| Multiracial | | Income |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | | |
| Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander | | |



Multiracial feminism offers a critical lens to this study because its coverage of race, gender, and class occurs on a spectrum that accommodates all individuals, including white, affluent males. Furthermore, sexual identity and gender identity will provide a more transparent identification of the capital or lack of capital afforded to each category. Ultimately, this lens acknowledges the oppression my participants face as women and then as women of color. Each has its own challenges, and Black girls and Latinas need to learn to navigate this terrain in order to survive.

**Foucault's Theory of Discipline**

The role of discipline in society has changed with time; what began as "an eye for an eye" has evolved to the current configuration of discipline using power to conform and maintain docile individuals. Through his Theory of Discipline, Foucault described how the creation of docile individuals can be achieved through observation and examination; however, it is essential to note the power and control that is appropriated in these acts. Johnson (2014) asserted that "Foucault's history of the prison provides a grid in which to understand the everyday policing of the public" (p. 7).

According to Foucault (1977), a docile individual is a body "that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136), and there are three fundamental facets of creating a docile individual. The first is "the scale of control" (p. 136), where the treatment of the individual is broken into independent mechanisms that results in "an infinitesimal power over the active body" (p. 137). The second factor is looking at what needs to be controlled, and that is "the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization" (p. 137). Finally, the third element is the method used. Close supervision creates an environment of constant intimidation. Together, these methods can be called disciplines, and disciplines are necessary for creating docile bodies. Foucault (1977) explained discipline:

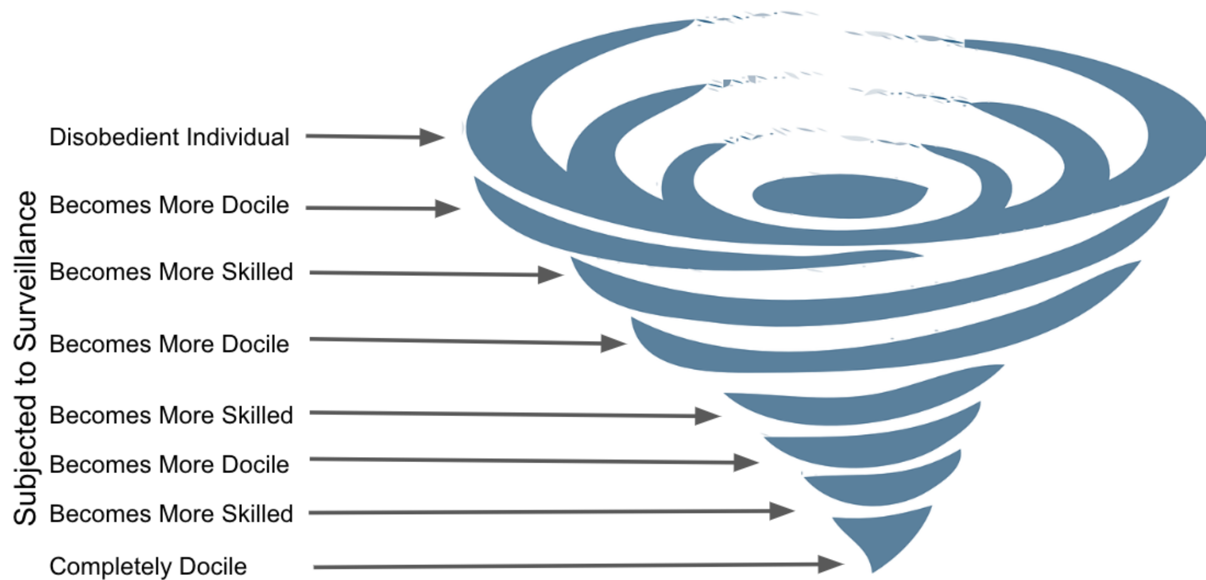
> In short, it (discipline) dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude,' a 'capacity,' which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (p. 138)

The three factors that make up discipline (scale of control, identification of what needs to be controlled, and method of control) are cemented in place through the use of the examination. Schrag (1999) pondered the role of the examination for Foucault and determined that it is the "very model of disciplinary power" (p. 377). It is a way to make those previously invisible

individuals visible, but visible in a hierarchy. Examinations demonstrate the connection between power and truth. The examinations hold power because they demonstrate the truths about individuals by which they can be ranked, and they set expectations. It is through examination that those in power identify individuals who need to be disciplined. Individuals who are more docile are afforded greater access to assets; the assets they receive then allows them to be more successful on the examination (Foucault, 1977).

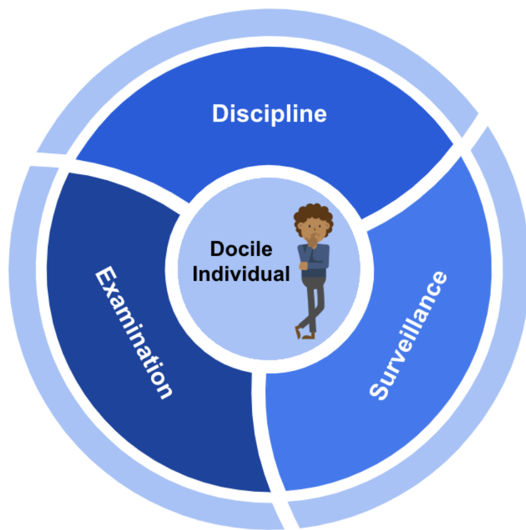
For the individual who is required to be docile, there is a cyclical dynamic at play whereby they learn and become more skilled, which requires some level of subjection; they become more docile, and as they become more docile, they learn more and become more skilled (Figure 3). The funnel's top is where there is little to no control, and an individual enters into the system. As she becomes more docile, she becomes more controlled until she reaches a point of being wholly docile and contained. For example, a student who sits quietly in her seat tends to be provided more latitude and freedom because of her behavior. The greater latitude she is provided, the more access she has to information and opportunities. As she has access to more opportunities, she becomes more docile in order to maintain access to those opportunities. Ultimately, the system is all about controlling the subject.

Figure 3
*Cycle to a Docile Individual*




Discipline is a crucial factor in generating docile individuals. Foucault (1977) defined disciplines as "methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docile-utility" (p. 137). He outlined four techniques of discipline that impact the behavior of those upon whom it is afflicted: "it draws up tables; it prescribes movement; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges 'tactics'" (p. 167). The tactics establish necessary activities, the magnitude of which are ascertained by the combination of activities constructed to create the most intense form of discipline. Like a recipe, the ultimate result is determined by the ingredients, and thus, can be altered to fit an individual need (Figure 4). Therefore, discipline does not look the same for every individual; instead, it is crafted specifically for its desired result for a specific individual. However, discipline can be imparted en masse, and it can be accomplished, in part, through surveillance.

Figure 4
*Ingredients for a Docile Individual*




At one point, physical intimidation was utilized to create docile people. At the start of the 18th century, punishments became less physical when crimes became less violent and instead focused more on property (Foucault, 1977). During this transition, the focus of creating docile individuals transferred to surveillance, which Foucault (1977) described as "a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power (p. 175). With the movement from physical intimidation to psychological intimidation, society saw a growth of infrastructure designs that enable the observation of others. Using prisons as a model, hospitals, asylums, working-class housing estates, and schools were set up using a format that most effectively allowed surveillance. Schools were prime institutions to use surveillance as a means to create docile bodies. Foucault (1977) noted that surveillance is a key aspect of elementary teaching: "A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (p. 176). It is not just the

students who are surveilled. In this system, there is the potential and possibility of every entity being observed:

> Students are observed by teachers, who are observed by principals, who are watched in turn by school boards, which fall under the jurisdiction of provincial or state departments of education. From this framework, a hierarchy of observation is created to maintain power and ensure docile bodies and increased utility at all levels. (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011, p. 154)

The structure of observations creates a hierarchy of power. Policies are ways of maintaining supervision and surveillance even when there is not a person there to monitor. If its subjects see the policy as fair and reasonable, they will likely follow it and even defend its existence to others (Petersen, 2020).

The success of a docile individual who is under surveillance can be determined through the examination, "a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them" (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Examinations permit a different type of surveillance as well as providing an understanding of what has been learned. Examination "both confirms students are under scrutiny and establishes a normalizing judgment on their actions or abilities" (Bowdridge & Blenkinsop, 2011, p. 156). It provides a consistent inspection of learning. Foucault (1977) indicated that the examination is used to honor individuals for their "own aptitudes or abilities" (p. 190) while allowing the individuals to be compared to the group to determine where they rank in relation to their peers and where gaps exist. Foucault explained, "In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification" (p. 187). Schools are locations where examinations are used continuously: "It (school) became less and less a question of jousts in which pupils pitched their forces against one another and increasingly a

perpetual comparison of each and all that made it possible both to measure and to judge" (Foucault, 1977, p. 186). After examinations, individuals can be compared to one another.

To allow surveillance and examination in the least intrusive way, the school's physical layout must be taken into consideration. Foucault (1977) indicated that the panopticon's strength is to set up the potential for constant surveillance but without the need to monitor continually. The fear of being observed sets up the power dynamic. According to Foucault, "Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable" (p. 201). Additionally, the dynamic created through surveillance puts the individual in the place of monitoring themselves if they were being observed. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) posited that social institutions like schools, prisons, hospitals, and the military transmit, normalize, and internalize power and are set up to serve dominant interests by socializing those within the social institution into compliance. They argued, "Those who have the motivation, authority, and resources to design, institute and enforce the panopticon are those who hold institutional power in society" (pp. 75–76). This drive for power highlights Foucault's Theory of Discipline's ultimate function—to obtain or maintain the structure of power currently in place.

Using Foucault's Theory of Discipline as a conceptual framework provides a lens that demonstrates the importance of discipline and being docile in a Eurocentric society. I posit that the concepts behind the importance of docile bodies, surveillance, and the examination will be prevalent in Black girls' and Latinas' experiences.

**Sensemaking Theory**

While there are a variety of definitions of sensemaking, for the purpose of my conceptual framework, I will use the definition provided by Weick et al (2005): "Sensemaking involves the

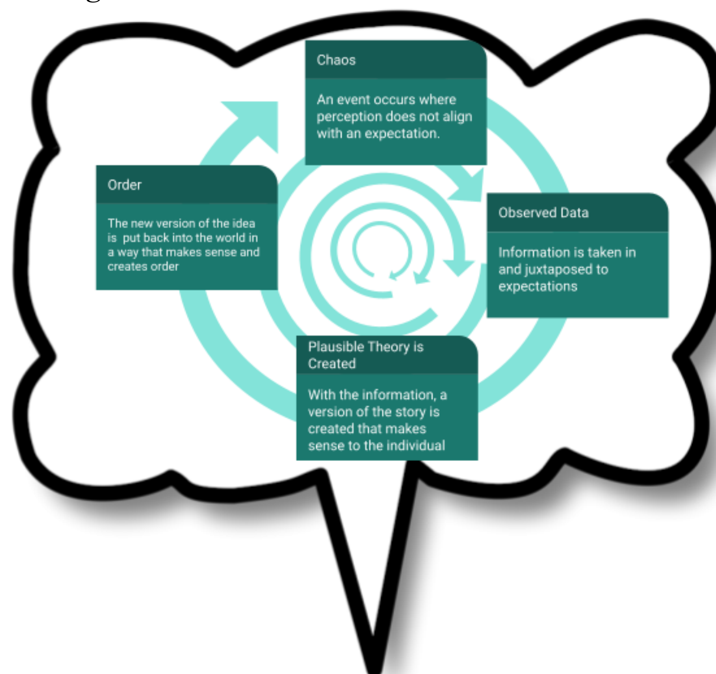
ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing" (p. 409).

The ultimate purpose of sensemaking is to create order out of chaos through understanding. There is a focus on the action that transpires and an individual's interpretation of the action rather than an evaluation of the action. Sensemaking occurs as an individual processes information, and their perceptions of the experience differs from their expectation of the experience (Weick et al, 2005). It is a way to interpret the lack of connection between perception and expectation. The creation of the idea that bridges these two entities is an invention that permits the individual to explain the lack of connection. "Research shows that sensemaking is a social and constructed process" (Dhaliwal, 2023, p. 96). When sensemaking occurs for an individual, what they experience is abbreviated from the process that is implemented with purpose in an organization. Additionally, individuals may not fully recognize that they are engaged in sensemaking.

The process starts with an event that does not make sense to the individual. Their perception of the event does not align with their expectations. From there, they take in information to help them make sense of their experience. Then, they create a plausible theory of the event. The process concludes as they put that idea out into the world in order to create order, and the process starts over again (Figure 5).

Figure 5

*Process for Sensemaking*




There are no experiences that are too insignificant for sensemaking. According to Weick et al. (2005), "To work with the idea of sensemaking is to appreciate that smallness does not equate with insignificance. Small structures and short moments can have large consequences" (p. 410). The smallest of actions has the potential to lead to sensemaking that galvanized significant change.

Sensemaking is key to my study as it is the framework through which my participants shared their experiences. It is also important to note that the sensemaking of the participants is retroactive. The girls would have made sense of the interaction they experienced in the moment, but as they recalled their experiences, they made sense of the memory of the experience again.

**Conclusion**

My theoretical framework combines the concept of Whiteness with Theory of White Institutional Space and merges them with Multiracial Feminism, Foucault's Theory of

Discipline, and Sensemaking Theory. The backdrop of the conceptual framework lies in the components that make up the theory of white institutional spaces: the social construct of race, the legal construct of race, whiteness, and white spaces. Through institutional white spaces, an environment is created by white individuals that build upon white norms. Students of color are made to feel like outsiders and are forced to navigate this terrain. Over the course of their education, it goes to reason that the terrain becomes more familiar; however, there is no account for the toll the navigation takes on the individual. Diamond and Gomez (2023) argue that white supremacy and anti-Black racism are part of school organizations and they come to fruition when organizational routines are implemented.

While navigating the terrain of White Institutional Space, Black females and Latinas are also combating oppression. There needs to be an understanding that the participants fall under two different umbrellas of oppression. The first is that of a female and the second is that of either a Black female or a Latina. It is impossible to discuss the impact of one oppression without recognizing the other oppression. Built from social feminist thinking combined with race and ethnic studies (Zinn & Dill, 1996), multiracial feminism provides a lens that acknowledges a system of domination in which power and privilege are associated with both race and gender. For that reason, as Zinn and Dill (1996) explained, racial oppression and gender oppression "offer new theoretical directions for feminist thought" (p. 321).

Foucault’s Theory of Discipline incorporates the ways in which schools work to obtain docile individuals through surveillance, discipline, and examination. The inclusion of SROs and security guards into schools provides the necessary element of policing, or surveillance, to ensure that students are compliant, or disciplined. They have a position of power, and they are looking to maintain an environment that demonstrates order and control. Those who prescribe to

this arrangement are successful and are permitted greater autonomy. Those who do not are policed more intensely and punished more heavily.

The lens of these theories are viewed through the Theory of Sensemaking that recognizes that sensemaking is how the individual who is entrenched in all of these concepts makes sense of what is happening around her. She takes an element of chaos and observes data. From there, she creates a plausible theory and puts it out in the world to create order. If the response to what she puts out does not sit well, it again creates chaos, and the process starts over again.

# Chapter 4:

# Research Design

## Methodological Approach

I conducted a qualitative study to determine how Black girls and Latinas made sense of the perceptions and interactions that they had with SROs and security guards. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained, “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their worlds” (p. 6). A qualitative approach allowed me to discern how my participants made sense of the interactions they experienced. With the incorporation of my conceptual framework and my research questions, my qualitative inquiry afforded me the opportunity to hear the impressions of the seven Black women and two Latinas I interviewed to determine how they made sense of what they experienced and how they explained what they believed to be the rationale behind that treatment.

## Methodology

The qualitative study is designed to make sense of the perceptions and interactions that Black girls and Latinas have of the SROs and security guards, their perceptions of the treatment they observe their classmates receiving, the ways in which they adjusted their behaviors,and consequences of being their authentic selves in response to SROs and security guards. I use Hermeneutic Phenomenology as the research strategy. Phenomenology looks at "the experience itself and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, pp. 25-26). "Hermeneutics is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of our being in the world and how our different ways of being in the world are connected to our understanding of things" (Kakkori, 2010, p. 26). This methodology aligns with the study's goal,

which is to consider how Black girls and Latinas understand their interactions with SROs and security guards, explain how they make sense of these interactions, and ascertain how they engage in their world because of these interactions.

The study is a critical inquiry with the goal to "critique and challenge, to transform, and to analyze power relations" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 59). Because of the dynamic between the actors (e.g., SROs and students, security guards and students), it is essential to understand the impact of power each actor has in the relationship to determine if that, in part, drives the actions of one or both parties. “Critical action research studies are specifically about attempting to challenge power relations based on societal structure of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or religion” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 56). In this study, the factors of race and gender are most specifically addressed. The SROs and security guards have power over the Black girls and Latinas who are high school students. Critique is key in a critical inquiry. There is a desire to understand what is happening and to make changes to create a “more just society” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 60).

In this study, I treated each subject as its own case study with the end result being a multi-case study or collective case study approach. Therefore, my study is a critical case study. I used multiple case studies to understand what each participant experienced as an isolated event. Multiple case studies can be used to show different perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Then, I looked for themes across the case studies, not to establish transferability of my study, but to understand if students’ experiences in one learning environment had any similarities to a student in a completely different learning environment. As the setting for each of the experiences was in a school, the environments have a multitude of similarities but they are also different. Again, this

does not mean that the outcome of my study is transferable. Instead, any similar outcomes allow us to look at the experiences of my participants.

While there are five physical locations from which participants matriculated, each of the nine participants is considered her own case study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), “One technique for assessing the boundedness of the topic is to ask how finite the data collection would be; that is, whether there is a limit to the number of people involved who could be interviewed or a finite time for observation” (p. 38). The participants graduated in different years. Each year contained different experiences and challenges. There were potentially different actors present in each of the years. All of these factors would impact the climate and culture of a district thus changing the setting of the case study. Yin (2014) indicated that a case study has two parts to its definition. The first part outlines that the case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context” and also that “the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 85). In my study, the contemporary phenomenon is the presence of SROs and security guards in school that lead to interactions. From those interactions, the Black women and Latinas need to make sense of their experiences.

The second part of the definition outlines the features of a case study. One feature is that it “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points” (Yin, 2014, p. 87). Another feature is that “one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulated fashion” (Yin, 2014, p. 87). In my study, the interview with the girls is the primary source of evidence. Secondary to that is the district data that informs the focus and the progress of the SRO program. The final feature is that a “result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data

collection and analysis" (Yin, 2014, p. 87). Through the inquiry completed for literature review and for the conceptual framework, the investigations of other researchers assisted in the development of my study.

**Participant Recruitment**

My pursuit of Black and Latinx girls' stories and their perceptions of their interactions with SROs and security guards was to look for common elements in their encounters, if any, to determine if there is a way to mediate these confrontations to result in a more positive outcome for the Black girls and Latinas.

I initiated my data collection by contacting several organizations with a description of the study and a request for them to assist me in identifying potential participants who met the criteria: Freedom Inc., Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness, Urban League of Greater Madison, Centro Hispano of Dane County, and Latino Support Network of Dane County (Appendix A). In June, an email (Appendix B) was sent to the individual on their website who handled communication about the organization.

In August 2021, in addition to pursuing a contact that was initiated by a colleague, I contacted eight additional organizations that spanned southern Wisconsin. The organizations were chosen either because their services specifically focused on Black girls or Latinas or because someone within their organization was recommended to me as a contact.

In September 2021, I connected with a fellow graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, who volunteered with Freedom Inc. and asked for his assistance in connecting with the right person to assist me in obtaining participants. He shared that in order to utilize the resources of Freedom Inc for research purposes, you need to volunteer with them for minimally one year. I also contacted seven charter schools between Dane County and Milwaukee

County to determine if it was possible to utilize their organization to secure research participants. Three of the seven schools responded. Two advised that they did not believe their population would meet the requirements of my participants. The third school allowed me to present to their board and volunteer for them, but they never provided me with permission to pursue participation from their students. I contacted another colleague who supervised students who were becoming educators. She agreed to share my proposal and requirements with the students she oversaw. Finally, I contacted NASRO to determine if I could find SRO participants through their organization.

In October 2021, I contacted leaders in NASRO from 10 different states. I also worked with two colleagues. One shared information about my study with a group of diverse students with whom he worked. The other arranged and joined me for a tour of a campus organization and a conversation with the person in charge of community relations who did not believe she would be able to assist me in soliciting participants.

In December 2021, I contacted several organizations that provide support to Black girls and Latinas. Additionally, I researched Black and Latinx leaders in Wisconsin who had been nominated by the Wisconsin State Journal and Madison 365 and contactacted them by email. I also contacted organizations that were seen as influential in the Black community.

In January 2022, I worked through college campus organizations to secure participants. I contacted the University of Wisconsin - Madison, the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, the University of Wisconsin - River Falls, the University of Wisconsin - Parkside, the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh, the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, the University of Wisconsin - Platteville, and the University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse. Additionally, I contacted organizations who provided support for Black girls and Latinas.

In February, I worked with the communications department of  a private, Catholic college and the Black Student Union at the University of Wisconsin - Stout. Furthermore, I contacted the Wisconsin Women's Network. Additionally, I worked with the founder of a charter school whose population was predominantly Black students.

In March, I contacted Girls in Madison (Table 1).

**Table 1**
*Participant Recruitment*

| Date | Contacts |
|---|---|
| May 2021 | ● Sent an email [Appendix C] to all of the orgs listed in proposal<br>○ Freedom Inc.<br>○ Boys and Girls Club of Dane County<br>○ The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness<br>○ Urban League of Greater Madison<br>○ Centro Hispano of Dane County<br>○ Latino Support Network of Dane County |
| August 2021 | ● Sharlene Moore through Katie<br>● Maydm<br>● Center for Black Women<br>● Urban Triage<br>● YWCA Madison<br>● ACLU - WI<br>● Black Youth Project - Madison<br>● Lit MKE<br>● Dane County Time Bank |
| September 2021 | ● Mike - Freedom Inc<br>● Charter schools<br>○ Howard Fuller CA<br>○ Carmen Schools<br>○ Seeds of Health<br>○ Pathways High<br>○ Escuala Verde<br>○ Transcenter for youth<br>● NASRO<br>● SL - connection to grad students |
| October 2021 | ● 10 state leaders in NASRO<br>● DI - connection to Posse<br>● KW - connection to Park Street community relations |

| | |
|---|---|
| December 2021 | ● AmFam<br>● Advancement Project<br>● Impact Demand 2020<br>● MOSES<br>● Madison Magazine - Black leaders<br>○ Nalah McWhorter<br>○ Robin Robinson<br>● Black Panther queens<br>● State Journal - Black influential Leaders<br>○ Ashley - Hope Street Ministry<br>○ Lydia - Socialxmke<br>○ Tracy - Running Rebels<br>○ Reverent Hart<br>● Madison Magazine - Sirena Flores<br>● Madison 365 Influential Black/Latinx Leaders<br>○ Gery Vasquez<br>○ Lorissa<br>○ John Soci - UWGB<br>○ Tammy Rivera - Soc Milwaukee<br>○ T.Garcia - Edgewood<br>○ Mayor Barrett - UWM<br>● Black/Latinx influential leaders<br>○ Brandi Grayson - Urban Triage<br>○ Milly Gonzales - Help of Door County<br>○ E. Highland - YWCA<br>○ Marla Delgado Guerro<br>○ Arlette Rodriguez Miller<br>○ Gabby Gamboa<br>○ Raquel Lopez<br>○ Annie Weatherby Flowers<br>○ Eddieknowsmore<br>○ Carmella Glenn<br>○ Justin Morales<br>● Influential Black organizations<br>○ Milwaukee Urban League Young Professionals<br>○ Black Lax 16<br>● Facebook Contact<br>○ Marlon Anderson<br>○ Ayomi Obuseh<br>○ Black Student Leaders page<br>○ Noah Anderson<br>○ Sirena Flores<br>○ TeKema Balentine<br>○ Carmella Glenn<br>○ Kyla Charles |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ○ Nalah McWhorter<br>○ Vispasha McMahon |
| January 2022 | ● University of Wisconsin - Madison<br>○ Multicultural Center<br>○ Latinx Culture Center<br>○ Black Voices<br>○ Diverse Leaders in Education<br>○ Latinx Student Union<br>○ Greek Life<br>○ Multicultural Student Nurse Organization<br>○ Office of Multicultural Arts Initiative<br>○ Campus Women's Center<br>○ Latinx Cultural Center<br>○ Center for Black Women<br>● University of Wisconsin - Green Bay<br>○ Multi Ethnic Student Affairs<br>○ Pride<br>○ Multicultural Student Success<br>○ Multi Ethnic Student Affairs<br>○ Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies<br>● University of Wisconsin - River Falls<br>○ Student Feminist Organization<br>○ Director of Student Success<br>○ Associate Director for Student Activities<br>● University of Wisconsin - Parkside<br>○ Latinos Unido<br>○ Black Student Union<br>● University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh<br>○ Women's Center<br>○ Women's Advocacy Council<br>● University of Wisconsin - Whitewater<br>○ African American Network<br>● University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse<br>○ Black Student Union<br>● University of Wisconsin - Platteville<br>○ Black Student Union<br>● Families for Justice - Dane<br>● Wisconsin Youth Company<br>● Center for Black Women<br>● The House Inc. |
| February 2022 | ● Marian University<br>● University of Wisconsin - Stout<br>○ Black Student Union<br>● Wisconsin Women's Network |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ● Founder charter school |
| March 2022 | ● Girls in Madison |
| December 2022 | ● Contacted all participants to request a second interview<br>○ Interviewed two participants in a second round of interviews - one orally and one through written responses. |
| January 2023 | ● Contacted all participants a second time to request a second interview |

**Participant Selection**

In the following section, I delineate how participants were identified for this study and present detail regarding the participant backgrounds.

The participants who were selected for this study identified as Black girls or Latinas, identified as female, were between the ages of 18–28, and were high school graduates. One participant was still in high school during her first interview, but was out of high school during her second interview. In total, I interviewed 10 participants but eliminated one because she was still in high school, and she was a sophomore.

From the contacts outlined above, I secured interviews with seven Black women and two Latinas. The girls matriculated from five different school districts across Wisconsin with one student transferring within the same district during high school (Table 2). Four of the five school districts are the four largest school districts in the state.

**Table 2**
*Participants by District*

| Districts | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| Madison Metropolitan School District | 3 |
| Kenosha Unified School District | 3 |
| Milwaukee School District | 1 |
| Green Bay Area School District | 1 |
| La Crosse School District | 1 |

My participants were selected because they had characteristics that were required in my study. I used a criterion-based selection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), criterion sampling works well with a phenomenological study because each participant will have experienced the phenomenon. In this case, the sampling included Black and Latinas between the ages of 18 years old and 28 years old who attended a traditional, public high school that employed either security guards and SROs, and had experienced or witnessed interactions with the security guards and/or SRO that impacted them.

**Table 3**
*Participant Demographics*

| Name | Age | School District | Race | Sports |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chloe | 26 | Madison Metropolitan School District | Black | Yes |
| Sarena | 21 | Green Bay Area Public School District | Black | Yes |
| Baina | 16 / 18 | La Crosse School District | Black | No |
| Amareyna | 19 | Kenosha Unified School District | Black | Yes |
| Zenalisa | 23 | Milwaukee School District | Black | Yes |
| Karina | 23 | Madison Metropolitan School District | Latina | No |
| Egypt | 24 | Kenosha Unified School District | Black | No |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Necie | 18 | Kenosha Unified School District | Black | No |
| Jadalyn | 25 | Madison Metropolitan School District | Latina | No |

Because this was a phenomenological study and the participants needed to experience the same phenomenon, participants were screened for their experiences; however, they did not need to be located in the same setting[9]. Cresswell and Poth (2018) pointed out that if there is a significant amount of diversity in the responses of the participants, it is difficult for the researcher to be able to find "common experiences, themes and the overall essence of the experience for all participants" (p. 365). "One general guideline for sample size in qualitative research is not only to study a few sites or individuals but also to collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied" (Cresswell & Poth, 2018, p. 377).

Baina was the first participant secured, and my connection to her was assisted by an organization in Milwaukee. The connection to that organization came from a direct connection made by a close friend who heard my struggle in securing participants. Zenalisa and Karina were both classmates of an individual who worked for the same school as me. Jadalyn and Chloe both worked in the same school as me but did not work directly for me. Necie and Amareyna responded to my solicitation to the Black Student Union at two University of Wisconsin campuses. Necie's sister, Egypt, was in the room while Necie was interviewing and fell within the participant demographics and asked to be included. Sarena was connected to me through a friend who knew that she met the participant requirements of the study (Table 1).

A limitation to this method of participant recruitment is that I am relying on my networks

[9] The sample size was kept to nine participants of Black girls and Latinas mainly due to the challenge of finding willing participants.

to identify potential participants. Therefore, I might be getting the views of individuals tied to those networks.

**Table 4**
*Methods Used to Secure Participants for the Study*

| Participant | Method of connection |
| --- | --- |
| Baina | Connection to an organization by a friend, The contact at the organization shared my contact information with Baina. She reached out to me. |
| Zenalisa | A classmate of a co-worker. He asked if they were interested in participating and shared my contact information with them to reach out to me. |
| Karina | A classmate of a co-worker. He asked if they were interested in participating and shared my contact information with them to reach out to me. |
| Jadalyn | A co-worker at the school in which I work. She does not work directly for me. |
| Chloe | A co-worker at the school in which I work. She does not work directly for me. |
| Necie | Responded to my solicitation to the Black Student Union at one of the University of Wisconsin campuses |
| Amareyna | Responded to my solicitation to the Black Student Union at one of the University of Wisconsin campuses |
| Egypt | Necie's sister who overheard Necie's interview and asked to be interviewed. She met the participant criteria |
| Sarena | Attended the college where a friend worked. My information was given to her and she was asked to reach out to me if she was interested in participating in my study. |

Merriam and Tisdale (2016) suggested interviewing participants until the researcher hears a repetition of answers to know they have reached saturation. In a phenomenological study, participants may not have the same experiences, but their responses will overlap. This could affect when the researcher attains a sense of saturation. Cresswell & Poth (2018, citing Duke, 1984) provided a range of one participant to 325 participants in a phenomenological study but agreed with Duke (1984) that a range of three to 10 participants is needed to most likely reach saturation.

Once participants were interviewed, I employed snowball sampling to attempt to acquire additional participants. "This strategy involves locating a few key participants who easily meet the criteria you have established for participation in the study. As you interview these early key participants, you ask each one to refer to you to other participants' (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 98). By utilizing this method, I was able to secure two of my participants; however, one of these participants I chose not to use because of her age and grade in high school. She was 16 and a sophomore.

**Participant Descriptions**

***Zenalisa***

Zenalisa identifies as Black and female/queer. She has four sisters and participated in track and cheerleading as well as band, music club, and student council while in high school. Furthermore, she was on the honor roll and concentrated a lot on her schoolwork. She was in a program called College Possible where she was mentored by college graduates in order to prepare her for college. Until that point, she had never thought about attending college. They helped her to prepare for the ACT and to obtain scholarships. Zenalisa describes herself as a good student, but she struggled with moving back and forth between her mom's house and her dad's house and rebelling against her mom. Additionally, Zenalisa attended two different high schools in the Milwaukee School District

***Sarena***

Sarena is 21 years old. She identifies as female and as Black. She is the youngest child of eight children, and played basketball during high school. Sarena does not recall having any issues with anyone or any issues around race until she reached high school. In high school, she describes herself as "Black privileged. Meaning that because I played a sport, I never had any issues with

teachers or our SRO officer, as you call it. I just call it a liaison officer. I was lucky that I've never had any issues…" Sarena believed herself to be afforded certain leniencies. She attended school in the Green Bay Area Public School District.

***Amareyna***

Amareyna is 19 years old. She identifies as Black and female. She has one brother, and she played basketball and was the captain of the dance team. She indicated that she did not get in trouble when she was in high school, but she shared that her best friend did. She believed her biggest influence for making decisions was her family. Amareyna was also influenced by her father's profession. He is a correctional officer at the prison located near her home. She attended school in the Kenosha Unified School District.

***Baina***

When Baina was first interviewed, she was 16 years old; however, by the time her second interview transpired, she was 18 years old and had graduated early from high school. She identified as Black and female. She was the oldest child in her household of four children, and she did not play sports in high school. She described herself as educated and very smart. She stated that learning did not pose a challenge for her. She attended school in the La Crosse School District. Baina speaks up when she thinks something is wrong, and she pushes back against authority figures. She sees herself as a voice for racial issues within the school district and she has even worked with the local paper. She does not believe that the school district handles most racial incidents correctly.

***Chloe***

Chloe is 26 years old. She identifies as female and as Black. She has three brothers and one sister and is the fourth born child. Her mother is a college graduate who owned two different

businesses over the course of Chloe’s childhood. Her father attended college but did not graduate. He was an immigrant from the Bahamas. She recognized from the age of 12 that she was treated differently because of the color of her skin. “I was playing basketball. And there's a girl, this little girl, she called me a black and we're dogs, and I punched her in the face. And I got in trouble. And like, nothing happened to her. And I think any instant after that was just kind of like okay.” She attended school in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

***Egypt***

Egypt is 25 years old. She identifies as female and as Black. She has one younger sister who attended the same high school as she did. She agreed to be a participant after listening to her sister be interviewed. She did not play sports in high school, and while her mother worked for the school, Egypt experienced discipline issues. Her sister, Necie, described her mother’s position as “some type of security guard.” She attended school in the Kenosha Unified School District.

***Jadalyn***

Jadalyn is 25 years old. She identifies as Hispanic and female. In high school, she participated in AVID, the People Program, and the Multico Theater class. She has three younger brothers, one of whom she helps raise. During her freshman year of high school, she did not have many friends and so she stayed out of trouble. Once she made friends, she started skipping school and got into more trouble. She describes herself as “not the best student, but I could make it.” She attended School in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

***Karina***

Karina is 23 years old and is originally from Mexico. She moved to Wisconsin when she was in first grade because her parents followed her father’s sister here in pursuit of the American dream.

When she arrived, she could not speak any English, so her mom went to school with her every day for a month to help her learn. She is the youngest of three children. She describes her parents' relationship as "toxic" and indicated that this was the reason that she and her siblings interacted with police outside of school. These interactions had a distinct impact on her. She attended school in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

#### *Necie*

Necie is 18 years old. Her sister, Egypt, is seven years older than her. While in high school, Necie was part of the cheerleading team. Necie admits that she was late to school a lot and this led to other issues for her. She believes that she was perceived as a "bad kid" to the staff at her high school. Her mom worked in some capacity in the school that Necie described as "some type of security guard." She attended school in the Kenosha Unified School District.

### District Descriptions

#### *Kenosha Unified School District*

Kenosha Unified School District is located in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The city population is just over 99,000 (Data Commons, 2023b), making it one of the largest cities in the state. The district of Kenosha is composed of 43 schools and educates just over 19,000 students each year where just over 10,300 students identify as economically disadvantaged. The racial composition of the district is as follows: 0.2% American Indian, 1.8% Asian, 13.5% Black, 29.6% Hispanic, 0,1% Pacific Islander, 7.1% Two or more races, and 47.8% white (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.-b).

#### *Milwaukee School District*

Milwaukee School District is located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is one of the largest cities in the state with a population of approximately 569,300 people (Data Commons, 2023b).

According to U.S. News and World Report (n.d.-e), the district contains 158 schools and educates just over 71,500 students, of whom 66.2% qualify for free or reduced lunch. The racial composition of the district is as follows: 0.4% American Indian, 7.9% Asian, 50.4% Black, 27.7% Hispanic, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 7.1% Two or more races, and 9.9% white.

***Green Bay Area School District***

Green Bay Area School District is located in Green Bay, Wisconsin. With a population of just over 107,000 people (Data Commons, 2023a), it is one of the largest cities in the state. The school district serves more than 21,000 schools in 36 schools. Forty nine percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The racial composition of the district is as follows: 3.6% American Indian, 8% Asian, 9.1% Black, 30.5% Hispanic, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 7.2% Two or more Races, and 41.6% white (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.-a).

***La Crosse School District***

La Crosse School District is located in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The population of the city is approximately 52,200 people (Data Commons, 2023c). The district contains 20 schools and educates just under 6,270 students. Thirty eight percent of students are considered economically disadvantaged. The racial composition of the district is as follows: 0.5% American Indian, 9.9% Asian, 5.1% Black, 5% Hispanic, 0% Pacific Islander, 10.7% Two or more races, and 68.8% white (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.-c).

***Madison Metropolitan School District***

Madison Metropolitan School District is located in Madison, Wisconsin. The population of the city is approximately 269,840 people (Data Commons, 2023d). The district is made up of 54 schools and education just over 26,150 students of whom 38.5% identify as economically disadvantaged. The racial composition of the district is as follows: 0.2% American Indian, 8.14%

Asian, 18.1% Black, 23% Hispanic, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 9.3% Two or more races, and 41% white (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.-d).

## Data Collection

### *Interviews*

Initially, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each individual. Each individual had the potential to be interviewed two times; however, most participants were only interviewed once. "In most forms of qualitative research, some and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 108). The questions asked were open-ended, as these types of questions "will rarely restrict answers to preconceived categories" (Richards, 2015, p. 47) to obtain the most information possible. Therefore, the questions were constructed in a manner to elicit the most accurate response from participants. Hypothetical questions were used as a healthy way to have individuals respond in a non-threatening way that demonstrated their experience. Playing the devil's advocate was another method utilized to solicit opinions and feelings around this controversial topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Maxwell (2013) noted that framing questions asked in terms of the specific setting or participants included in the study is advantageous because it stops the researcher from assuming that the individuals being studied are similar to other individuals, helps the researcher recognize the diversity of the individuals being studied, and "helps you to focus on the specific beliefs, actions, and events that you observe or ask about, and the actual contexts within which these are situated, rather than seeing these as simple manifestations of abstract, context-free categories" (p. 79).

Because of restrictions in place due to COVID-19 and because of the distance of some interviewees, the interviews were conducted through video-conferencing software such as Zoom. This venue posed some challenges. Relationships were harder to form, and rapport was harder to

obtain in a virtual format. All of the participants were computer savvy, so there was no need to maneuver the interviews' technical aspect (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim while they were being conducted.

The Black and Latinx girls who participated in the study shared events that were traumatic to them. Therefore, it was vital for me to address the trauma and provide the girls' ways to deal with their feelings. They were told that at any point, they could end the interview if the feelings become too overwhelming; however, this did not occur.

At the beginning of the interviews and throughout the interviews, I validated the womens' experiences and acknowledged how the experiences made them feel. Additionally, I provided the girls with some techniques to mediate the anxiety that can develop due to trauma. At the start of each interaction, I explained to the women that as we discuss what they went through, they may experience a physical reaction similar to what they experienced during the encounter. The goal of these techniques is to help eliminate the physical reactions. Therefore, we began and ended each interaction with some deep breathing exercises (Lees, 2020). The women were instructed to use this technique when they begin to feel tense or anxious during the interview. We also discussed practicing visualization. The women were asked to think about a place that brings them joy. Then, I coached them through the process of thinking about what they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel in this environment (Robinson et al., 2020). At the end of an interview, I offered time to go through this process to de-escalate any anxiety that may have arisen during the conversation due to trauma.

Because their information is valuable, the participants were compensated for their time. They received a $20 gift card for their participation in each interview. The gift card was to the store of their choice. The cards were issued at the end of their interview.

Once I finished the first round of interviews with all nine participants, I asked each of them to provide me with a second interview. Baina was willing to complete an interview in the same format as the first interview. Zenalisa was willing to answer a list of questions that I posed to her through email. I did not receive responses from the other six participants. I reached out to them twice. I felt like any more than that and I was placing pressure on them.

***District Documents***

With my participants extending over five districts, I looked on each district's website for any documentation regarding their policies, procedures, protocols, evaluations of the SRO programs, or documentation regarding SROs and/or security guards in their schools. I utilized the search words "police," "SRO," "ERO," "School Resource Officer," "Educational Resource Officer," and "officer." The material provided for public consumption varied with Madison Metropolitan School District providing the most information and Kenosha Unified School District providing the least amount of information. The data contained within these documents is used to provide insight into the settings in which the participants in the study attended school. Additionally, I reviewed any school board minutes and documents that referenced the school SRO. Then, I looked for information on each district's seclusion and restraint data for the 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022 school years. Kenosha Unified School District was the only district where this information was broken down by race, gender, and special education status. I submitted record requests to Lacrosse School District, Madison School District, and MilwaukeePublic School District. Finally, I looked at how the district evaluated the SRO program in their district.

For my literature review, I analyzed the material on the website for the National Association of School Resource Officers.

## Data Analysis

### *Interviews*

Immediately after each interview was conducted, or as soon as possible after, the interview's recorded transcriptions were reviewed, and corrections were made to the transcripts, when necessary, to assure that what was in the transcript matched precisely what was saved in the recording of the interview. In some cases, a memo of the interview was created throughout the coding process to highlight themes found throughout the interviews. Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended starting to memo when you first read through the data and continuing through the very end of your writing. Therefore, I wrote memos throughout my data collection and analysis.

Coding was completed throughout the interview process; however, most of the coding was completed at the conclusion of interviewing. Since I handled my participants as if each one was its own case study, I started by writing a narrative for each of my participants. For some of my participants, I wrote several drafts depending on the depth of their interview. Richards (2016) indicated that this can be “highly productive” (p. 194). I wanted to make myself as familiar as possible with the material in their interviews. Once I completed all of the narratives, I went through them and coded for broad common themes.

> In a multiple case study, there are two stages of analysis – the *within-case analysis* and the *cross-case analysis*. For the within-case analysis, each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much as possible about the contextual variables that might have a bearing on the case. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 234, emphasis in original)

I then reorganized my data by the broad themes. Creswell (2014) described this as finding patterns in the studies. In this format, I re-coded the interview material for more nuanced points within the broader context. I went through the reorganized broad themes several times.

> In this situation [multiple-case studies], there may be no separate chapters or sections devoted to the individual cases. Rather, your entire report may consist of the cross-case analysis, whether purely descriptive or also covering explanatory topics. In such a report, each chapter or section would be devoted to a separate "cross-case issue, and the information from the individual cases would be dispersed throughout each chapter or section. (Yin, 2014, pp. 456–457).

Richards (2015) noted this method for "highligh[ing] common issues and central themes" (p. 194).

Once I reached the point where I felt as if I had gotten all of the more nuanced aspects of the broader themes, I went through each participant's narrative one more time. Finally, with the nuanced themes in mind, I went through the transcript of each participant's interview to look for additional information and quotes.

### *District Documents*

I went to each school district's website to review public documents. These included the student handbook, the school board meeting minutes, district behavior policies, and district disciplinary policies. The link for the handbook for Kenosha Unified School District did not work, so I requested and was provided a link from the district office. I requested specific seclusion and restraint data from Madison Metropolitan School District, Green Bay Area School District, Milwaukee School District, and Lacrosse School District

To determine what had been reviewed by each district's school board or board of education, I located where the district housed their meeting minutes online and searched "school resource officer", "SRO", "police", "seclusion", and "restraint". I reviewed any meeting minutes where the board discussed the SRO specifically or made any reference to the position. Starting in August of 2018, during the time designated for public comment at the beginning of school board meetings, Desert Springs School District had numerous individuals provide their position both verbally in and written registration on having SROs. The intensity of the participation continued

through February of 2020 where all 11 speakers addressed police in schools and the unequal treatment of students of color. In March of 2020, the format of the school board meetings changed to online due to the pandemic. At this point, public comments were discontinued. Ultimately, Madison Metropolitan School District removed SROs from schools after the murder of George Floyd. Lacrosse School District held two open forums in September and October of 2020 for the public to share their thoughts on SROs. The Green Bay Area School District had one public comment session that addressed SROs.

Then, I went to the website of the Department of Public Instruction and located the data for disciplinary incidents and disciplinary actions for 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022 school years. Finally, I looked at each district's seclusion and restraint data for the 2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022 school years. Kenosha Unified School District was the only district that indicated the race, gender, and special education designation for mechanical restraints, physical restraints and seclusions, noting that mechanical restraints can only be effected by police officers. I submitted requests to the other four districts for the information broken down in the categories provided by Kenosha Unified School District, but I was informed that these districts did not have this information. Therefore, in my findings, I provided the district data for all of the districts as it was reported to their school boards or boards of education. For Kenosha Unified School District, I provided the more detailed information broken down by race, gender, and special education designation. I identified which categories were impacted by the inclusion of students who were identified as special education students and demarcated that data based on the significance of the impact. Categories for demarcation included over 50%, over 75%, and 100%.

## Validity and Reliability

### *Interview Participants*

It is essential to ensure that my data are trustworthy. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) posited that different kinds of qualitative research require different validity and reliability criteria. To assure the validity of my research, I conducted respondent validation with those I interviewed and could reach to determine if my analysis of the information they provided through their interview aligns with their perception of the information. I did not provide them with my complete analysis but with pieces of information to have them validate. The length of their interviews determined the amount of data provided.

### *District Documents*

All of my documents come from public records. I chose the public records used within my dissertation after I finished my interviews with the participants. The documents I chose to include all centered around student stated expectations and disciplinary actions and documentation of disciplinary actions to support or refute what was shared during the interviews. “Since the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering data, he or she relies on skills and intuition to find and interpret data from documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 175).

The authenticity of each of my sources comes from where they were published and the organizations who published them. District handbooks are created by school districts and are published on the school district’s website. Disciplinary data are provided by a state institution - The Department of Public Instruction. School board minutes are endorsed by the school boards who publish them. And public statements made at school boards are recorded for accuracy therefore supporting their reliability. ““For case study research, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 2014, p. 300). With

this in mind, the documents collected from each of the districts will be juxtaposed against the information provided by each of the participants in order to determine the validity of both.

**Positionality**

My study topic, how I interact with my subjects, and my analysis of the materials are all impacted by my own experiences.

> How we write reflects our interpretation based on the cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics that we bring to research. All writing is "positioned" and within a stance. All researchers shape the writing that emerges, and qualitative researchers need to accept this interpretation and be open about it in their writings. (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 518–519)

I identify as a cisgender, bi-sexual, middle-class, white female. My father was a Postal Inspector, which classifies as a federal agent, and my stepmother worked for some time as an FBI Agent. In retirement, my father worked for his local police department as an officer and continued working for the federal government to complete background checks on individuals applying for classified positions. My mother worked for an affluent private school that my sister and I attended from first grade through eighth grade. Then, she worked for a medium-sized public middle school in Michigan while she earned her doctorate in Psychology. I lived in small New England towns for high school, college, and post-graduate degrees, moving to Madison, Wisconsin, a much more liberal community, in my mid-30s. As a doctoral student, I am somewhat unique because I am in my early 50s.

Creswell and Poth (2018) put forth reflexivity as having two parts. The first part pertains to the researchers' experiences in terms of the phenomenon. The second part pertains to how the researcher's experiences impact the researcher's interpretation of the phenomenon. My experiences in terms of the phenomenon are impacted by the positions of my father and stepmother. Having worked in law enforcement, their views, which have influenced my

perceptions, are centered on the structures of rules and are rooted in a strict view of what constitutes respect. My father and stepmother, in their positions, have also had negative interactions with individuals of color that have resulted in a negative perception of most people of color. In addressing my interpretation of the phenomenon, I need to account for this influence and identify how my implicit biases can impact my research.

As my research includes members of marginalized groups who have experienced negative interactions with both educators, many of whom statistically are white women, and school resource officers, I need to acknowledge my outsider status and develop a rapport with the study subjects.

> The point is that participants in studies of marginalized groups (by race, gender, class, sexual orientation) are often suspicious of those who are members of the dominant culture researching people of oppressed groups. They often worry about what the researcher's agenda is and how they will be portrayed as participants. The point of critical research is generally to research with people, not on people. (Merriam and Tisdale, 2016, p. 64, emphasis in original)

While I have some outsider experiences as a bi-sexual female, and I understand being marginalized for my sexuality, my outsider experiences will differ from those experienced by Black and Latinx girls. I can relate to the experience of being marginalized because of a characteristic over which I have no control; however, unlike skin color, I can hide my sexuality if I so choose. Understanding the impact of the ability to have this choice will be vital as I contemplate my own experiences as an outsider; however, my experiences allow me to have empathy.

***Limitations***

My study can be limited because the topic of school resource officers is such a politically charged conversation. While it has been a controversial subject for several years, the death of George Floyd in May of 2020 at the hands of a white police officer, along with the death of

Breonna Taylor, and the shooting of Jacob Blake as well as numerous other deaths of unarmed Black individuals at the hand of overzealous police officers has brought the issue to a head in several school districts. After George Floyd's death, school resource officers were removed from several school districts across the country, including Portland, Oregon, Denver, Seattle, Minneapolis (Reilly, 2020), and Madison, Wisconsin (Hauge, 2020).

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic put many school districts online, which limits students' interactions with SROs. The conversations that I had with students were about incidents that occurred over eight months ago to over 10 years ago. This time frame has the potential to impact the accuracy and the details of the memories shared. However, dependent on the impact and influence of the interaction, the memory may be intact.

As my study primarily used interviews there are some limitations. I will only be getting the Black and Latinx girls' perspectives that I am interviewing about their interaction with the SRO in their specific incident. This provides one side to the story; however, as I am looking for their perceptions, only getting their side does meet the study's requirements.

Furthermore, my evidence is limited by the fact that I am asking the individuals I interviewed to recall events that occurred years ago.

Finally, my nine participants graduated from five different high schools in the state of Wisconsin. Because each high school has its own policies and procedures which create the school’s climate and culture, I cannot make any strong claims regarding the context of my participants’ experiences.

# Chapter 5: Findings

## The District Landscape

### District Documents

In my study, there are five districts: Madison Metropolitan School District, Milwaukee School District, Green Bay Area School District, Kenosha Unified School District, and La Crosse School District. In the evaluation of their SRO program or through the contract signed with the police department, the district indicates the purpose of the SRO. Then, through their handbook, each district provided information about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in their schools. There are certain elements, like the dress code and serious violations such as possession of a weapon, that I will not address in my findings because while relevant they have been covered in other studies and are not fundamental to my study. I will focus on the areas of the handbook that are subject to interpretation and for my interview participants were areas that impacted their interactions.

The sections below include: the purpose of SROs, the analysis of district evaluations of SRO programs, themes in the handbook, disciplinary actions of districts and the discipline data associated, and seclusion and restraint data. The purpose of SROs and the analysis of the evaluation of SRO programs is included to provide insight as to how the district envisions the use of SRO which will be critical later when participants share how they have made sense of the actions of SROs. Themes in the handbook, disciplinary actions of districts, and discipline data are included to provide an overview of the environments in the districts attended by the study's participants. Seclusion and restraint data is shared to demonstrate how the district is implementing its disciplinary policies and any possible disparities based on demographics.

The Milwaukee School District was the only district that referenced SROs in their handbook.

> The Milwaukee Police Department will assign an officer as a liaison to work with students and staff. The liaison officer will be available to meet with students regarding legal concerns during regular school hours. The officer is considered an agent of the school for purposes of all searches (p. 31).

The verbiage used in the submission was vague and failed to outline the roles and responsibilities of the SRO. Concerning in this submission is that “the officer is considered an agent of the school for purposes of all searches” (p. 31). School employees have far greater leniency when it comes to searching students, their lockers, and their possessions than the police are afforded. By altering the SRO from a police officer to an agent of the school, the officer now has far greater access to students. Bracy (2010) indicates that this is not an unusual method for schools to employ. “The way that contemporary school administrators and SROs work together virtually renders irrelevant any stricter standards outlined for law enforcement, as SROs and schools regularly find ways to work under the lower school standard” (309). Bracy goes on to indicate that another concern that comes with this ambiguity in roles that “law enforcement enters the picture at a point when no crime has taken place yet, as a result of his observance, students are subject to the same serious consequences as any other police search” (304-5) resulting in the students’ rights being compromised.

In their handbook, Green Bay Area School District also afforded police extended rights to their students. In the consequences outlined for a fight, the district states that “the police have the authority to talk to students without parent permission” (p. 28). Typically this is not a courtesy extended to police; however, school districts have a different threshold than police officers.

***Purpose of School Resource Officers***

In the evaluations of the SRO programs for Madison Metropolitan School District, Green

Bay Area School District, Milwaukee School District, and La Crosse School District and in the contract for Kenosha Unified School District, it states the defined purpose of the SRO in the district. It is important to understand the stated reason for SROs to be in districts and schools because this is the premise under which the SROs are acting. Additionally, as the girls share their narratives about interactions with SROs, it is evident that the purpose of having SROs in the school can be adapted to encompass almost any scenario.

In Kenosha Unified School Districts contract with the Kenosha Police Department, it specifies that the SRO is to “act in the capacity of a sworn, on-duty police officer” (Kenosha Unified School District, 2021). The rest of the contract provides specifications of how that looks [Appendix K], for example, “provide a law enforcement presence in the school to which assigned” (Kenosha Unified School District, 2021).

Madison Metropolitan School District indicates that the SRO program is a “preventative collaboration” (Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, 2020) to “ensure that the four primary high schools are safe, secure and welcoming for all” (Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, 2020). They will do this through “community oriented policing” (Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, 2020) and “trust based partnerships” (Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, 2020). Doing so will foster a “safe and supporting learning environment for students, teachers, and staff” (Madison Metropolitan School District Board of Education, 2020).

Milwaukee School District states that the purpose of the SROs is to be “proactive, and ready to respond in the event of an emergency or other situation requiring the police” (Milwaukee Board of School Directors, 2022). The program was set up for the purpose of addressing “local desires, needs, and circumstances, as determined by local stakeholders”

(Milwaukee Board of School Directors, 2022).

Green Bay Area School District states the purpose of SROs is to “contribute to the school team by ensuring a safe and secure campus, educating students about law-related topics, and mentoring by serving as a role model for students” (School Resource Officer, n.d.). The goals of the program include working to “enhance the safety and security of students, staff and the community in order to maintain an environment in which education and learning can take place” (School Resource Officer, n.d.). They are also to balance the role of a community educator with that of a law enforcer. The final goal is on relationship-building.

In the La Crosse School District, SRO are asked to provide services that include but are not limited to “staff safety training, safety assessments and consultations, threat assessment assistance, emergency preparedness and service calls” (La Crosse School District Board of Education, n.d.). Additionally, the district provides four ways in which the SRO can provide service: “to enhance the safe and positive learning environment for all students” and “crime prevention efforts” (La Crosse School District Board of Education, n.d.). Additionally they are asked to “further an environment of cooperation” as well as to “facilitate the report of all crimes” (La Crosse School District Board of Education, n.d.).

Across the districts, it is apparent that there is a focus on safety which makes it difficult to argue against their presence. Through these descriptions, there is no way to discern what SROs could perceive as a threat to safety. The reiteration of the idea of a structured learning environment alludes to something unsafe being anything that disrupts that goal highlighting again the docile individual promoted in Foucault’s Theory of Discipline.

***Analysis of District Evaluations of their SRO program and Recommendations***

In reviewing the districts evaluations of their SRO program or the contract to employ SROs and the recommendations, the districts had some consistency in their focus for SROs. Kenosha Unified School District, Milwaukee Public Schools, and Madison Metropolitan School District all had a training component within their recommendations. Milwaukee Public Schools and Green Bay Area School District both mentioned relationship development as one of the areas on which they believed SROs needed to focus. Madison Metropolitan School District and La Crosse School District both recommended oversight committees and the use of restorative justice practices versus punitive practices. Kenosha Unified School District and Madison Metropolitan School District both heavily documented policies and procedures in their recommendations. For example, Kenosha's contract listed "Investigate or assist in the investigation of crimes or Ordinance violations to which students in the assigned school may be a party or have information" as one of the areas of focus." Madison Metropolitan school district focused on

> each school hav[ing] a designated primary contact at the administrator level so that if an officer is needed, clear lines of communication are in place to ensure that the presence of the officers who respond will be less likely to escalate a potentially volatile situation.

Milwaukee Public Schools and Green Bay Area Public Schools both addressed the role of the SRO on campus (APPENDIX J). The latitude of responsibility varied from district to district.

Additionally, Milwaukee School District, Green Bay Area School District, La Crosse School District, and Madison Metropolitan School District had all evaluated their SRO programs within the last five years. Results from these evaluations highlighted areas believed to be essential to stakeholders. Milwaukee was the only district that hired an outside evaluator and did not conduct its own evaluation.

Ultimately, when analyzing the information around how school districts evaluated their SRO program and the recommendations that were made what shone through was the understanding of the inequalities resulting from SROs being present in the building and a desire to make changes; however, based on the narratives shared by the participants, what was mandated on paper was not being enacted in the schools.

Kenosha Unified School District did not evaluate their program.

Milwaukee Area School District made recommendations that focused on reviewing the process for selecting the SRO, their training, policy documentation, the method of tracking their activities, and the ways in which they are used by the district. In the predicted outcomes, there is a better understanding of documentation of how the SRO is utilized [Appendix L].

Green Bay had their families complete a survey [Appendix M] of how they would like to see the SRO utilized in the schools. Based on the survey results, the district developed four goals of the SRO program [Appendix N] that focused on safety, respect for policies, balanced law enforcement duties with community education, and relationship building.

La Crosse School District had the clearest findings. They recognized markers of the STPP, their reliance on exclusionary discipline, disproportionality in discipline, suspensions, and arrests, racial gap in graduation rates, and higher juvenile arrest rates [Appendix O]. These led to six recommendations [Appendix P] that focused on developing and expanding programs and practices.

Finally, Madison Metropolitan School District had 16 recommendations that range from creating an ERO Advisory Committee to creating a well defined complaint procedure to improving recording keeping.

The common theme across the districts who evaluated their SRO programs was that the recommendations made appeared to address the issues of disparities, but the impacts were not being seen or felt by the participants. The recommendations were the equivalent of the districts spinning their tires in the mud where it looked like something was going on but no traction was made. Additionally, a common theme across all districts was that they saysaw school safety as the purpose of having an SRO.

***Handbook Themes***

Material provided in the handbooks of each of the schools on the behaviors the district viewed as discipline worthy varied greatly as did the consequences. All of the handbooks were written using ambiguous language and incidents were subject to the discretion of the staff member. Kenosha Unified School District, Milwaukee School District, Green Bay Area School District, and La Crosse School District covered threats and truancy and tardiness in their handbooks while Madison Metropolitan School District did not cover those. Civil disobedience, chronic disruption or violation of school rules, disruptive behavior, and being uncooperative were covered in the handbooks of Kenosha Unified School District, Madison Metropolitan School District, Milwaukee School District, and Green Bay Area School District. Hallway issues were covered in Kenosha Unified School District, Milwaukee School District, and La Crosse School District. The topic of Public Displays of Affection was covered in the handbooks of Kenosha Unified School District, Madison Metropolitan School District, and Milwaukee School District. Only fights or assaults and bullying or harassment were addressed by all five districts in the handbook, and their descriptions fluctuated in depth and breadth (Table 5).

**Table 5**

*School Handbook Topic Coverage*

| | Kenosha Unified School District | Madison Metropolitan School District | Milwaukee School District | Green Bay Area School District | La Crosse School District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threat | x | | x | x | x |
| Fight or assault | x | x | x | x | x |
| Bullying / harassment | x | x | x | x | x |
| Civil disobedience / Chronic disruption or violation of school rules / Disruptive behavior / Uncooperative | x | x | x | x | |
| Hallways | x | | x | | x |
| Public displays of affection | x | x | x | | |
| Truancy / Tardiness | x | | x | x | x |

While ambiguous language is used throughout the handbooks, I will utilize the infraction of a fight to highlight how the verbiage for both student behavior and consequences has the potential to impact students through their interpretation versus that of the adult who is present and the latitude it affords to the SRO and school personnel. Kenosha Unified School District provided the least amount of information about fighting or assaults stating that it was considered, “inflicting bodily harm on any student on school property” or “Inflicting bodily harm on any member of the school staff” (p. 8). Consequences included suspension and police involvement.

Madison Metropolitan School District had the greatest amount of information along with various levels that aligned with assorted consequences. Fighting or assault that was considered a Level Two or a Level Three violation and included descriptors such as “inappropriate physical act of aggression by one student directed at another student that does not rise to the level of excessive physical aggression” (p. 45). As a Level Two infraction, managing discipline could be handled by a classroom teacher or by support staff. Consequences included possible removal from class or possible one day in-school suspension. As a Level Three infraction, support staff would manage the discipline with the potential for one to three days of in-school suspension if an alternative could not be determined. There is no indication of who determines the level or the consequence demonstrating the potential ambiguity in enforcement. Furthermore, the alternatives to suspension add another layer of obscurity to the distribution of consequences. They are automatically afforded for “taunting, baiting, and encouraging fights” and “repeated disruption of instruction” (p. 27). Additionally Madison Metropolitan encourages staff to establish alternative consequences for

> swearing at staff, drug violations, excessive physical aggression, Making, transmitting, or distributing, including posting to the internet, any recording of physical contact, whether or not the participants considered it “play fighting”, incidental contact, including the use of an object, with a staff member of the MMSD or any adult who is legitimately

> exercising authority at the school or during any school activity, and any other behaviors (pgs. 27-8)

With the variation in behaviors along with the potential divergence in tolerance by staff, there is the possibility for a significant amount of latitude to be afforded to some students and no latitude afforded to others. The district's stated goal is to "decrease students' time outside the learning environment" (p. 27); however, they do not address the potential for the execution of the policy to lead to further discrimination against some students while protecting the rights of other students. A Level Three or Four incident is marked by the level of offensive against a student moving to "aggressive" (p. 46) or an "incidental contact" occurring with a member of the staff. A Level Four incident results in four to five days of an out-of -school suspension. Finally, a Level Five incident that requires a "consult with Coordinator of Progressive Discipline" and a "five day out of school suspension with a recommendation for expulsion (p. 46) and is attained when a student attacks a member of the DWSD staff.

Milwaukee School District deems a fight or an assault "a physical confrontation between two or more students….students gathering to encourage a fight or an assault by means of cheering, taunting video streaming, video recording, and/or posting about the incident on social media" (p. 45). Consequences range from parental contact to expulsion.

Green Bay Area School District defines a fight or assault as "actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur" (p. 39). Consequences include suspension, expulsion, and potential referral to law enforcement.

Finally, La Crosse School District classifies a fight or assault as "unnecessary roughness, pushing, shoving, kicking, using fists, or any other physical or verbal conflict" (p. 19). They also include play fighting and shadow boxing and indicate that this could result in disciplinary action, leaving room for interpretation. Consequences include suspension, referral or fine. Additionally,

the handbook notes that the student could be charged with disorderly conduct, assault, and/or battery, and the district stipulates that the police may talk to the student without the parent present. Typically, when police interview minors, it is with a parent present. Here, the district is using their requirements as an educational institution [district staff may speak to a student without a parent present] and affording it to their SRO. There is a greater potential for the student's rights to be compromised in a situation. Bracy (2010) posits ways in which students' inability to differentiate between the SRO and school staff could make them "less likely to safeguard their rights" (p. 306) thus putting them at greater risk.

The ambiguity in the language used by the districts is problematic in ensuring consistency; it affords the district leniency in distributing consequences. Kenosha Unified School District considers a fight or assault "inflicting bodily harm", but they do not indicate to what degree and who determines if bodily harm was inflicted. Madison Metropolitan School District indicates that a fight or assault can include "any other inappropriate physical act of aggression by one student directed at another student that does not rise to the level of excessive physical aggression" (p. 45). They do not clarify what constitutes an inappropriate act of aggression nor do they clarify what establishes the grounds for excessive physical aggression. Milwaukee School District provides the definition of a "physical confrontation" (p. 45), but they do not indicate the parameters around that term. Green Bay Area outlines a fight or assault as "violent behavior shall mean behavior or actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur" (p. 39). Again, no parameters of serious physical contact are provided other than where injury may occur, which is subjective to the person who experiences the act, the person who generates the act, and the person who witnesses the act. La Crosse School District indicates that "unnecessary roughness…or any other physical or verbal conflict" (p. 19) all fall under the

category of fight or assault. They do not indicate what would make roughness necessary or unnecessary nor do they provide any indication of what constitutes a physical or verbal conflict. For fights or assaults, all districts listed suspension and police involvement as a consequence. Madison Metropolitan School District, Green Bay Area School District, and Milwaukee School District also listed expulsion as a possible consequence. In none of the districts was any information provided about what determined if the consequence was a suspension versus an expulsion versus police involvement indicating that discretion was left to the district personnel. With no parameters, this is an area where individuals can use their discretion and if they do not acknowledge their own implicit bias, they have the potential to punish students of color more harshly than white students.

Vague terms permeate the descriptions of behaviors. Terms such as “intent to inflict”, “making a threat”, “aggressive”, “inappropriate”, “repeated enough or serious enough”, “negatively impact”, and “disruptions” [Appendix D] are all ambiguous. Punishments range from “discretionary action” to “expulsion” and “police referral” making the lack of clarity problematic.

Additionally, in 2014 Madison Metropolitan School District moved from what they referred to as an exclusionary based discipline system to a Behavior Education Plan that was rooted in relationship building, restorative justice, and a focus on learning. This move provides the optics of a discipline system that was more student centered;  however, closer examination revealed that it did not remove exclusionary discipline from the plan.

Understanding the themes of the handbooks are important because they demonstrate the transgressions the districts found important to address and document as well as the consequences assigned to those transgressions. Furthermore, analysis of this information highlights the latitude

afforded to staff, including but not limited to the SROs and security guards, that outlines the experiences of the participants of this study. The handbook is also the tool used by the districts to maintain control over the students. It is their play book for power. Not only does it outline what needs to be controlled, but it also provides the method of control, and much of that comes from close supervision and then discipline. Moreover, the handbook is an apparatus to determine who needs to be disciplined.

***District Discipline Data***

District discipline consists of the areas that districts punished students, discipline actions, and seclusion and restraint data.

Districts report their disciplinary incidents and their disciplinary actions to the Department of Public Instruction each year [Appendix F]. These data afford a cursory snapshot of the disciplinary environment in which the participants attended school. The five incidental areas in which the districts collect data are “assaults”, “drugs and alcohol”, “endangering behavior”, “weapon related”, and “other violation of school rules”. While assaults, drugs and alcohol, and weapon related are fairly clear cut, the areas of “endangering behavior” and “other school rule violations” are subject to the interpretation of the school personnel who observe the acts. For all districts, the combined number of offenses in “endangering behavior” and “other violation of school rules” made up the largest percentage of discipline:

Kenosha Area School District - 57.8%
Madison Metropolitan School District - 51.6%
Milwaukee Area School District - 95.5%
Green Bay Area School District - 89.2%
La Crosse School District - 66.6%

In combination with the district discipline data [Appendix G - Appendix J], this information is noteworthy as the district discipline data reflects a disproportionate suspension of

Black students. The discipline action records from all five districts reiterates what we already know about discipline in schools. Students of color are removed from the learning environment at disproportionate rates to their white peers. It is evident in each of the five districts looking specifically at Black students and Hispanic students comparatively to white students.

For the 2021/2022 school year looking specifically at out-of-school suspensions, Black students made up nine percent of the population at Green Bay Area School District, but they made up 24.7% of the out-of-school suspensions. Hispanic students made up 31.5% of the population, but they made up 27.7% of the out-of-school suspension. Meanwhile, white students made up 40.1% of the student body, but they only made up 24.4% of the out-of-school suspensions.

In the Kenosha Unified School District, Black and Hispanic students made up 13.6% and 30.2% of the student body respectively. Meanwhile they made up 34.6% and 24.7% of the out-of-school suspensions respectively while white students made up 48.86% of the population while only making up 27.9% of the out-of-school suspensions. There are approximately 3200 more white students than there are Hispanic students, yet white students only received about 140 more out-of-school suspensions than Hispanic students received. There are about 6450 more white students than there are Black students. Still, Black students received approximately 280 more out-of-school suspensions than white students received.

In the Lacrosse School District, Black students made up five point two percent of the population but made up 13.6% of the out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students made up five percent of the student body while making up eight point eight percent of the out-of-school suspensions. Comparatively, white students made up 68.48% of the student body while only making up 56.2% of the out-of-school suspensions.

The Madison Metropolitan School District tells a similar story. Black students made up 18.5% of the student body while making up 57.3% of the out-of-school suspensions. Likewise, Hispanic students made up 23.2% of the population while making up 17.3% of the out-of-school suspensions. Compare this to the white students who made up 40.8% of the students while only making up 11.5% of the suspensions. There are over 4480 more white students than Black students and about 5700 more white students than Hispanic students; however, Black students are expelled almost five times as much as white students and Hispanic students are more than one and half times more likely to be expelled than white students.

The Milwaukee School District is not any different. While Black and Hispanic students made up 50.3% and 27.8% of the student body respectively. Meanwhile they made up 79.8% and 13.3% of the out-of-school suspensions respectively while white students made up 9.6% of the population while only making up 2.4% of the out-of-school suspensions.

Black students are suspended and expelled and suspended at a disproportionate rate and the greatest reasons for these consequences fall under two areas of discipline that are most subjective. The discipline data is relevant to my study in that it demonstrates that the behaviors of students of color are “on the radar” which equates to a greater number of consequences. While the focus of the school’ handbooks demonstrates each school’s desire for compliance; the suspension data highlights the consequences disseminated for a student's failure to comply. The disproportionality between the percentage of the population of Black and Latinx and percentage of suspensions they incur is indicative of their failure to comply and the extent to which they are the focus of SROs and security guards.

Seclusion and restraint are two techniques implemented in school districts to manage student behavior and the data of use must be reported to the district’s school board by September

first of each year. Restraints can either be mechanical restraints or physical restraints. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2019) defines seclusion, physical restraint, and mechanical restraint.

> Specifically, under Education's definitions, physical restraint broadly refers to restricting the student's ability to freely move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head. Mechanical restraint broadly refers to the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement. Seclusion broadly refers to involuntarily confining a student alone in a room or area from which he or she cannot physically leave. (p. 2)

Seclusion and restraint are both classified as a form of discipline.

Madison Metropolitan, Milwaukee, Green Bay Area, and La Crosse provided the data without delineating the demographics subjected to seclusion and restraint. For example, in the board minutes published from the meeting on August 25, 2022 from Milwaukee School District, the district shared

> In the 2021/22 school year, there were a total of 41 students, including 23 students with disabilities, involved in 44 incidents of seclusion. There were 281 students, including 165 students with disabilities, involved in 417 incidents of physical restraint (p. 293).

While meeting the requirements of state reporting, these data provide little understanding of the students who are most impacted by being secluded and restrained [Appendix E].

Kenosha Unified School District, however, provided additional details to their submission which is categorized by race and gender [Table 7]. Additionally, in their reports, restraints are organized into either mechanical restraint which indicates that the restraint was enacted by a police officer or physical restraint which can be executed by a certified member of the district staff.

These data also demonstrate the disparity in the individuals who are mechanically restrained, physically restrained, and secluded. Focusing on just females, over four years there were 19 mechanical restraints occurring in two of the four years reviewed. Using physical

restraints, Black females and Latinas were restrained in both years. In the 2018/2019 school year, one Latina and three Black females were mechanically restrained. In the 2021/2022 school year, two Latinas and nine Black females were mechanically restrained. There were three white females and one female who identified as two or more races restrained in the 2021/2022 school year [Table 7]. All of white females who were mechanically restrained were receiving special education services.

The Wisconsin Department of Instruction (2022) Data Report for the 2020/2021 school year noted that factors such as mental health issues and students of color and students with disabilities receiving less support could be impacting the number of seclusions and restraints received by these students.

Over the same four years, there were 130 physical restraints of females. Of these restraints, the 12 Black females restrained in the 2018/2019 school year and the two females who identified as two or more races were the only category of females that contained less than 50% students who received special education services  In the 2018/2019, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022 school years, 100 percent of the white females who were restrained received special education services. In the 2019/2020 school year, 75 percent of the white females who were restrained received special education services. Comparatively, of the Latinas who were restrained, special education services were afforded to at least 50% of the females in 2018/2019 and 2021/2022. In 2019/2020, 100 percent of the Latinas who were restrained received special education services, and in 2020/2021, at least 75 percent of the Latinas who were restrained received special education services. Black females who were restrained in the 2019/2020 school year, at least 50 percent received special education services. In the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 school years, at least 50% of the Black females restrained had special education services.

In this same time span, there were 94 seclusions of female students. In the 2018/2019 school year, less than 50% of the three Black females and eight Latinas secluded received special education services. The one Black female in the 2021/2022 school year and the two Black females in the 2020/2021 school year who were secluded did not receive special education services. In the 2018/2019 school year, at least 50% of the white students who were secluded received special education services. In the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 school year, all of the white students who were secluded received special education services. Additionally in the 2019/2020 school year, 100% of the 35 Latinas secluded received special education services and at least 75% of the six Black females received special education services.

In looking at these figures, Black females and Latinas who do not receive special education services are far more likely to be restrained, both physically and mechanically, than their white classmates. Furthermore, mechanical restraints, which are only enacted by police officers, were executed 100 percent more times on Black females and Latinas who did not receive special education. Removing the special education filter from the data, Black females were restrained at a ratio of 4:1 when compared to their white counterparts. Additionally, Black females and Latinas who do not receive special education services are also more likely to be secluded.

District discipline is informative to my study because it highlights what actions each district found worthy to examine and to punish. In Foucault's Theory of Discipline, the three factors that make up discipline, scale of control, identification of what needs to be controlled, and method of control, can be utilized when viewing the district discipline data. School districts value docile individuals. The categories of "endangering behavior" and "other school rule violation" demonstrate the most ambiguous areas for removing students.

**Table 6**

*Seclusion and Restraint Data for Kenosha Unified School District*

| | 2018–2019 | | | | | 2019–2020 | | | | | 2020–2021 | | | | | 2021–2022 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | H | A | B | W | T | H | A | B | W | T | H | A | B | W | T | H | A | B | W | T |
| Mechanical restraint - male | 2[a] | | 4 | 2[c] | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 4[a] | 3[c] | | | | 5[b] | 8[b] | 2[a] |
| Mechanical restraint - female | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 9 | 3[c] | 1[c] |
| Physical restraint - male | 38[b] | | 49[b] | 66[b] | 18[b] | 4[b] | | 27[b] | 21[a] | 5[c] | 11[a] | | 44[b] | 44[b] | 1[c] | | | 95[b] | 49[b] | 12[a] |
| Physical restraint - female | 12[a] | | 12 | 6[a] | 1[c] | 13[c] | | 10[b] | 19[b] | | 5[b] | | 6[a] | 11[c] | 2 | 10[a] | | 10[a] | 9[c] | 4[a] |
| Seclusion - male | 29[c] | 5 | 57[b] | 59[b] | 17[c] | 46[b] | | 15[b] | 8[a] | 14 | 2[c] | | 19[b] | 8[c] | | 3[c] | | 30[b] | 4[c] | |
| Seclusion - female | 8 | | 3 | 8[a] | | 35[c] | | 6[b] | 27[c] | | | | 2 | 4[c] | | | | 1 | | |

H-Hispanic A-Asian B-Black W-White T-Two or more races

[a]Indicates number is at least 50% students receiving special education services

[b]Indicates number is at least 75% students receiving special education services

[c]Indicates number is 100% students receiving special education services

**Conclusion:**

The chapter on district data included district rationale for SROs, analysis of the evaluations of the SRO program and recommendations, themes in the handbook, disciplinary actions of districts in combination with discipline action data, and seclusion and restraint data. The district rationale for hiring SROs provided the lens with which SROs approached their position. The evaluations and recommendations demonstrated an understanding by the district of the components of the position and changes that needed to be made. The themes of the handbook, district discipline actions and data showed the focus of the district on maintaining docile individuals. Finally, the section on seclusion and restraint laid out how Kenosha Area School District managed the bodies of their students who they viewed as most in need of containment. Combined, this chapter furnished an overview of the school environment the participants of this study encountered.

Ultimately, what this chapter demonstrated was the need of the district to control their students. The surveillance of students with the rights of an educator through the lens of a police officer is an element of control outlined in Foucault's Theory of Discipline. There is a power dynamic with the ultimate goal of management. This concept of control and need to manage the movements of students is defined by Foucault as discipline. Foucault's Theory of Discipline is beneficial in understanding how those who are not demonstrating docile behavior are treated. Surveillance of students exhibiting actions that are considered "endangering behavior" or "other violation of school rules" are removed.

Foucault's Theory of Discipline aids in understanding the areas of interest and the measures used by school districts to manage the behavior of students. The primary areas that districts see as potential for losing control are: fights or assaults, bullying or harassing,

truancies, threats, civil disobedience, chronic disruption or violation of school rules, disruptive behavior, being uncooperative, public displays of affection and hallway issues. The use of surveillance of students affords the district control. The use of consequences ranging from parental contact to expulsion or being charged by the police is the discipline required to maintain docile individuals. For students who cannot comply with the rules are removed thus eliminating their access to education.

District discipline data demonstrates the areas in which the districts focus their efforts and the documentation of the penalties assigned. The vagueness of the categories that are utilized most and the disproportionality in disciplining specifically Black students provides an understanding of the environment in which the participants attended school. Again, relying on Foucault's Theory of Discipline there is a focus on creating docile individuals. The data demonstrates the removal of those who cannot comply.

Seclusion and restraint are another documented means of controlling the behaviors of students. The data in Kenosha Unified School District demonstrates that Black females who are not in special education are more likely to be mechanically or physically restrained. This is the most severe form of demanding compliance and demonstrating a docile body. Restraints are a means of forcing someone to become docile by taking away their ability to move.

Finally, the review of district documents regarding SROs revealed each district's purpose in having an SRO. The focus across the districts was safety and a connection between the school district and the police department. Understanding why the SROs believed themselves to be in schools is necessary when looking at how they interacted with students.

White Institutional Space also offers another lens through which to consider this information. As indicated in the conceptual framework, school staff are predominantly white

individuals making schools a “white space”. In this capacity, students of color understand the behavior that is expected of them which is to be quiet and docile. This expectation is reiterated in the rules that are outlined in the handbook and the areas in which students are most greatly surveilled and disciplined: “endangering behavior” or “other violation of school rules”.

Students of color are required to navigate the white racial frame, and this inhibits their “ability to participate in develop, through critical discourse, well constructed arguments about race and the law” (Moore, 2008, p. 152). This disparity in consequences for Black and Latinx students is apparent in the district discipline data. Specifically for Black students, they are disproportionately suspended and expelled for infractions, some of which can be described as ambiguous.

# Chapter 6: Findings

## The Power of Being in the Inner Circle

### Introduction

In this chapter, I look at how the perceived social status of my participants and the other students they observed impacted the interactions these students had with SROs and security guards. It is easy to think of relationships between police officers and students as monolithic, however, the young women reported that how police related to students varied substantially. The participants understood that there were a group of students who had strong relationships with the SRO and/or with the security guards, and they acknowledged the significance of the relationships. Those students were far less likely to get into trouble and more likely to be defended by the SRO and/or security guards. In these situations, the girls in the study shared their thoughts about the relationships between the SRO and the students they perceived to be sheltered from consequences. Additionally, the girls shared how they managed their own voices and bodies when there was an SRO and/or security guard nearby. They shared how they made sense of altering their normal behaviors to stay safe. They disclosed stories of what they and their friends and classmates experienced when they did not modify their behaviors, and they explained how experiencing those interactions or seeing those interactions impacted them.

In many schools, there is a hierarchy of social status among students. There are numerous factors that impact this hierarchy. There are factors that affect how a student is perceived by his or her peers. Physical attractiveness and aggression are two key features related to a student's popularity (Borch et al., 2011; Zwaan et al., 2013). Eckert (1989) found that a student's position in the social hierarchy of a school has a direct impact on the opportunities he or she is afforded. O'Connor et al. (2011) determined that academic success for the Black girls

where they were placed in higher level courses of study meant an increase in their social isolation. They had to choose whether to accept academic challenges that placed them in classes separate from a majority of their peers or maintain peer relations at the expense of academic rigor. As we look at the students that the participants see as receiving preferential treatment, it is first important to establish that there is a division of students who are seen as the inner circle.

Students understand that there is a hierarchy at play in social structures. Shin (2017) puts forth that this is, in part, what determines friend groups. “Adolescents often select each other as friends when they have similar popularity, and individual popularity changes depending on the popularity of peers they hang around with” (p. 2305). The young women in my study were aware of the student hierarchies within their school. They made a connection between their status and the kind of interactions they had with the SRO and/or security guards. The girls within my study shared their narratives and how they retrospectively made sense of the experiences that they had or that they witnessed with the SRO in their school.

I organized the chapter by first looking at the criteria participants viewed as beneficial in establishing strong, positive relationships with the security guards. Next, I discuss ways in which the relationships between SROs and security guards and some students that were perceived as inappropriate. Then, I analyze the perceived benefits of being a “favorite” of an SRO or security guard. After that, I looked at elements that participants believed inhibited relationship development with SROs. And finally, I consider actions by the security guards that made them appear more approachable and relationship-oriented.

## The Inner Circle

### *The Significance of Being a School Athlete*

Black female and Latina students recognized that some students received preferential treatment from SROs and security guards' and were spared from disciplinary actions. Across all of the participants, there was a range in the preferential treatment that was observed. Baina, who was 16 years old at the time of our first interview and 18 years old at the time of our second interview, identified as Black and female, and attended La Crosse School District. She recognized that those individuals she identified as the favorites could "get away with anything." They could "be on their phone in class" or "be disruptive and loud" and they did not get into trouble.

Other participants also saw the actions of the SRO and security guards as more favorable to some students than to others. Jadalyn, who was 25 years old at the time of her interview and identified as Hispanic and female, assigned meaning to actions she saw. She attended Madison Metropolitan School District, and she identified the students she viewed as the favorites by how the security guards or SROs acted. One of the security guards, Gretchen, sat with Jadalyn and her friends every day at lunch. Because of this, Jadalyn believed that she and her friends were a favored group. Karina, a 23-year-old immigrant from Mexico who identified as female and Latina and also attended Madison Metropolitan School District, determined who the favored students were seeing the students with whom she saw the SRO talk. Egypt, a 25-year-old female who identified as Black and attended school in the Kenosha Unified School District, ascertained who she believed to be the favorites by establishing the students with whom the SRO and security guards spent time. Chloe, a 26-year-old Black female who attended school in Madison Metropolitan School district, and Sarena, who was 21 years old, identified as Black and female

and described herself as “Black privileged,” both knew they were part of a group of favored students and determined that their role as an athlete assisted in establishing this status.

Participants' relationships with SROs and security guards impacted how they made sense of the students they identified as favorites and as they made sense of how the favorite students established their designation [Table 8]. Chloe and Sarena were both part of the group of students who received beneficial treatment. They were both athletes, and they both recognized how their identification as an athlete was the criteria by which they were chosen. Baina and Egypt were not athletes; however, both recognized the impact of being a student athlete on the relationships those students had with SROs and security guards. Egypt, Karina, Jadalyn, Amareyna, and Baina did not identify as students who were favored, but they did recognize the favoritism when they saw the SROs or security guards interacting with other students. To summarize:

**Favored Status:** Chloe, Sarena

**Not-Favored Status:** Egypt, Karina, Jadalyn, Amareyna, Baina, Zenalisa, Necie

Table 7
*Differential Status - Favored versus Not-Favored*

| Favored | Not-Favored |
| --- | --- |
| Chloe | Egypt |
| Sarena | Karina |
| | Jadalyn |
| | Amareyna |
| | Baina |
| | Zenalisa |
| | Necie |

The participants who were part of the “not favored” group understood what that meant and the characteristics they needed to espouse in order to avoid surveillance. Some participants were able to navigate this unwritten expectation easily, while others went back and forth in their ability; others still consistently challenged these expectations. For example, when Baina confronted a teacher about a comment he made that she thought was insensitive, she understood that as she got louder, she was putting herself on the radar and being noticed by school staff. She described herself as “loud and proud”, and she was told by another teacher to “act properly”. Baina accepted that her intensity is what drove the request. “He’s trying to tell us to be calm because we’re over exaggerating. We  need to calm down and talk to him properly, and I had to let him know every time a Black woman with a voice stands up for us, right, and she is being loud and proud about it…you always have to gang up on us”. She understood that her behavior triggered a response from the teacher because it did not fall into the acceptable norms of the school.

As participants looked at the students that they saw develop the most significant relationships with SROs, they identified student athletes as the most prevalent group. Sarena and Chloe both recognized that as school athletes, they were afforded preferential treatment. Sarena perceived that she experienced the preferential treatment for being in the group of students favored by SROs and security guards first hand and believed it was because of her status as an athlete. Describing herself as “Black privileged” because she played basketball, Sarena highlighted the power that student athletes had in her school: “Meaning that because I played a sport, I never had any issues with teachers or our SRO officer, as you call it. I just call it liaison officer. I was lucky that I've never had any issues.” She understood that because of her status she was afforded certain leniencies: “But the thing is is me and my brother Joe were part

of the basketball team and, essentially, we were considered like star players on the team". Until she reached high school, Sarena did not recall having any issues with anyone around race. Once she reached high school, that changed, and she understood the benefit of being part of the protected class of athletes.

Being a preferred student, Sarena realized that the SROs and security guards afforded her certain latitudes.

> And I never really had any issues with them like he would talk to me, and he was like super nice to me and things like that, and I never had any issues with him, and all the people he's ever ever had issues were non-student athletes. Like all the Black individuals he had issues with were non student athletes.

She acknowledged that if she was not an athlete, she would have probably been treated differently. More importantly, she recognized that all of the people that the SRO and security guards did have issues with her Black and not athletes. Without saying it, Sarena acknowledged that being white and being and/or being an athlete protected students in some capacity.

Like Sarena, Chloe was an athlete. She played basketball, and while she was an athlete and part of the group of students favored by the SROs and security guards, she did not describe herself as a favorite of the SRO or security guards. Instead, she made sense of her interaction with the SRO or the security guards for different reasons. Chloe saw her protected status arising from the friend group to which she was associated. Admittedly, her friend group contained primarily student athletes. Chloe described her friend group as a lot like her:

> I mean, honestly, like I yeah, I mean, I wasn't like doing anything crazy. I also kind of hung out with a lot of I guess. Yeah, a lot of people who are like me…but just didn't really like a lot of drama. Just wanted to kind of just float around and have fun and, you know.

She argued that the connection the security guard had with students dictated the way in which he interacted with them. For Chloe and her friends, she realized that they were protected: "He

[was] more lenient, I guess, with kids he knew, which was mine." In this situation, Chloe did not recognize the impact of her status as a school athlete. As discussed later, she was aware that as a Black individual she had to be careful about what she said and did in order to stay safe, but she was not aware of other factors that played into her being protected.

Egypt, who was not an athlete, did notice and identify the difference in the way that student athletes in her school were treated by the SRO and the security guards. She recognized that if they were going to get into trouble, the security guards would work very hard to get them out of trouble.

> Int: So depending on who was there determined how they responded? So like athlete? Popular kid? No trouble?
>
> Egypt: Basically. Yeah. Okay, like to get them out of trouble as much as possible. Yeah, just just in general…But for certain students. They definitely work very hard to get some people out of trouble. And to like keep them up, like athletes, of course, they [are] like oh, she was with me. It's cool. It's cool. Oh, always covering for like athletes, and definitely some of the favorite, more popular kids, but then again, though, the popular kids are usually like the athletes or like you know, like the boyfriend or girlfriend of athletes. So they would always be there anyways.

She acknowledged that this most likely happened, at least in part, because of the relationships these students developed with the SRO and security guards. She noted that the benefits of preferential treatment extended from the athletes to their boyfriends and girlfriends as well. She speculated that it might be because of the time they spent hanging around outside of the gym and that is also where the SROs and security guards hung out. The relationships they developed led to preferential treatment.

Egypt also observed that the preferential status meant that the SROs and security guards did not address behaviors by athletes even when it negatively impacted other students. She shared the narrative that one of the big athletes in school used to physically hurt his girlfriend, and it was never addressed:

> Micky's definitely like they used to do stuff to Katie and they [the security guards] definitely would see it and they definitely would not do anything to Micky's because he was definitely an athlete player…Like he was literally grabbed her in the hallway and they would do nothing. Absolutely nothing.

She indicated that to her knowledge he was not stopped or reprimanded. This situation reiterated to Egypt that athletes were a protected class of students who could not get in trouble. It also sent the message that if you were important enough in the school hierarchy, you could physically hurt others without fear of consequences. Egypt's recollection was that the only time security stepped in was when he threatened a teacher, and even that did not get him expelled. While eventually, he was expelled, it was not until after his season was over and it was, in her opinion, way too late. In this example, Egypt saw that an athlete could go as far as abusing another student or threatening a teacher with no repercussions. He was untouchable. Based on his actions, he seemed to know it, and other students in the building knew it too.

As Egypt made sense of how Micky was treated, she saw that as an athlete he was afforded latitudes around his behaviors. Additionally, she recognized that when they finally did hold him accountable for his behaviors, it was after his athletic season was over. The school benefited from his athletic prowess, and they did not hold him accountable until after he was no longer valuable athletically to them.

> So like way later in the year, like way, way, way, way later…so even then he got expelled way too late. Like there was one too many incidents. Yeah. Up to the point of his expulsion, he should have gotten expelled probably the first time he put his hands on [her] like that.

Egypt recognized the power that being an athlete had for Micky who could do whatever he wanted to his girlfriend, and no one protected her until it was "way too late."

Jadalyn was able to identify the preferred treatment that was afforded to athletes during their season and then the less than preferential treatment they received after their season.

Jadalyn shared that the security guard in her school, Gretchen, was close with her and her circle of friends. She also shared that Gretchen hated Jadalyn's then boyfriend and now fiance, David, who played football, hockey, and cross country. He was very involved. Because athletes were required to maintain good grades, Jadalyn shared that he went to class. During his senior year, things changed. She thought it was because he was "sick of school" and she posited he figured "I'm done with hockey" and he figured that "there's no reason for me to really keep trying at this point." The way he interacted with his classes changed, and he was more likely to skip. Jadalyn asserted that once David's hockey season was over and his attitude changed, Gretchen was "on top of him":

> He played football. He played hockey. He did cross-country. He was a theater kid, so he was like really involved in school. So therefore he had to maintain his grades, so he could continue playing all these sports, but I think it was towards senior year when he was just sick of school, and was like I'm I'm done with it. I'm done with hockey. So therefore there's no reason for me to really keep trying at this point …but he didn't care as much then, and that was really when she was like on top of him. And really, you know, getting him in trouble for not being in class.

The change in treatment from when he was an athlete to when he was not was noticeably different to Jadalyn.

Like Sarena, Chloe, and Egypt, Baina included athletes into this category. They were students who played sports; she said, "They're part of a sport, and they're, like, popular." She did not spend much time on how she saw their preferential treatment manifest, but she knew there was a small population of elite students and then there was the rest of the student body.

### Power of Being "White" and "Popular"

Besides athletes, there were a few other students who received preferential treatment. Baina and Karina both saw the same types of individuals afforded certain leniencies that made their high school experiences smoother. Besides athletes, Baina also added three more categories: "preppy," "popular," and "white." Briana stated, "But it's usually the preppy popular

kids that white kids that they (the SROs and security) kind of associate themselves with." She openly acknowledged that she was not part of this group. She made sense of the discrepancy in treatment in the way that she viewed the role of students of color in the school. She maintained that while she saw herself as smart, she did not play sports and was definitely not part of this inside group. She made the connection that a lot of the students she would describe as the "favorites" were white students. She felt as though there was a population of students who were used as a "platform to make our school look good," and she was part of that group, but the school was not doing anything to make the experience for those students positive. Instead, she saw the experiences of the small population of the elite to be the focus of the district. She also indicated that those who received preferential treatment were the worst offenders of using racial and sexual slurs. The relationship they had with the SRO and security guards empowered these students to push the boundaries on school policies and procedures. What Baina did not recognize was the significance of the impact of both having preferential treatment and not having preferential treatment.

Karina noticed that a student's position in the social hierarchy dictated their importance to the SRO or security guards. Like Baina, she also identified students who were "white" and "popular" as those who received preferential treatment from the SROs and security guards. "But if I did ever hear the police officer talk it was always with like, really popular kids. Okay. Oh, really popular white kids because they know their parents or you know." Being able to converse with the SROs and security guards allowed students the opportunity to develop positive relationships with them that would ultimately end up benefiting the student.

***The Importance of Professionalism***

Egypt focused a lot on the lack of professionalism displayed by both SROs and security guards. She was especially concerned that the relationships they developed with students were inappropriate. She thought that the SROs and security guards needed stronger boundaries. The first area in which she saw this was in the way that they developed relationships with specific students. The second way she saw this was in the way she engaged in gossip and promoted unkind behaviors.

Egypt believed that the SROs and security guards were a little too friendly with some of the female students:

> I've noticed that like they would attach themselves to certain certain girls, and it was just very weird to me considering they are overly grown men with like wives and kids like yes, like the same age as like us.

She indicated that when she was in high school there was conversation among girls she knew that demonstrated the girls were aware of the behavior, stating, “I do remember too like, like girls saying stuff to administrators and being like, there's no reason for him to be like looking at me like that.” Egypt’s recollection was that nothing ever changed and that the administrators did not address the issue.

As an adult removed from the school environment and reflecting back, Egypt took a more serious stance on these interactions:

> Security guards, since most of them were men, I'm not going to lie, I feel like they were preying on like the high school girls. Okay. Oh, yeah. I'm not even gonna lie to you. I feel like they were definitely. They had their favorites, you know and stuff like that. We all knew who the favorites were. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. So there was that…Looking back as an adult now is like that's weird because you're like 20-30-40 [years old] Why are you so close…with like, a 15 year old?

And she saw the commonalities in the girls that attained the most attention from the security guards. She stated, “They are super cool,” “They had like the big personalities,” “They were

always fun," "It was always like some of the sports girls...like they would be a lot by like the gym area," and "They were, you know, like, the pretty girls. They were definitely, I will say, they had more womanly attributes…" She also acknowledged that the girlfriends' of athletes were in this group, and she assumed that it was because they all hung out near the gym and the common time with the security guards permitted bonds to be formed. Egypt pointed out that this was not the fault of the girls. She believed it was the responsibility of the adults to maintain the appropriate boundaries.

Egypt also saw the lines of conversations taken up by the SRO or security guards as inappropriate. It was not unusual for them to gossip with students: "They definitely got it. Like there's they [the security guards] would go back and tell their students like gossip…They [would] definitely gossip with other students and stuff like that. Yeah, they love the gossip." And while they were aware they could not touch the girls, they did engage in conversations with high school males about the exploits the high school males had with the high school girls. She stated, "But like definitely and I've also heard you know, like, like the guy's having like guy talk like with the security guards and stuff like that about the girls." Security guards were also heard discussing which girls they thought were cute, and sometimes about the interactions they shared with parents of the students that Egypt thought was inappropriate for conversation:

> There's definitely been some talk about, like, you know, security guards. I've heard I've heard like, very, like inappropriate rumors like security guards and how they're involved like some of the students' parents or how they think that student is cute …

Egypt included these in the unprofessional behaviors she said that she saw in the security guards.

Another way that Egypt saw the security guards as being unprofessional was in how they would laugh at what students did even when it was mean. She saw security guards laugh

when students were bullying other students or when students were laughing at other students. She experienced this with one of her classmates and a security guard: “Like myself. I remember like, like some like little like boys trying to bully me and like making fun of me and crack[ing] jokes. And though the security guards would like be laughing along with them.” The laughing, joking, and comradery alludes to a familiarity between individuals. Furthermore, instead of protecting students from these behaviors, the security guards become complicit in them.

Necie added to this sentiment by discussing the fondness SROs had for drama. Necie, who was 18 years old, identified as Black and female, attended Kenosha Unified School District and was Egypt’s younger sister, also spoke about the professionalism of the security guards. She shared that one of the things she hated most about being at school was all of the drama. “They like they love the drama. I'm telling you. The security guards were as much as in the drama as the kids were.” Through their behaviors, the security guards highlight areas that they see as acceptable and individuals who are protected. She admitted her mom was some type of security guard but indicated that she acted differently than the other security guards.

***Familiarity Breeds Favoritism or Loathing***

Amareyna and Jadalyn both identified the preferred students for SROs and security by who the SROs and security guards addressed. Amareyna, attended Kenosha Unified School District, was 19 years old and identified as Black and female, indicated that it was as simple as watching for the students to whom they said “hi.” She determined that a student’s level of familiarity with the SRO or security guards was an indicator for how they were treated. Her description of how the SROs and security guards interacted with students who were not in their preferred group is not anything that would be noticed unless an individual was aware of the dynamic. She stated,

> I would say, around certain students that they're pretty familiar with, they would say hi, you know, for other students that kind of just, you know, walk past, you know, they weren't like, total, total total jerks. You know, they were just like, you know, say hi to the familiar students and just kind of walk past 50/50.

Amareyna's use of the verbiage "total, total, total jerks" gives an indication of the potential they have to interact with students in a hurtful way. It also demonstrates that she recognized the potential for the SRO or security guards to treat students unkindly.

Jadalyn could tell who their preferred students were by who said "hi" to them. That was the most subtle indicator. There were also obvious indicators, such as the way that the security guard, Gretchen, acted with Jadalyn and her friends:

> You definitely could tell when they had their favorites. They, you know, there were a lot of kids that would just say hi to them, or like, how's it going, or like Gretchen, the female one, would come and sit with us during lunch…

Just as Jadalyn knew she was in the preferred group for Gretchen, she knew that her boyfriend, David, was not. Jadalyn knew that there were other students that Gretchen did not like because Gretchen was pretty obvious about it. Jadalyn explained, "She was not afraid to tell you or show you that she didn't like you." Jadalyn shared the example of her boyfriend, David, and how Gretchen treated him: "She hated him [and] like would go out of her way to find him in the hallways….single him out specifically." Jadalyn saw her "get[ting] him in trouble for not going to class." Gretchen was familiar with David; however, rather than talking to him to get him to go to class, Jadalyn recalled that Gretchen got him into trouble for not being in class. What Jadalyn witnessed was what happened if you were not in Gretchen's inner circle and protected. David was just one example of how Gretchen treated students she did not like. Jadalyn also said that "she's chased a couple of people into the bathroom before." Ultimately, you did not wonder how Gretchen felt about you. According to Jadalyn, "If she didn't like you, she didn't like you, and you knew it." In these interactions, Gretchen wielded a fair amount of power. She could

determine who would get into trouble and who would not. The deciding factor appeared to be the subjective determination of how Gretchen felt about you.

Likewise, Sarena noted that if you were not one of the preferred students, you were "treated differently." Even Sarena, who was a student-athlete and considered herself "Black privileged" saw herself out of the favored group when the criteria was adjusted. She realized that she was afforded some protection because of her position as an athlete, but she also realized that whiteness and money provide even more of a protected circle. Sarena had a strong understanding of the environment in which she was being educated. She believed that about 85% of the school was white and the rest were students of color. She knew that a lot of the students who attended her school came from affluent families. She indicated that one family donated three point five million dollars to the school for a field. She also recognized the impact this kind of affluence had on those who did not have money, explaining,

> And like if you weren't in the inner circle, you got treated differently, if that makes sense. Like, yeah that administrative or like teachers who watched all these other kids grow up and things like that. So, typically, most of the black kids that live there didn't have that privilege. So you were outsiders working your way into their system, like conforming to their society it almost felt like.

So even within the preferred circles, there were still hierarchies that could shift a student into preferred or out of preferred depending on which criteria was applied. In order to fit in and be successful, Sarena understood the need to conform to who she was to a more "white" way of existing. While being athletic was one way to earn privileged status, being white or being wealthy, components over which students had no control, were perceived as direct routes to preferential treatment.

Baina spoke about the benefits of being one of the preferred students. Through her description it is clear that there are definite perks to being on this list. It allows the student to act in any way they choose, and they are free from consequences:

> [Their favorites] are the only people they are nice to…They literally let them get away with anything. They could be on their phone in class. Oh, that's okay because that's one of their favorites. They can be disruptive and loud, or in the hallways, or literally in class without a hallway pass, leaving. Oh, no, it's okay, because they'll just talk to the SRO for five minutes and go do whatever they want to do. Like they genuinely pick and choose.

These types of preferred treatments definitely draw a line between the students who have and those who do not.

***Relationship Barriers***

The participants discussed the relationships that were developed between students and SROs and/or security guards. The police uniform came up as a reason that participants were wary of the SROs and not so much of the security guards. The appearance of an individual with a uniform made them appear much less approachable. More specifically, guns and handcuffs were noted as two components that students found most off-putting. Egypt, Jadalyn, Zenalisa, Karina, and Baina all saw the SRO uniform as an aspect that prevented students from developing relationships with SROs.

Egypt talked about the SROs in her school. Of the two, she could only remember the name of one. She remembered very clearly that he had handcuffs. She stated, “But there was one cop, and he actually had like handcuffs, just like Gonzalez.” She went on to talk about how much more approachable the security guards were specifically because of their attire.

Jadalyn had the same mindset. She shared that she was more comfortable with the security guards and speculated as to whether or not it was because of the uniform:

> I definitely felt a little more comfortable with the security guards, and I don't know if it's just like their uniforms, because the resource officers were, you know, their full uniform

> like police attire, where the security guards were some black dress pants and a gray shirt that might say security in the corner. They didn't carry a gun.

She specifically pointed out that the security guards "didn't carry a gun," and it was apparent that the way that the SRO dressed impacted the way in which she received his presence. Later in the interview, Jadalyn spoke to the impact of the SROs uniform.

> Int: Did it have one vibe with SRO's present and another vibe, or was it the same across?
>
> Jadalyn: I think so. I think it was different. I think it definitely felt more felt scarier with the resource officer again. I think a lot of it has to do with just that uniform and the gun that he carried.

Again, for Jadalyn, the gun was her focus.

Like Jadalyn, Zenalisa focused on the SRO having a gun as a concerning condition that led to students not being able to engage with them. She accepts the need for security guards within schools, but not police officers:

> I think I think it's good to have security guards. You know, people who are trained to deal with those type of confrontations. You know, I don't think you need [an] officer with a gun, handcuffs, mace, and a baton in school. It's not jail. You know, I think having security is fine. But when you have officers stationed in the school, I think it's a bit much.

She specifically cites "a gun, handcuffs, mace, and a baton" as the factors that she sees as alienating.

Karina also indicated the SROs gun as an identifying marker of his uniform and his position within the school, saying, "Because he would wear like his whole thing with a gun and everything…" The noting of the gun is an indicator that students were aware of it, and it held a specific meaning to them.

Finally, Baina indicated that the SROs "gun" and "walkie-talkie" were indicators that differentiated them from the security guards. She also shared that the way that they looked at

students made them far less approachable. “People are literally mean-mugging you from across the hall.”

When thinking about security guards wearing more formal uniforms, Egypt was torn. She went back and forth as to whether or not she thought security guards should have uniforms to make them more identifiable. She described their current attire as “lax,” and said that security guards were identifiable because they wore walkie talkies. She thought with their current attire they looked more “approachable” and they “blended in.” If they went to uniforms, she thought this would change, and she speculated as to why the school might want to make the change. “I mean, probably to make them more political because then everyone would be like, scared of them anyways, if they were actually wearing like security guard, you know, outfits, right? Because they definitely [would] be less approachable.” Egypt’s comments highlight both the need for appropriate boundaries, the lack of appropriate boundaries, and her feeling that there was a choice to be made. Either someone could instill fear and with that fear came power, or they could be relational. She did not see any way that these two entities could exist within the same space.

Ultimately, with her connection that not having serious uniforms made them more approachable, Egypt determined that she thought that security guards should wear uniforms because of the way that they acted. She stated, “Okay, and saying that, it's like, I feel like it would be better if they wore like, you know, security or type of outfits, but I will say just in terms of like, how they acted.” Egypt wanted more of a line drawn for security guards so that they would maintain a level of professionalism she did not believe they currently had:

> I feel like they maybe shouldn't have been as approachable you know, as they were or so cool with the students because again, these are kids, right and not saying they can't be cool with kids. You know what I mean? Because, you know, if you actually like your job, you know, like, then you'd like you know, like working with kids. That's fine. But,

> you know, once we get into the predatory stuff, and the extreme favoritism, that's just, there's like a, there's a line.

In her mind, the uniform of the police was an aspect that while it kept students as more hesitant to develop relationships and might even frighten students, it was also necessary for drawing a line of appropriateness. Egypt saw a definite need for more precise boundaries specifically for the security guards.

***Security Guards Worked for the Relationships***

The focus on how uniforms, guns, and handcuffs impede relationship development also highlights the significance that students held on the relationships they were able to develop with security guards. Relationships were very important to Amareyna, Jadalyn, Karina, Necie, and Zenalisa. Their ability to relate to security guards positively impacted their high school career or the high school career of someone close to them.

Amareyna noticed security guards building positive relationships with students. She saw it as the responsibility of the SRO and security guards to help students who were struggling make better choices. She wanted them to guide students to “follow rules” and “stop getting in trouble.” Her cousin had an officer who was there every time she got in trouble. They had a “respectful relationship” and Amareyna described him as “very sweet.”

She thought that the relationships that SROs and security guards had with students was better than the relationships students had with the deans. She speculated it was because of the effort made by the security guards to get to know the students. “They would conversate with students in the hallway during passing time. They would build a strong relationship.” For Amareyna, this meant that the SRO and security guards could apply positive pressure to students that would potentially make the student more successful.

Furthermore, Amareyna saw the security guard as someone who could assist the student and to keep them calm. She saw their demeanor as beneficial to the relationship development with students, "But most of the times like they were very friendly. They were very friendly, more friendly than the police." She indicated that this really mattered when a student needed to be pulled out of a classroom, saying, "Because if there was an officer that there would pull somebody out of classroom, there also be like a security or somebody else there one of their favorites to kind of calm down." In a situation where high emotions were possible, there was a benefit in Amareyna's opinion of having someone that the student perceived knew them.

Jadalyn looked at the fear students felt. She also spoke about how the relationships developed between students and security guards led students to be less afraid of interactions or discussions regarding a bad choice they had made: "I felt like people just had a little or better relationship with them [security guards], you know, and so I think it wasn't as if you weren't as afraid." When students got in trouble, they realized that they still would have consequences but there was not the same fear as there was when it was the SRO. She explained,

> And so I think it wasn't as if you weren't as afraid, or you really are afraid, you just know, like, oh, crap! Now I'm in trouble kind of thing. But I don't think it was like this terrifying feeling where I'm like, oh, my gosh, I I really screwed up kind of thing.

Jadalyn's feelings indicate that there is a level of trust rooted in the relationship between the security guard and the student. In these interactions, the student recognized that they were still in trouble, but did not feel the same amount of fear. Furthermore, the way that security guards presented was not as intimidating as the way SRO presented: "I think it definitely felt more felt scarier with the resource officer again. I think a lot of it has to do with just that uniform and the gun that he carried." The security guards ability to be approachable is what makes the difference for Jadalyn. She did not expect to get away without any consequences, but she did not fear

retaliation. Instead, because of the relationship that existed, it appeared that she trusted the security guard to hold her accountable in a way that was fair.

Karina viewed security guards as more interested in students and from their engagement the security guards developed stronger relationships with the students. She also saw security guards as more involved than the SROs. She stated, “Actually, I always said that security did more than the police officer.” She saw the role of the security guard including “getting along with the kids, [and] participating in all the classes.” On top of that, she saw the security guards doing more to develop relationships with the students:

> One of them was my coach, my basketball coach. He would like invite you to, like your family, to have dinner. Or if you're going through something, he'll like, he would give you money and like stuff like that.

Her description of their actions shows them going above and beyond the standard expectations of any employee of a school. She also juxtaposed the behavior she saw from the security guards with how she saw her interactions with the SRO: “The police officer never even looked at me.” There is a drastic difference in how Karina made sense of both interactions. In the interaction with the SRO, she does not feel seen, literally. Then, with the security guard, he filled a positive role in her life; he is her coach. He also demonstrates care and concern for her and her family. He fed them, and also possibly gave her money.

Necie was selective in the security guards with whom she developed relationships and it impacted how she discerned their effectiveness. With most security guards, Necie felt like she was “walking on eggshells.” She was worried that they would start something with her over “something that’s super dumb.” She knew who would take issue with her no matter what and who would leave her alone or support her. Necie said that there was one security guard who was a woman who “did her job,” according to Necie. She checked up on Necie and made sure she

was in class, but Necie perceived her to be the only security guard who checked on her in a positive way. Even though the security guard was looking to make sure that Necie was doing what she was supposed to be doing, she did not take it haphazardly. Instead, she compliments her and has respect for her.

Zenalisa, who was 23 years old, identified as Black, female, and queer and attended school in Milwaukee School District, saw the relationships that security guards developed with students as integral to the success of the students. She saw the security guards as "less reactive" and recognized that the relationships developed because "the security guards see us every day. They engage with us. Some of them even have rapport with the students." She saw the security guards as individuals who looked out for the students, saying,

> And you know, some even security guards try to keep the students out of trouble. So that way they don't have to do you know calling the police to come break a fight or, you know, get people you know, taken to jail or anything of that nature.

She saw the security guards as advocates of the students who were pushing for the students to be successful:

> Like they wanted us to come to school, get our education. So I feel like they, they didn't really want to do those things (get students taken to jail), but because of the things that we did they have to do it.

Through this lens, Zenalisa understood that when the security guards did get the police involved or when students were arrested because of an interaction they engaged in, it was not because the security guard wanted the student to get in trouble, but because the actions of the students demanded it. While the same statement could be made about the SROs, understanding was only afforded to the security guards as Zenalisa made sense of their actions. Because of this, Zenalisa thought it was good to have security guards in schools because they were "people who are trained to deal with those types of confrontations," but schools did not need an "officer with a

gun, mace, and a baton in schools." She viewed the security guards as less reactive than the police or the SROs, and she credited that to the relationships they built with the students.

Furthermore, Zenalisa saw security guards acting as mentors to students who needed encouragement to make better choices. They would tell them things like "go to class" and "focus on school" or "don't worry about the drama." She saw a benefit to their presence.

> I think having security guards is safer. It's more of a better option. It also makes the children feel safe. I feel like because like I said you can build a report the security guards and those security guards tend to look out for you. They tend to keep you out of trouble.

She did not feel the same way about having SROs in the school.

***Students Have Favorites Too***

While much of the focus was on the way that students made sense of their relationships with SROs and security guards, the fact that students also have favorites surfaced. Egypt and Amareyna both spoke about ways in which students interacted with the SROs and security guards that demonstrated the preferences of the student. Egypt saw it in a more nefarious way as she spoke about the girls in her high school who were attracted to a specific security guard. Egypt acknowledged that if a security guard was viewed as "cute," the girls would pay more attention to him. There was one security guard in her school that all the girls thought was cute and who received a lot of attention. The girls would "chop it up" with him. She saw him as the one responsible to hold a boundary.

Amareyna was more direct and saw less nuance to the interactions she shared that demonstrated that students had favorites when it came to SROs and security guards. "Some students have favorite officers." She saw this as a benefit when these students got into trouble. They were a person that the student would listen to and would leave a classroom, if necessary. "They would be like, No, give me this officer because I'm not coming with you." She also spoke

about how these individuals were instrumental in keeping students calm and able to interact with other adults: “Because if there was an officer that there would pull somebody out of classroom, there also be like a security or somebody else there one of their favorites to kind of calm down.” Amareyna recognized that for some students how they felt about the person taking them out of a classroom would dictate their reaction. If the SRO or security guard had a good relationship, the student was more likely to remain calm.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I look at what my participants perceive as the characteristics of their peers that afford them greater latitudes with SROs and security guards. Being a school athlete, being white, and being wealthy all weigh into how students are treated. There is an understanding of which students are in the inner circle and which students are not. There is also the perception that SROs and security guards can be inappropriate in the way that they talk with and about students, provide protection to some and not others, and engage in the activities and interactions in schools. There are also components to the interactions of security guards that make them a beneficial individual in schools. They are seen as caring more about students, advocating for students, developing relationships with students so they can calm them down when students are upset, and advocating for students. Because of this, students have favorite security guards who they trust and respect. Those individuals are able to work with them when the student is elevated. Security guards are perceived as more beneficial to the success of students than SROs.

As I examined the relationships that SROs and security guards had with students, it was noteworthy that the participants recognized that SROs and security guards treated specific students preferentially, and that athletes, white students, popular students, and wealthy students

were most likely to be in this category. While we use blunt categories like race and gender when we describe the way that students are treated, relationships are also impacted by status. Status characteristics among students in the same broad categories mattered. The participants who shared this perspective combined the descriptors “wealthy” and “white” in a way that indicated that they were one and the same. This aligns with the work of Welton et al. (2019) as social inequalities are maintained merely by the students identifying as white. Lewis and Diamond (2015) discussed how assumptions of affluence are tied to whiteness. Furthermore, some participants recognized what happened if you were not included in this inner circle. As these students of color are required to navigate the terrain paved by whiteness, the impact can affect their ultimate well being and success. Nayak (1997) posited the psychological harm incurred by Black individuals who are forced to navigate this terrain. These experiences also entrench the concepts embodied in white institutional spaces. The participants have their experiences reflected back to them through a white person’s lens thus normalizing the white perspective on their experiences (Moore, 2008).

The intersection of race, class, and gender is not a concept that the participants identified by name; however, they understood the power associated with being white (race) and being wealthy (class). Furthermore this intersectionality helps to explain the promotion of the athletes because of their status. Baina and Karina both talk about the benefit of being white. Just by being white, these students are afforded leniencies and privileges not afforded to students of color. Karina points out how the SRO had an outside relationship with the student based on his or her relationship with the parent of the student. Because of this commonality, these students were afforded the opportunity to spend time with the SRO and develop a relationship. Then,

while at school, these relationships benefited the students. There is power and acceptance just for having white skin.

Nonetheless, the way that security guards sexualized Black girls and Latinas highlights how these girls have to navigate two very different terrains of oppression. The first is their oppression as a member of a marginalized racial group. The second is the way that they are disparaged as a female. Both Black girls and Latinas are oversexualized (Childers-McKee & Bettez, 2015; Wun, 2016a). It is the navigation of the power dynamic that is associated with race and gender that is emphasized in multiracial feminism. As the girls mediate or witness the sexualization of the female body by the security guards, they are fielding a dynamic that hypersexualizes Black women and portrays Latinas as submissive and obedient (Collins, 1987; Hernandez, 2009; Morris, 2007; Muhammed & McArthur, 2015; West, 1995).

The development of relationships are beneficial to the student and to the SROs and/or security guards for a multitude of reasons. To start, when there is a strong relationship, the SROs and/or security guards can utilize this to mediate behaviors. Students are far more likely to respond to the request of someone with whom they have a relationship. From the students perspective, SROs and security guards are trusted adults. They can serve as a resource for a student who needs to trust in an adult. However, there are also aspects to these relationships that serve less honorable intentions. When SROs and/or security guards have the trust of students, there is the potential they are told information that could get student(s) into trouble. In this capacity, the relationships discussed by the participants are a nuanced form of surveillance. The information provided gives insight into actions that need to be controlled in order to maintain docile individuals. Additionally, there is a power dynamic already in place, and with additional

information further tips the scales to the benefit of the SRO and/or security guards. These relationships serve the interest of the school in their desire to maintain control of their students.

The elements of Foucault's Theory of Discipline is evident in the interactions the participants describe with SROs and security guards. There is a focus on creating and maintaining docile individuals. Baina, for example, describes herself as "loud and proud", but she knows that this is going to cause issues. She is told by a teacher to "act properly" indicating that there *is* a correct way to act. Baina accepted that her intensity is what drove the request. "He's trying to tell us to be calm because we're over exaggerating. We need to calm down and talk to him properly, and I had to let him know every time a Black woman with a voice stands up for us, right, and she is being loud and proud about it…you always have to gang up on us". Baina understands that the way she is acting is going to incite a reaction, and she described it as "gang[ing] up on us".

Not only does Foucault's Theory of Discipline drive the desire for docile bodies in schools, so does White Institutional Space. As has been reiterated before in my dissertation, schools are white space. Therefore, the behaviors accepted within are driven by the white individuals. Baina's teacher's focus on having her calm down highlights one of the criteria that he believes is important. Baina also says that she knows he wants her to "talk to him properly" indicating another component of that space. Furthermore, Baina had to navigate being told by a white person that she was not reading the situation clearly - one of the six tenets of White Institutional Space. The teacher wanted Baina to react in a very specific way, and the fact that she was not responding in that way was problematic for him and therefore problematic for her.

Several of the participants expressed concern with the SRO's uniform, specifically the gun. It made the participants feel wary and less likely to engage with them; however, the

uniform also created a definite boundary that one participant saw as imperative to maintaining respectful relationships. Furthermore, when it came to building relationships, security guards were much more successful in developing and maintaining relationships with students because the participants saw them as making more of an effort and caring more about the ultimate well-being of the students. The security guards did this in a variety of ways: conversing in the hallways, not wearing a uniform, participating in classes, making efforts to get to know students, checking on students in a positive way, and being less reactive. However, the purpose and presence of the security guard, no matter how they presented themselves, was to observe and examine. Ultimately, their presence is used to maintain docile bodies. While the students view these relationships as positive, they do so because they are being rewarded with attention for acting the way the security guards want them to. The more docile and accommodating the students are, the greater the reward which leads to further buy-in to the behavior. The cyclical nature of this relationship was discussed in Chapter Three and demonstrated through Figure 3.

# Chapter 7:

# Surviving High School

## Introduction.

As participants made sense of the impact of having SROs and security guards in the school, some recognized a difference in their own behaviors. They adjusted what they did and how they did it in order to avoid negative interactions with officers and guards. These adjustments were not just about following the rules, they were at times racialized because they required the girls to engage in behaviors to overcome controlling images of them as girls of color (Collins). Although the participants could comprehend the overall basis under which the school district rationalized needing SROs and security guards in the schools, they worked to make sense of their experiences with them and how those experiences reconciled with the district's rationale. It is at this juncture that the disconnect occurred for the participants.

## Quiet, Polite, and Safe

### *Chloe*

Chloe, Sarena, Necie, and Jadalyn all learned to tone down how they acted and sounded in order to limit their exposure. Chloe worked to blend into the environment. Sarena made sure she acted in a way that was not considered aggressive. Necie understood that being quiet and keeping your head down limited your vulnerability with SROs or security guards. Jadalyn knew to be polite. While each participant navigated different ways to "stay under the radar," they all understood the benefit to doing so. As they made sense of adjusting their actions, or choosing not to, the participants balanced expressing their personalities with their desire to stay safe and out of trouble. Carter (2007) posits how educators in schools, whether they are Black or white, instruct on the culture of power which embodies the priorities of white middle and upper class

individuals. Understanding how to navigate the priorities can lead to cultural capital. Cultural capital for white individuals can lead to economic gain. She points out that Black students also have cultural capital. “But instead of using it for long-term economic gain, they use cultural capital to maintain group identity and distinctive cultural boundaries (p. 49). If Black students understand the cultural capital of the white individuals, they possess the information necessary to participate in the arenas where they can make money and achieve success.

Chloe had positive interactions with the SRO and security guards in her school. As an athlete, she was a favored student who experienced positive interactions with SRO and security guards, as discussed in the last chapter. Her role as an athlete also put her in situations where she had to interact with police officers in a different capacity. As a member of the basketball team, Chloe attended basketball tournaments in Milwaukee. Chloe observed that when Black people were present at places like basketball tournaments or the mall, police presence was more likely. She observed that the greater the percentage of Black individuals, the greater the police presence.

> A lot of the times like at basketball tournaments, which was kind of funny, like we knew, like if we were going to be playing in Milwaukee, where there’d be like a lot of Black teams, we knew to expect a lot of police officers.

In those situations, Chloe had already figured out how to manage her behavior in order to stay under the radar of the police.

> Int: What was your feeling or what was your feeling towards police officers?
> It sounds like you had a pretty good relationship with the school resource officer.
>
> Chloe: Yeah. And so I guess it really wasn't until like a lot of nationwide selling that I really oh my God…And like we my parents had that conversation with me, but I've just I've never I didn't really see it in Madison until I got older.
>
> Int: How about when you were with the basketball team and you went to like Milwaukee? I'm assuming you went to other schools.

> Chloe: Well, I mean, like in those instances, it's just like you kind of know.I wasn't scared….Like, you just kind of learn to assimilate. In order to just kind of, like, stay under the radar.

The way that Chloe spoke about her assimilation indicated that she had accepted the act as necessary in order to remain safe. For her assimilation was normal, something that you just did to “stay under the radar.” The ease with which she spoke about this was noteworthy, indicating that this was just something that she accepted.

She recognized that doing this kept her “under the radar”, and she made sense of the increased presence more because of the parents of the players rather than the players themselves.

> Int: And in those instances, did you ever see the officers like interact with any of the kids of color?
>
> Chloe: It was mostly be a lot of like the parents because you know, it's basketball games. They get a little heated. So it would be a lot of the parents of color that they would be like dealing with or escorting.

As Chloe made sense of the presence of the police at basketball tournaments, she recognized that an increase in the presence of Black individuals equated to an increase in police presence. She also acknowledged that the players’ parents caused more concern than the players themselves did. Her description of what triggered the interaction was that the parents “got a little heated.” This implies that the parents were possibly loud, more physical, and agitated. She observed that the police appeared to be defensive at these times. The police perceived that the parents were not acting in ways that are considered socially acceptable by white norms.

She credited the parents and not the police as the reason that there were no physical interactions between the two entities.

> Int: When they interacted with the parents, how were they?
>
> Chloe: Like, kind of on the defense.

Int: Did you ever see them get physical with any of the parents?

Chloe: No, you never saw that. I think the parents wouldn't really allow it to get that far. She identified that there was a raised state of tension, but because of the awareness and desire of the parents, the situation remained calm. "I mean, like, the same feeling you get when you see them [police officers] like on TV, doing some crazy stuff just like okay there's everywhere else." In this environment, Chloe's observations of the increased police presence, the heightened tension, and the behavior of the Black parents appeared to help her to make sense of how to adjust her own behavior to best interact when police officers were present. She understood if you "get heated," you get escorted out. And even then, if you are escorted out, it is up to you to remain calm so that the situation does not escalate. She accepts that police are permitted to do "some crazy stuff," and it is the responsibility of those engaged with them to make the correct decisions so that it does not negatively impact them. Chloe said all of this in a way that indicated that for her, this was just the way that things were.

Like the parents, Chloe recognized that her response to "assimilate" and "stay under the radar" was not a typical behavior or response, but she believed it was necessary.

> Int: Did you ever feel like you were in greater jeopardy of getting called out for something because of your color?
>
> Chloe: Yeah.
>
> Int: Okay, so did you mediate your behavior then or do you feel like you acted like you normally would and just knew where they were?
>
> Chloe: You for sure have to like change how you would normally respond. I don't know. It's like it's kind of bizarre because you have to like, stay calm and like make them not feel threatened when like you're the one in that position. Very odd feeling.

She acknowledges that she is the one in the "threatened" position; however, her response has to defer to the police officer and act as if the officer is the one in the "threatened" position. Chloe

knew how to do this. When she reflected, she realized that what she was required to do was to negotiate the feelings of the adult and the individual with power in the setting in order to keep herself safe. She did this and she saw Black parents doing it, reinforcing that this was the norm if you were a Black individual. In her case, the police at the tournaments were always white and always male.

Chloe shared that her parents had given her advice when she was growing up on how to interact with police officers. While she recognized that the conversation her parents had with her was very different from the conversation they had with her brothers, she also understood the importance of the message: “Be seen and not heard.” This aligns with her goal to “stay under the radar.” Her parents also instructed her that “the police officers aren’t wrong even if they are,” which coordinates with Chloe’s intention to “assimilate” to her environment. There was one ultimate objective: “The biggest takeaway is like, get out alive.”

For Chloe, there was a correlation between how she made sense of the techniques she used to mediate her behavior around police and the direction she was given by her parents in her interactions with police. Their advice aligned with characteristics of white norms: “Be seen and not heard.” Chloe’s parents knew that the social constructs that dictated white norms should be duplicated in order to afford their own child safety, even if it is not how she would typically respond. Her parents advice that “the police officers aren’t wrong even if they are” suggests that Chloe should not argue. She may be right in her argument, but because of the power dynamic, she will still be wrong. Her responsibility is to act like she believes that the police are “right,” but to know that, in actuality, they are not.

The presence of the police was to assure the desired behaviors of parents and players. This was achieved through surveillance with the threat of discipline. There were several officers

in order to assure a full scale of control with an understanding that what needed to be controlled were the reactions of the parents. While the players were not the focus of the surveillance, they were impacted by watching the mediation of their parents' behavior in order to stay under the radar. This has a significant impact on Chloe who recognized the alignment between her parent's actions and the advice they gave her around dealing with police officers.

***Sarena***

Like Chloe, Sarena understood the need to mediate her behaviors. She entered high school on the radar because of her older brother who was expelled during his freshman year of high school. She realized that as soon as teachers heard her last name, she was "watched like a hawk" and she was constantly compared to her siblings. She knew this was not a good thing for her. "I was terrified because my brother had an awful reputation." She juxtaposed the surveillance she experienced because of her brother's reputation with the surveillance she experienced as a star basketball player who had what she called "Black privilege." In both cases, she understood her actions were being observed. She had already made sense of the fact that if she acted like her brother, she would be excluded or removed. On the other hand, being observed as a star basketball player, as long as she toned down her behavior, afforded her opportunities and advantages. Her choices indicate that she understood the need to demonstrate being docile. Her brother did not demonstrate this characteristic, and he was expelled. Therefore, Sarena employed the exact opposite technique.

When it came to her behavior, Sarena attempted to stay under the radar. In order to do so, she realized that she needed to manage her behavior and alter the way that she interacted with others. She stated, "I never really had any issues with anyone at school, like, I never, I wasn't super like aggressive type like I would say what I say, and I wouldn't get loud about it."

Sarena realized that in order to blend in, she needed to be more passive and be quiet. She points out that she could not be seen as "aggressive" or "get loud about it." Those actions carried with them negative consequences. Instead, she acted in a way that was seen as more docile, and therefore, she was afforded more opportunities. This is highlighted in Chapter Three where Foucault demonstrated that individuals who were seen as more docile were afforded greater opportunities which then afforded them even more options. Sarena was caught in this cycle. So she would "try not to be as aggressive" and "get involved in the drama" because doing those things would make her seem "ghetto" or "ratchet." She specifically stated that she did not want to be seen as "ghetto" or "ratchet" and someone who would "overreact to things" by others in her school. She made the connection that if she was not docile and if she spoke her mind, this is how she would be seen. Ultimately, she knew that if she wanted to have "smooth sailing" and to "fit in" she had to alter her behavior; "So I acted white." She went so far as to point out "I had to go really white in high school."

Sarena's identification that she "had to go really white in high school" highlights her understanding of the type of behavior that would provide her with the best options. She did not explain what this meant in any further detail. Ahmed (2009) argued that whiteness is a characteristic that puts certain things, and not just physical things, in reach of the possessor. By acting white, Sarena was more likely to be included in the acquisition.

***Jadalyn***

Jadalyn also recognized the need to mediate her behavior in order to stay out of trouble. As she got older, she used her dislike for confrontation to help her negotiate her interactions with police:

> I think I just learned on my own to just be polite to just like, do what I'm told, and just like not fight against what they're saying…I don't like to argue. I don't I don't want problems, so you know I'm just polite and do what I'm asked kind of thing.

This speaks to her understanding of how she needed to act in order to stay under the radar and her desire to do so. Like Chloe, Jadalyn understood the need to act as if "the police officers aren't wrong, even if they are" by being "polite," "do[ing] what I'm told," and not "fight[ing] against what they are saying." What she is describing is acting in a docile manner. If she does that, she is given the opportunity to stay out of trouble. She recognizes the potential for trouble when she points out "I don't want problems." Jamin understands that if she pushes back, if she is not seen as docile and accommodating to the police, she could experience "problems." Additionally, Jadalyn's identification as Latina and female impact how what she said and did was seen and heard.

**Girls Who Are Seen as Ghetto and Ratchet**

According to the young women I interviewed, students who did not modify their behavior and "act white" were more likely to get into trouble with teachers, SROs, and security guards. Baina, Necie, and Sarena's best friend, Kadisha, all had narratives that demonstrate what happens to girls of color when they do not act docile.

***Baina***

When Baina talks, she is loud. She is direct and to the point, and she is unapologetic about who she is: "I had let him know every time a black woman with a voice stands up for what's right and she's being loud and proud about it." When she views something as wrong, Baina speaks up. During one encounter, she and three other students, one of them being her friend Necie, went to see a teacher because of a comment he made about the death of Daunte Wright. She explained, "And he was trying to kind of justify like if you've listened to the police

he wouldn't have died, if he would have just follow[ed] the rules." Baina was not in the classroom when the comment was made, nor did she have the class or the teacher, but she felt it was her responsibility to educate him on the impact his words had on students of color in his classroom. Baina's position was that a teacher, who had students of color in his classroom, should not have this opinion.

> We're trying to educate you because there are students of color in this these classes, like you can't have them these classes, and these are your opinions. Like as a teacher you shouldn't have those opinions, if you work in a school building with students of color and with students with disabilities, like all of these different students.

While his comment was the antecedent to what escalated to an incident that involved the SRO, it was not the cause of the SRO being called.

In the middle of their conversation, the bell rang to change classes, and the teacher went to leave to eat lunch. Baina took issue with his disregard for them and the conversation they were having: "And he was very disrespectful about it; just talking about well lunch isn't that long, and I need to go eat. Just like everybody else being very, very disrespectful about the entire situation." As the conversation was transpiring, Baina recognized that her voice was getting louder. She recognized the significance of her raised voice. She described her voice as "loud and proud," and she noted that having this voice made those in authority "gang up on us."

Baina's tone drew the attention of another teacher who came into the room and told the girls to "calm down," accused them of exaggerating, and told them to talk to the teacher "properly." The addition of another adult elevated the intensity of the conversation. He also attempted to normalize the white perspectives of their experiences, a component of white institutional spaces (Moore, 2008).

At the inclusion of another teacher, Baina's friend, Necie, started to cry and became emotional:

> She's like, why are you coming in here. It's like it's you're just berating us. Like it's not your conversation like. You need we're not talking to everybody else. We're only talking to him. Like we're just trying to talk to him and like you bring you bring yourself into the conversation isn't helping anything.

The room they were in impacted the interaction because it had all glass walls which posed the challenge of not being afforded any privacy. Everyone could see everything. She realized that a crowd of teachers had gathered, and she described them as "peering in like it's a show. Laughing about it. Pointing. Trying to egg her on, like being openly disrespectful."

As the situation escalated and drew in more teachers and administrators, Baina specifically requested that the SRO be kept out of the conversation. She thought his presence would only make things worse; however, when the administrator appeared, he brought the SRO with him. When they got into the room, Nalah was "starting to have a meltdown. He (the SRO) kept coming closer and kept trying to talk to her." At this point, Baina and her friends were surrounded by teachers who had come up to the room from the lunchroom. She stated, "So you have to understand like four high schoolers we're surrounded by all these teachers. It's like like everybody's freaking out like. We're so uncomfortable because it's like, even if we wanted to leave like were crowded everywhere." Baina's perspective was that all she wanted to do was to have a conversation with the teacher that was involved. She felt disrespected by his dismissal. She knew that she was loud, but she thought the teachers misunderstood her reasons for being loud.

> ...another teacher starts to come in, because [we] know we're getting a little little more loud, but it's not like we're getting loud trying to yell at him. What's because we're upset and we're trying to get him to understand how you feel.

As Baina shared the story, her voice got louder and her speech got faster. Her intensity was palpable. The conversation only ended when Baina told the principal that she was recording the encounter, and she and her friends left the school.

Baina firmly believed that she was right. She explicitly stated that the teacher's opinion was wrong: "Like your opinion is wrong and you may not feel like that but we know it is, and we're trying to educate you." She saw herself as trying to help him, but does not appear to be open to the idea that he might not want her help. Instead, she attracted a lot of attention, drawing in other teachers, administrators, and the SRO. Her yelling was not because she is "trying to yell at him," but because she is "upset and we're trying to get him to understand." Her insistence combined with Nalah's emotions and the loudness with which Baina is admittedly speaking runs counter to all of the characteristics of white norms that would keep her "under the radar." Additionally, Baina is not docile. She is also not intimidated by authority.  Furthermore, as a Black female, Baina is balancing the expectations and the oppressions of being Black and being a female. Both her race and gender can impact the way others view her ideas and opinions and then interact with her.

Baina had other experiences that reiterated the repercussions for interacting with others in a way that did not embody the characteristics of whiteness and of being docile. In her senior year, Baina's school setting changed from the high school to the local community college. Our second interview took place after she attended her last semester of high school at the local community college and graduating early. She shared that her local high school was "getting uncomfortable for me."

In the new location, she continued to have interactions with teachers that escalated to the point the teacher threatened to request the SRO. Baina did not draw the parallel between the first interaction that she shared with me when she was in the district school and the interaction she shared with me that occurred at the community college campus. For the interaction that occurred at the district school, Baina saw the teacher's inability to see that he was wrong as the

reason for the escalation. In the interaction that occurred at the community college, Baina saw it more as miscommunications. She viewed both incidents as occurring because teachers were not listening to what she was saying.

At the community college, Baina shared that she got upset when she failed the final exam that she needed to graduate by one point. She acknowledged that she was upset and loud. When the teacher approached her, she rationalized that while she understood the message that was being communicated to her by the teacher, that she would need to retake the exam, the news was upsetting so she was permitted to act upset. She stated, “And I’m explaining that I understand, that I'm just upset in this moment. I need a moment, so I can breathe and calm myself. Get myself together.” In addition to the teacher, another student complained that she was being loud. Baina’s position was that the teacher kept harping on the fact that Baina would need to retake the exam and that if she did not, she would not be able to graduate, and she might as well just go back to her original high school. She said, “And then, of course, she threatened to get the school resource officer, and so I started getting upset. Why are you getting the resource, officer? I'm telling you that I understand that I need to take this test.” In her opinion, there was no need for the SRO. She could not understand why the teacher was threatening her: “I mean, she threatened to get to the school resource officer, because I didn't want to take the test when that wasn't what I was saying like?” Baina saw this as more of a miscommunication. She was not saying that she would not take the test again, but she just needed time to express her frustration at failing the original test. She felt like no matter what she said, the teacher was hearing that she was refusing to take the test. Therefore, she viewed the teachers desire to contact the SRO to be predicated on them not being able to find a resolution they could both agree to:

> There's conflict, of course we could not come to a resolution that we could both agree on. It would be like something that they like. They want me to do something. I don't agree with that. I want to find something that works for both of us. They don't agree with that. So then they'll call the SRO.

Like the incident at the high school, while Baina realized that she was loud but she did not associate anything negative to being loud. Admittedly, she was upset: “I'm just upset that I have to retake the test after I just did like an hour and a half long test.” She did not see herself as disagreeable. “I'm telling you that I understand that I need to take this test.” The teacher threatening to call the SRO did not make sense to her, and so she got more upset. “So I started getting upset because I'm like, why are you getting the resource, officer?

Each of Baina’s narratives highlight the importance her tone of voice had on the situation. In both cases, Baina describes herself as loud but she does not appear to understand the impact of being loud. In Baina’s first narrative, her tone of voice is what she indicated drew the attention of other educators and led to the administrator bringing the SRO with him. Then, they wanted her and her friends to behave in a specific way more specifically to be less emotional. In her second narrative, her tone of voice and the intense emotion of the situation led to the teacher threatening to contact the SRO which Baina believed was unnecessary.

***Necie***

Necie knew that she was “on the radar.” While her mom worked for the school, Necie did not come to school on time and after a while she did not come to school at all. The fact that she was on “the radar” was reinforced because she was not allowed to do things that other students were allowed to do. She recalled a day when she was calling her sister during lunchtime because she had a fight with their mom. In her school students were permitted to use their phones during lunch. A security guard approached her and told her that she needed to hang up. She refused and started to walk away. When she pushed back, things escalated: “They were

like screaming at me like you, can't have your phone out. Hang up right now." Again, Necie pushed back. She stated,

> And so I was like, okay, like, No, I'm not going to do that because I'm talking to my sister right now. Like, you know, like, just give me a moment y'all hang up when I'm done venting and calm.

As they insisted and things continued to escalate, Necie walked away, mainly because they were yelling at her. She explained,

> They started following me around, so I tried to leave the lunchroom area, and I'm just trying to avoid them and I try like go in a different way. And I remember they…call[ed] down and they have like, officers like officers block, like my entire, like, way down the hallway. So it was like four officers standing in the way of the hallway, so I could not get through. And then they made me hang up my phone. And then they're like we're gonna suspend you. Like you're gonna go have a detention or you know, we will take your phone. All of that just over a phone call in the lunchroom that you were allowed to use.

Reflecting back on this moment, Necie and her sister Egypt questioned their professionalism.

The final straw for Necie participating in brick and mortar school was when the SRO threatened to arrest her for trying to go to class. Necie admittedly did not come to school on a regular basis. On one of the days that she came to school, Necie got into trouble in one of her classes, so she was sent to room "152. That's like the office where you can kind of sit down or whatever." An officer came in and told Necie she could not go to class, but she pushed back: "I was like, I am going to go to class. I came to school. I'm going to class." The officer threatened to put her in handcuffs and was "getting really slick at the mouth." They went back and forth in a power struggle:

> And he was like, you're not going to class. I will arrest you if I have to. I'm telling you. You're not leaving this office building. Like you're not going to class. I will arrest you if I have to. And I was like, well, you can do whatever you have to do because like I said I was [going to] class. I came to school today. I'm going to class.

The officer ended up leaving the room, and Necie went to class. The next day when her mom returned to work, the officer told her mom that they did not arrest Necie "for the simple fact that

they didn't want to cause a scene or anything like that.” Necie was incredulous that they were going to arrest her for going to class. “I’m a kid who doesn’t go to school, and you’re mad because I want to go to class?” It made no sense to her. Also noteworthy in this interaction was how Necie described the way in which the officer spoke to her as “slick at the mouth.” She characterized it as “he was getting aggressive at me.” So instead of working to deescalate the situation, the officer was looking to keep it going and get the last word in.

Necie also realized that being on “the radar” meant that when she was at school the security guards paid closer attention to what she was doing. “They would kind of always follow me around or something.” And they would try to get her to engage by “saying slick stuff.” What she learned was that she needed to avoid them to stay off the radar: “Let me keep my head down around them so they don’t say anything to me.” Necie learned that being quiet and docile protected her from getting into trouble.

Necie understood that part of what she was experiencing was connected to her being Black. She stated, “The only time a Black kid isn’t like, you know, demonized is like if they're an athlete or they're quiet. They keep their head down. They don't speak ever like if they're okay.” The power of being an athlete, even if you were Black, was discussed in the last chapter. Necie identifies that as one way to be safe. She identifies another way for a Black student to be safe is for them to be “quiet,” “keep their head down,” and “don’t speak ever.” Through these descriptors it is apparent that Necie understands how important it is, like Chloe’s parents advised, to “be seen and not heard.”

***Sarena for Kadisha***

While Sarena experienced “Black privilege” because of her status as an athlete, she was still affected by the treatment of her best friend, Kadisha, who was not an athlete and did not

have “Black privilege.” Kadisha experienced many challenges in school. Along with being Black, she was loud and intense in her interactions. Sarena shared that Kadisha was “seen as the ghetto, aggressive, Black girl of that school that everybody was terrified.” She believed that it was because Kadisha “didn't take anyone's bs and called you out on the spot. And that was kind of me and her thing.” While Kadisha elicited fear with her behavior, Sarena, who admittedly behaved in the same manner, did not. Sarena believed that this was because she “knew everybody, [was] on the team,...and [was seen] as a nice person.” So even when Sarena acted in the same way as Kadisha, her status as an athlete and as a member of the team buffered her from negative consequences. She was not viewed as “ghetto” or “aggressive.”

In one instance, Kadisha got angry when she heard a white student had made racial comments, and she went after her. Sarena is sure she would have fought had Sarena and Sarena’s cousin not been there to stop her. Kadisha had a second fight with her cousin, and she was suspended. Ultimately, Sarena shared that Kadisha had someone from the school assigned to her. “But they did have someone monitoring her while she was at school, at lunch or any free period. She had. They always wanted to know where she was.” It was not discussed with Kadisha, but he was always around. “She[‘d] like try to keep her distance from him because she didn't really like him.” Sarena also rationalized why Kadisha reacted:

> …all the time she ever really got into the situations with people at our school yelling at them, or anything was when they said racist comments in front of her. And she was held more accountable than the ones who said the racist comments, so it never really made sense to me to monitor her actions.

What Sarena learned from watching Kadisha’s interactions was that if you yelled, even if the reason you were yelling was justifiable, you were monitored. Unlike Chloe from earlier in this chapter who was willing to temper the tone of her message to stay under the radar, Kadisha did not appear to be concerned with being perceived as an “aggressive, Black woman.”

**Conclusion**

Since whiteness (Ahmed, 2009; Hyland, 2005; Lipsitz, 2019; Martin et al., 1996; Mueller, 2020; Welton et al., 2019) dictates what is acceptable in schools, students who do not follow those norms have the likelihood to suffer punitive repercussions. With 80 percent of teachers identifying as white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020), the potential for teachers to act in ways that entrench white norms as a race of power and make assumptions that further perpetuate specific belief systems (Hyland, 2005) is paramount. We see this in the ways that teachers demand a certain tone of voice and require almost instantaneous responses to requests for specific behaviors. For the Black girls, specifically, who are outspoken and loud, they find themselves subject to the pejorative connotations[10] associated with Black women (Collins, 1987; Morris, 2007; Muhammed & McArthur, 2015; West, 1995), and they are removed from the learning environment.

In this chapter, we saw how Black girls and Latinas learned to manage their bodies and their voices in order to “stay safe.” Based on several definitions, Schooley et al. (2019) defined whiteness as "a multidimensional construct that envelops racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences most prevalently, but not exclusively, related to white people and the privileged position white people embody in a racially hierarchical society" (p. 532). It is these attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that create the expectations to which Black girls and Latinas are held. It is impossible to find the characteristics of “acting white” because it is whatever white people say it is, and it can change depending on the time, circumstances, and person. Here I am not talking about peer dynamics among Black girls and Latinas and the accusation of acting white. Instead,

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[10] Tough, angry, bossy, loud, pushy, hostile, confrontational, seductive, promiscuous, hyper-sexualized, or ghetto.

I am referring to the institutional standards of schools to which the girls are often forced to acquiesce.

In schools "acting white" is associated with an expectation of quiet bodies and mouths. This is different from Fordham and Ogbu's (1986) explanation of acting white where " black students do poorly in school [because] they experience inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic effort and success" (p. 177). Quiet bodies and mouths is a standard to which all students are held, and it is obvious because the women in this chapter all provided examples of being quiet and still in order to be safe. For Black girls and Latinas this is a battle because of the assumptions made about them. Epstein et al. (2017) outlined the assumptions made about Black girls when they are compared to white girls who are the same age. Black girls are seen as needing less nurturing and less protection, and being supported and comforted less. Black girls are also seen as more independent and as knowing more about adult topics and sex. These assumptions hold profound implications when considering the interactions of Black girls with others and the repercussions for their actions. Taking these beliefs into consideration, Black girls in school settings are viewed as disruptive, disobedient, and defiant, thus leading to greater chances of being subject to discipline (Annamma et al., 2019), and more attention being placed on their manners and conduct than their academic growth (Morris, 2007). The participants in my study showed their understanding of these beliefs when they mediated how they acted. Like Chloe's mom said, "The officers aren't wrong even if they are." There is no chance to stick up for themselves or argue their positions. Instead, to stay safe, they stay quiet and still.

For students who were loud, like Egypt, Necie, Baina, and Kadisha, there are repercussions. These women had to make a choice to either act like themselves and be seen as

“ghetto” or “ratchet” or be quiet and stay safe and under the radar. When they chose to embrace their own voices and they went on the radar, they were then put into positions of having to interact with the SROs and security guards. While making these decisions, the participants had to handle the oppression that comes because of their race and then because of their gender, each holding separate implications. Applying the lens of multiracial feminism further considers the differences in life experiences that impact "alternative ways of understanding the social world and the experience of different groups of women within it" (Zinn & Dill, 1996, p. 328).

The actions and narratives of my participants reflect the expectations outlined in Foucault’s Theory of Discipline which also emphasizes docile bodies. Baina, Necie, and Kadisha were all examples of what would happen if you did not stay under the radar. With Kadisha, things went so far as she was constantly surveilled when in school and not in classes. While Baina and Necie did not experience this level of surveillance, they both also knew that standing up for themselves or what they believed in caused issues and they got into trouble. Baina stuck up for what she thought was right and Necie stuck up for herself.

On the other side, Chloe, Sarena, Necie, and Jadalyn all recognized how toning down how they acted afforded them greater access to opportunities. Chloe points out how she “learn[ed] to assimilate” in environments where there were police present in order to stay under the radar. She knew she had to change her behavior and stay calm in order for the police to stay calm.

# Chapter 8:

# Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

## Introduction

In the final chapter, I discuss my overall findings: the districts' purpose for their SROs and what they discovered in the evaluation of their programs and the recommendations they made, how the discipline data reveals the environment of the districts, the benefits of being in the inner circle, the reasons students preferred security guards to SROs, and the benefit of managing their bodies and voices. I also discuss the implications for practitioners and for future research. I organize it by first looking at the district material, then the impact of relationships, next preferential treatment, and finally the negotiation of behaviors. In regards to implications, I suggest ways in which school districts could better navigate the relationship between SROs and security guards and students and areas I believe would further the conversation regarding the role of SROs and security guards in schools.

## Discussion

In schools across the nation, there is a debate about the impact of SROs on students. Arguments to keep SROs in schools include that they help prevent school shootings (Protecting our Students, 2023) and help prevent crime and keep students safe (U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, n.d.). NASRO (n.d) outlined numerous reasons why SROs are not detrimental: "they do not contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline," "do not lead to an increased chance of students being arrested." Instead, these entities portray SROs as beneficial to the school community, arguing that they: "see themselves as more than just a police officer," "bridge the gap between youth and law enforcement," "prevent violence in schools," and "serve as a trusted adult within the community."

In contrast, activists argue that SRO's should be removed from schools. One main argument emphasizes the negative impact their presence has on students of color. There is an increase in the number of students, specifically those of color, entering the school-to-prison pipeline through the criminalization of behaviors (Annamma et al, 2014: Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Rocque, 2010; Simmons, 2009; Wallace et al., 2008). While the inception of SROs into schools was bolstered by school shootings, the research demonstrates that SROs do not prevent mass shootings (American Civil Liberties Union, 2021). James and McCallion (2013) posit that having an SRO in schools might prevent school shootings because a shooter may rethink attacking a school if they believe an SRO to be on-site. Additionally, if the SRO has a relationship with students it may be more likely that the shooting would be reported ahead of time. Finally, if there is a shooting and an SRO is on-site, there would be a faster response time; however, there is no research that supports their supposition.

Organizations that do not support the employment of SROs provide an additional counter narrative. They argue that the data around SRO's impact on behaviors and protection does not support their employment. The National Education Association posits that having an SRO in schools can "actually create higher rates of behavioral incidents and spikes in suspensions, expulsions, and arrests" (Patterson, 2022). Disability Rights Wisconsin (2020) argued that with the limited funds for education, money being spent on SROs could be better allocated to hiring social workers. The Healthy Schools Campaign (2020) contended that the removal of SROs from schools will support children's health and wellness. In looking at the bigger picture, SROs are not beneficial to the overall well being of students. Debates and differing perspectives demonstrate the varied perspectives.

Media in the areas in which the participants of this study were located provided a snapshot of the current climate around SROs based on recent events: “Kenosha Unified School District to review school resource officer contracts at May meeting” (Fores, 2022); “School Resource Officers are not a panacea” (Myers, 2023); “School Resource Officer memorandum moves forward for La Crosse School District” (Aarsvold, 2021); and “A Wisconsin district debates the effects of terminating school police” (Patton, 2022). These headlines indicate that having police in schools is a timely conversation. Currently, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, a 12-year-old girl is suing an off-duty Kenosha officer. He was acting as a security guard in the school in March of 2022 and knelt on her neck for more than 20 seconds when she engaged in a fight (Bentley, 2023).

In the spring of 2023, the Wisconsin Assembly voted to mandate SROs into schools that experienced a “high number of crimes” (Associated Press, 2023), which was determined to be “more than 100 incidents in a semester, and at least 25 of those result in an arrest” (Associated Press, 2023). The bill further designated that the officer who was hired must be armed. Proponents of the bill indicated that the motivation was reducing violence in the schools. Opponents of the bill saw it as an attack on the Milwaukee School District and the Madison Metropolitan School District, two of the Wisconsin Districts that removed SROs from schools after the murder of George Floyd. The infractions that call for an armed police officer to be employed by the school range from sexual assault to more ambiguous transgressions, such as possession or use of illegal drugs, which includes marijuana and alcohol, and disorderly conduct which is a subjective offense. The topic of police presence in schools and the impact that they have on students is timely and necessary.

In this study, I analyzed the perceptions of seven Black girls and two Latinas to understand how they made sense of the interactions they witnessed and experienced with SROs and security guards in public high schools in Wisconsin. I used a conceptual framework that addressed white institutional space, the impact of race and gender on interactions, and sense-making. With these theoretical tools, I examined how these women retrospectively made sense of the relationships they saw between the SRO and security guards and students in the building, how students' status impacted those relationships, the ways in which the girls and young women managed their behavior, and their experiences and observations of the consequences of not doing so.

***District Analysis***

The nine women I interviewed matriculated from five different districts. In the last five years, one of the districts did not evaluate their SRO program, one hired an outside evaluator to analyze their SRO program, and three of the districts created committees and embarked on a district evaluation of their SRO program.

While there was some consistency between districts when comparing them to each other, there was no consistency across all five districts. In their recommendations, suggestions ranged from adaptations to the district's policies and procedures to suggestions for training to outlining the role of the SRO on campus. This supports the stated concern that there is no consistency of responsibilities or expectations for an SRO on campus. NASRO promotes that the SRO has three focus areas in their position within a school: teacher, informal counselor, and law enforcement officer (Lambert & McGinty, 2002; Lynch et al., 2016; National Association of School Resource Officers, n.d.). In the district focus on responsibilities for SROs, there is no evidence of requests for SROs to teach or act as informal counselors. There is, however, a

considerable number of recommendations that center around the SROs role as a law enforcement officer. While the verbiage used in some of the recommendations highlight areas such as rectifying disproportionate discipline and the use of restorative justice, there is no further guidance on how these recommendations will be implemented and achieved. Bracy (2010) indicated that while the SRO's role has guidelines, very little is known about the way these guidelines are assumed and what consequences they may have for the students. Instead, the recommendations support the claim that SROs focus is more on activities that more closely resemble a security officer's focus (Lambert & McGinty, 2002). Furthermore, the results of the evaluations demonstrate the districts' understanding that the presence of SROs is problematic for students; however, their continued relationship demonstrates their focus on the feelings of safety for some at the expense of others.

Through the evaluation process, the four districts indicated that the purpose of having an SRO is to create a safe learning environment. Kenosha Unified School District, who did not evaluate their program, states in its contract that the SRO "act in the capacity of a sworn, on-duty police officer" (Kenosha Unified School District, 2021). The rest of the districts refer to the SRO being present to create an environment where learning can take place. When my participants reflected on the interactions they experienced and witnessed with SROs and security guards, they did not mention safety. Instead, they talked about how they saw SROs and security guards protecting some students and managing other students. While they did not say that they felt unsafe, some participants expressed discomfort in their interactions with SROs and security guards.

***The Impact of Relationships***

Where four of the five districts evaluated their programs, only two had points that focused on the relationships that SRO developed in the district. The interviews with the participants brought to light the significance of the relationships that SROs and security guards had with students in their districts. There were positive aspects to these relationships, such as students demonstrating trust with specific security guards and their requests for specific security guards when they got into trouble. There were also points of concern. There were areas where students believed that the SROs and security guards lacked professionalism because of the way they interacted with students. This variance speaks to the ambiguity around the role of the SRO in school districts.

Several of the participants noted that the SRO and security guards had relationships with students, but the relationships were based on the status of the student. Athletes and students who were wealthy and white took top seed. Students of color who were not athletes were pushed to the outside, where they saw those in the inner circle treated differently. The students in the inner were protected and allowed to break rules, like talking on their phones or being out of class without a pass.

One common factor that several of the girls shared was how the SRO uniform (including guns and handcuffs) made them uncomfortable and impacted how they interacted with them. This is especially problematic with the Wisconsin Assembly voting to mandate armed SROs in schools with a "high number of crimes" (Associated Press, 2023). Most specifically, the handcuffs and gun were off-putting to the girls and made them hesitant to engage. Security guards, while they worked harder on the relationships they developed with students, were also viewed as more approachable because they were not wearing a police uniform. Additionally,

whereas the security guards did not wear official uniforms, some participants wondered if this would be more helpful in providing stronger boundaries for students with security guards and would require security guards to act more professionally.

The girls also raised questions about the SROs professionalism. Egypt, for example, focused on the lack of professionalism the security guards showed in their relationships with students. She felt as though it crossed a line of appropriateness. She saw them "gossip" with some students and allowed what she described as bullying behaviors by not addressing it or stopping it from happening. She also saw that these blurred boundaries lines led the security guards to have students seen as their favorites. Those students were given latitude only experienced by some students.

### *Preferential Treatment*

As the women made sense of students' relationships with SROs and security guards, they shared specific criteria that set students up to be considered favorites. In other words, status hierarchies amongst students shaped how they were treated. Sarena and Chloe were both school athletes. Sarena recognized that being an athlete gave her "Black privilege". She even pointed out that the only "Black individuals [the SRO] had issues with were non-student athletes." Chloe assumed that the relationship between her and her friends, who were also athletes, and the SRO and security guards were just because of how they acted. Egypt went so far as to assert that a school athlete was allowed to physically abuse his girlfriend with no repercussions until after his season was over. Jadalyn's boyfriend, David, was "safe" and left alone while playing sports. However, as soon as his seasons were over, she watched Gretchen focus on him: "He didn't really care as much then [after his sports were over], and that was really when she was on top of him and really, you know, getting him in trouble for not being in class."

Athletes were not the only students who received preferential treatment. There was also power in being "white" and "popular," as shared by Baina and Karina. This realization speaks to the power of whiteness that exists within our schools. Based on several definitions, Schooley et al. (2019) defined whiteness as "a multidimensional construct that envelops racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences most prevalently, but not exclusively, related to white people and the privileged position white people embody in a racially hierarchical society" (p. 532). In Kariana's and Baina's experiences, being white led you to be a favorite of the SRO and/or security guards. Being a favorite meant "getting away with anything," being "on their phone in class," or being "disruptive and loud" and not getting into trouble. This is evidence that there is cultural and symbolic capital in being white (Diamond & Lewis, 2015; Lewis, 2003; Wallace, 2018), which provides white students with more freedom to behave in ways that violate official school rules. Additionally, the theory of White Institutional Spaces explains how white students can navigate interactions with greater ease than their classmates of color. This afforded them an extra edge.

Being white was not the only physical attribute that held capital. There were also physical attributes that led to certain females being preferred by the SRO and security guards. Moreover, there were social categories, such as race and gender, that shaped the participants' interactions and the interactions they observed with SROs and security guards. Egypt spoke about the way that the security guards favored some girls. She said that she heard other students also expressing concern about how some security guards looked at them, specifically around what they were wearing. When she described the girls, she said that they were "super cool," "had big personalities," "were always fun," "the pretty girls," and "they had more womanly attributes." As girls, these individuals navigated being part of two distinct marginalized groups.

The first was because they were women of color. The second was because they were women. There is oppression associated with both designations. Through the agency of multiracial feminism, women of diverse races can illuminate the stereotypes associated with their race and gender, such as Black women as matriarchal or hypersexual (Childers-McKee & Bettez, 2015). Egypt recognized the impact of sexuality on the relationships that developed between SROs, security guards, and students. She did not indicate that lines were crossed; however, she noted that the lines were blurred.

While we use blunt categories like race and gender when we describe how students are treated, there is an impact by status. Status characteristics within school-based student hierarchies in the same broad categories mattered. "Wealthy," "white," "popular," and "athlete" were the four categories of position that were named as being worthy of acquiring preferential treatment.

### *Negotiation of Behaviors*

As Black girls and Latinas made sense of the interactions they witnessed and experienced involving SROs and security guards, their sensemaking about how the district portrayed the presence of these entities with how they made sense of their own experiences varied. Their rationale for the presence of SROs and security guards included maintaining control of students, removing students from class, waiting for something to happen to help troubled students, funding, and school shootings.

Chloe, Sarena, and Jadalyn managed their behaviors. Baina, Egypt, and Necie managed their behaviors differently, so they experienced very different interactions with the SRO and security guards than Chloe, Sarena, and Jadalyn. Chloe, Sarena, and Jadalyn spoke of the techniques they used, such as "being polite," "learn to assimilate," "stay under the radar," "be

seen and not heard," and "get out alive." Chloe's mother summed it up when she told Chloe that during her interaction with the police, "they police officers aren't wrong, even if they are." All three girls understood that if the police approached them, their best chance of getting out unscathed was just to agree to whatever the officer said and do so in a way that showed deference to his position. At this moment, they have a choice. They can assert their position of being correct and risk harm or acquiesce to the officer's demands, and while there is harm as well, it is less tangible harm. While one is physical harm, the harm inflicted by submitting to the officer has an unmeasured impact on the women. There are implications for these women who must act in a way that is not authentic but prioritizes their safety. It forces them to choose how they will be controlled. Not addressing the inaccuracy of the officer's position allows him or her to believe they are correct. For the females, it means denying their own truth to allow someone else to believe that their truth is correct. But for the ones who practice this model, they do so without thought to this damage. Chloe directly references it when she speaks about how "you have to change how you normally respond" and "you have to stay calm and make them not feel threatened when like you're the one in that position." She describes it as a "very odd feeling."

As a result of managing their bodies and voices, Chloe, Sarena, and Jadalyn are all afforded access to their education. They are permitted to be in the academic space without incident. Baina, Necie, and Sarena's friend Kadisha are not afforded this same opportunity because they did not manage their bodies and voices in the same way. Instead, they are as Baina describes herself, "loud and proud." This comes at a very distinct cost. By not prescribing to the criteria of white institutional space, Baina puts herself at odds with her environment. What she is doing is seen as resisting white normative frames. Nayak (1997) posited the psychological harm incurred by Black individuals who are forced to navigate the terrain of whiteness. When

Baina stands up for herself and other students of color, she ends up in a confrontation not only with the teacher, but also other teachers that come to his support. She is told that she needs to "calm down" and talk to the teacher "properly." There is an obvious imbalance of power. There is also a desire to control the bodies of the students who are seen as loud and out of control. In these encounters, there is the impact of white norms and the expectation that the girls will be still, quiet, and compliant. This truly speaks to the influence of white normative culture and its roots in cultural racism. Franklin et al. (2006) spoke to this when they addressed how cultural racism is the dominant group's preferences that prescribe what is expected and not expected. In this situation, the expectation is that the girls will be calm and act properly, even if the situation does not dictate those reactions.

Diamond and Lewis (2019) recognized how racialized meaning impacts the consistency with which rules are enforced, guaranteeing some students access to rights and privileges while denying others. In this situation, Bania and her friends are denied access to their education because they are not complying with elements of the white normative culture that are in place at that moment with those specific teachers. But the bigger challenge faced is that when the actors in the room change, there is the potential for there to be a shift in the expectations. The shift may be a nuanced change, but the implication for the girls is that it increases the likelihood of them being out of compliance. When it was just the one teacher in the room, Bania and her friends were dealing with his expectations. The addition of another teacher added the expectation that she "calm down" and act "properly."

The third facet of close supervision creating intimidation is apparent in the placement of the SROs and security guards. Each of the participants described being supervised in some capacity. While some, like Baina, are more likely to speak out about it and push back, others,

like Sarena and Chloe, are more apt to capitulate to the pressure in order to "stay under the radar." While physical mediation is required for some participants, others fall prey to the factor of intimidation and do not question the requirements or their application.

Ultimately, the women each made sense of the interactions they had with the SRO and security guards in their own way. Some, such as Necie and Baina, understand that in order to be allowed access, they have to modify who they are as a person and they refuse to do so. This act of "defiance" comes at a cost, and the women are not afforded the same access to their education as those who acquiesce. What they experienced aligned with both Foucault's Theory of Discipline's call for docile bodies and the tone of an environment, one that honored docile bodies, being set by the white individuals as discussed in the Theory of White Institutional Space. For other participants, such as Chloe and Sarena, they saw benefits in acting a certain way in order to "stay under the radar," and they were afforded greater access to their education and to opportunities.

The inclusion of SROs and security guards in schools set up a focus on safety and the requirement that students be compliant. Vaguely outlined policies and procedures in the handbooks paved the path for students who were not docile to be excluded. Disproportionality in discipline assured that students of color were more likely to be suspended or expelled for ambiguous transgressions. SROs and security guards were one more tool used by districts to assure compliance and to discipline those who did not comply.

Additionally, having SROs and security guards in schools does make some students feel safe, but it is at the expense of other students' feeling under greater scrutiny and further marginalized. Furthermore, their presence highlighted the need for students who did not fall in the inner circle to manage their behavior in order to stay under the radar. The participants

recognized that if they were on the radar they were subject to greater scrutiny. In the spotlight, they were more likely to be excluded from educational opportunities. While students, like Necie, did not demonstrate a prioritization of her education through her actions, when she was in school she wanted to learn. She saw SROs and security guards as individuals who were looking to prevent her from learning by managing where she could go in the building.

## Implications

When it comes to my study and findings, there is vast potential for future research and for changes in practice. In this section, I will detail ways that I believe the conversation can be furthered through additional analysis of my research and possible research topics. Additionally, I will offer suggestions for changes in practice.

### *Research*

When it comes to the research on Black girls and Latinas and their interactions with SROs and security guards, the data is limited. The research that does exist is predominantly quantitative and focuses on Black males and Latinos. Connie Wun and Monique Morris have started the work, and their findings are foundational to future studies. While my study touched addresses how my participants made sense of their interactions with SROs and security guards, there is a vast amount of potential to dig deeper into their sensemaking and the impact these interactions had on them, both in the moment and over time. Speaking with more girls like Baina and Necie would offer further insights to the experiences and the impact of how these women make sense of the interactions they have with SROs and security guards.

I could find no qualitative studies that focused on SROs or security guards and how they made sense of the interactions they had with Black girls and Latinas. Understanding their perceptions and sensemaking would be helpful in determining future modifications in practice.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to study if having an SRO in schools prevents mass shootings.

Ideally, a study taking place in a high school where both the female participants and the SROs and security guards would provide excellent information about their perceptions and sensemaking in the moment. For example, how does the SRO and/or security guard(s) and the Black female and/or Latina see the same event or situation?

There is the potential to look more closely and more thoroughly at the district data available for public consumption. My district data consisted only of SRO program evaluations and recommendations for the past five years. A deeper dive into the district handbook and other public documents that discuss discipline would provide an interesting lens to the setting in which these girls made sense of their interactions.

There is the need for additional research on the impact of the role of a students' position in school-based hierarchies on their interactions with SROs and security guards. Additionally, research on the agency participants required in order to avoid contact with police and security guards needs to be explored further. This research should be for both males and females.

***Practice***

There are numerous places where modifications or adjustment in the practice of SROs and/or security guards could yield far better outcomes for Black girls and Latinas and for the academic environment. To begin, when it comes to the inclusion of SROs and security guards into schools, it is problematic that any known job requirements are ambiguous. This lack of clarity allows SROs and security guards to extend far outside the boundaries of what should be included in their job with no repercussions. It also makes it close to impossible to hold them

accountable for actions that overstep what would be considered typical or fair because there is no such thing as typical.

Additionally, school districts should seek to learn about the impact that the presence of SROs and security guards is having on their students. They should look at this information in categories such as race and gender, but then also complete an analysis by other groupings that became apparent in my study such as popularity and athleticism.

School districts should look at the impact of relationships with SROs and security guards and how a good relationship can positively impact students who struggle in the academic setting as well as the school environment. Creating an environment and opportunities for students who struggle to develop relationships with the SRO and security guards has the potential to have a positive impact on their academic experience and performance.

**Conclusion**

The study provides information on how a small group of Black girls and Latinas make sense of the interactions they have with SROs and security guards. Through the sensemaking of their experiences with SROs and security guards, my nine participants, Zenalisa, Sarena, Amareyna, Baina, Chloe, Egypt, Jadalyn, Karina, and Necie shed light how they perceive those who are in the inner circle and the impact of mediating their voices and the movement of their bodies. Through their narratives, we learned about the significance of being an athlete, the power of being “white” and “popular,” the downside of positive relationships, relationship barriers, security guards working hard for their relationships, and the understanding that students have favorites too. Additionally, we discovered the ways in which some Black girls and Latinas feel the need to mediate their behaviors in order to “stay safe” and “under the radar.” Some also shared their perceptions of what occurred if you were seen as “ghetto” or “ratchet.”

The findings have implications for both research and practice. More importantly, there is a demonstration of the need to further the conversation around the sensemaking Black girls and Latinas complete in regards to their interactions with SROs and security guards.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

**Freedom Inc.,**
M. Adams & Kabzuag Vaj
2110 Luann Lane
Madison WI 53513
info@freedom-inc.org

Freedom, Inc. (FI) is a Black and Southeast Asian non-profit organization that works with low- to no-income communities of color. Our mission is to achieve social justice through coupling direct services with leadership development and community organizing that will bring about social, political, cultural, and economic change resulting in the end of violence against women, gender-non-conforming and transgender folks, and children within communities of color. FI works to challenge the root causes of violence, poverty, racism and discrimination. Our belief is that people who are most affected by these issues must have voice, power, resources and choice, in order for true social change to happen.

**Boys and Girls Club of Dane County,**
Michael Johnson
2001 Taft Street
Madison, WI 53713

At Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, it is our goal to lead the way in youth development programs by working together with local businesses, foundations, and community programs to produce positive outcomes for nearly 7,750 young people and their families.

**The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness**
Lisa Peyton-Caire, MS.Ed.
PO Box 259831
Madison, WI 53725
info @ffvbww.org

Established in June 2012, The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness is a Wisconsin-based non-profit organization committed to mobilizing African American women to pursue and sustain mind-body-spirit wellness, and to raise the visibility and support of Black women's health as a community and public health priority.

**Urban League of Greater Madison**,
Ruban Anthony
2222 S. Park Street, Suite 200
Madison, wI 53713

Educate: To support and enhance the learning experiences of our youth in the classroom and the community so that they are prepared to realize their full potential in life.
Employ: To ensure that African Americans and others of working age are able to identify, train for and secure employment in stable and emerging industries.
Empower: To ensure that people of color are adequately empowered with the opportunity to transform their own communities, participate in social and cultural activities, and contribute to the common good of our region.

**Centro Hispano of Dane County**,
Karen Menendez Coller, Executive Director
810 West Badger Road
Madison, WI 53713
reception@micentro.org

Since its beginnings in 1983, Centro Hispano has provided a range or programs that support Dane County's Latino population. Throughout the years, the needs of the Latino population have changed, and today, our programs focus on youth, families and the community. We serve over 2,500 families every year through our programs and services.

**Latino Support Network of Dane County**,
https://www.facebook.com/LaSupNetwork/events/?ref=page_internal

The Latino Support Network is a consortium of health, community, and social service agencies and individuals interested in promoting the well-being of the Latino community.
The purpose of LaSup is to create a network of social service providers and others working with the Latino community in order to share information, to discuss, and find solutions to critical issues, and to learn about resources that exist in the community

**National Association of School Resource Officers**
200 Valleydale Road, Suite 207A
Hoover, AL 35244
205-739-6060

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) is dedicated to making schools and children safer by providing the highest quality training to school-based law enforcement officers. NASRO, the world's leader in school-based policing, is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators and school security and/or safety professionals who work as partners to protect schools and their students, faculty and staff members.

**Appendix B**

I am a Ph.D. student at UW Madison, and my dissertation topic focuses on the role of the School Resource Officer in the School-to-Prison pipeline looking specifically at Black and Latinx females. I am looking to interview individuals who identify as female, who are between 18-28 years old, who are enrolled in school, who identify as Black and/or Latinx, and who have had an interaction with an SRO that has impacted them. Participation would be one-hour interviews for which they would receive $20 gift cards. There is the possibility of having more than one interview, but for each interview in which they participate, they would receive another $20 gift card. I do not want to hold my study in a school district for fear that the environment will prevent the females from speaking honestly because they are worried about retribution.

If you have more questions, you can reach me at 608-228-1769 or at kcanderson22@wisc.edu. Dr. John Diamond is my advisor and his email is jbdiamond@wisc.edu if you would like to verify that I am who I say I am and that I have permission to hold this study. I have also attached the visual that I am sharing in hopes of finding participants.

# Appendix C

Kimberly Anderson
480 Medinah Street
Oregon, WI 53575

**Date**

Greetings [**Name of person who is in charge of organization],**

I would like to take a moment of your time to introduce myself and to request your assistance with a research project upon which I am embarking. I am a doctoral student at UW Madison in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, and I am seeking assistance finding research participants for my dissertation study.

I am researching the role of School Resource Officers and their relationship to Black and Latinx girls in the school-to-prison pipeline. I have looked at the research that has been completed, and these girls are a very understudied population who I believe deserve attention. I want to hear their stories and understand their perspectives of the interactions they have had with SROs. My desire is to be able to offer suggestions to SROs and school districts on how their interactions with these girls could be handled better on their side to deescalate the situation.

I have opted to try to work with organizations such as yours instead of working through school districts as I am concerned about the comfort of the girls; I do not want them to experience any repercussions for speaking with me. I need your help in disseminating a letter and a survey [both attached] to the girls in your organization who are currently between the ages of 13 and 21 and who are enrolled in school current, or who were enrolled in school during the 2020-2021 school year.

I would appreciate it if you would review this information and then permit me some time to speak with you to answer any of your questions. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Warmly,

Kimberly C. Anderson

**Appendix D**

*Handbook Coverage of Discipline*

| | Kenosha Unified School District | Madison Metropolitan School District | Milwaukee School District | Green Bay Area School District | La Crosse School District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Threat | Student/Staff<br><br>Verbally, in writing or by gesture expressing the intent to inflict bodily harm or property damage on any member of the school staff.<br><br>Discretionary Action | | Reasons for suspension:<br><br>Knowingly conveying any threat or false information concerning an attempt or alleged attempt being made or to be made to destroy any school property by means of explosives; or, 3. Conduct by the student while at school or while under the supervision of a school authority that endangers the property, health or safety of others which includes making a threat to the health or safety of a person or making a threat to damage property; or 4. Conduct while not at school or while not under the supervision of a school authority that endangers the property, health or safety of others at school or under the supervision of a school authority or endangers the property, health or safety of any district employee or School Board member which includes making a threat to the health or safety of a person or making a threat to damage property | Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional wellbeing and includes, but is not limited to, taunting, baiting, inciting and/or encouraging a viable fight, disruptions or other violation of school rules.<br><br>Students who violate this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and referral for expulsion.<br><br>When warranted, the District may notify the school resource officer of the student’s behavior or refer the matter to law enforcement authorities. In addition to disciplinary action, the student may be required to pay restitution or be subject to other sanctions provided by law. | Intimidation through the threat of force or violence against an individual’s person, possessions, or residence based on the classifications set forth above. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fight or Assault | Inflicting bodily harm on any student on school property.<br><br>Inflicting bodily harm on any member of the school staff.<br><br>Suspension<br>Police Involvement | Hitting, slapping, pushing, grabbing, tripping, shoving, kicking, spitting, or any other inappropriate physical act of aggression by one student direct- ed at another student that does not rise to the level of excessive physical aggression (includes actions considered “play fighting”). Level 2, 3*<br><br>Excessive physical aggression (fighting or a physical attack against a student). Level 3, 4*<br><br>Incidental contact, including the use of an object, with a staff member of the DWSD or any adult who is legitimately exercising authority at the school or during any school activity. Level 3, 4*<br><br>Physical attack, including the use of an object, against a staff member of the DWSD or any adult who is legitimately exercising authority at the school or during any school activity. Level 5* (pgs. 45-46). | Physical confrontation between two or more students - Striking another student or staff member - Students gathering to encourage a fight or assault by means of cheering, taunting video streaming, video recording, and/or posting about the incident on social media will be subject to discipline.<br><br>Parental contact / Suspension / Police Referral / Expulsion (p. 45). | Violent behavior shall mean behavior or actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur including, but limited to, fighting<br>Students who violate this policy shall be subject to school disciplinary measures, including suspension and expulsion, and may be subject to referral to law enforcement authorities for prosecution under applicable laws (p. 39). | Unnecessary roughness, pushing, shoving, kicking, using fists, or any other physical or verbal conflict are considered types of fighting. Play fighting, shadow boxing, etc., is also prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.<br><br>Police may talk to student w/o parent present<br><br>Charge of disorderly conduct, assault and/ or battery<br><br>Suspension, referral or fine (p. 19). |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bullying/ Harassment | Harassing, intimidating or threatening verbally or by gesture, the safety or welfare of another student either directly, indirectly, including cyberbullying.<br><br>Discretionary Action | Verbal, written, and non-verbal threats, or written or verbal put downs toward another person where there is no reasonable apprehension of bodily harm. Level 1, 2, 3*<br><br>Swearing, cursing or making obscene gestures, use of racial slurs, or protected class references directed toward another student. Level 2, 3*<br><br>Swearing, cursing, or making obscene gestures, use of racial slurs, or protected class references directed toward a staff member. Level 3, 4*<br><br>Serious threats, including but not limited to threats made over social media, to threaten someone or to cause a disruption. Level 3, 4* (pgs. 44-45). | Name calling, profanity, pestering, tormenting, or threatening actions that are meant to demean another person.<br><br>Ethnic, sexual, racial, or religious ▪Hate crimes (Federal law provides severe consequences) ▪Bullying<br><br>Warning ▪Detention(s) ▪Parental contact ▪Suspension ▪Police Referral ▪Expulsion | Bullying is a deliberate or intentional action or behavior, using words or actions, that is intended to cause fear, intimidation or harm. | Unwelcome physical contact or attacks on an individual or individuals for reasons related to sex, handicap, race, color, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, or emotional or learning disability. |
| Truancy/ Tardiness | Absent for more than 15 minutes w/o permission<br><br>Unexcused tardiness<br><br>Progressive Intervention | Not included | Misses more than 50% of the class<br><br>Progressive including citation and truancy referral. | A pattern of tardiness will be brought to the attention of the student's parent/guardian. Tardiness will be handled at the discretion of the individual building personnel.<br><br>Meeting with parent / referral for bldg consult / modification to academic program / referral to school or community resources / enrollment in alt. Program / referral to the court system by the SRO, citation from SRO | Unexcused absences may result in Simple Truancy citations, a habitual truancy citation, and/or a referral to County Human Services (p. 17). |

| Civil Disobedience / Chronic Disruption or Violation of School Rules / Disruptive Behavior / Uncooperative | Student protests, walk-outs and related actions that disrupt the educational process.<br><br>Discretionary Action<br><br>Failing to comply with the reasonable request of any member of the school staff. Violation of classroom rules<br><br>To insult, use derogatory names or obscenities verbally or in writing to any member of the school staff.<br><br>Discretionary Action | Behavior that disrupts instruction and the learning of other students In the classroom. - Level 1, 2, 3*<br><br>Taunting, baiting, inciting and/or encouraging a fight, a disruption, or other violation of school rules, including failure to disperse from a fight or disruption when directed by adults - Level 2, 3, 4*<br><br>Volatile Acts – Disorderly, violent, or threatening conduct of a serious nature that significantly disrupts school, a school-sponsored activity, or a school-supervised activity held off school premises. Level 3, 4*<br><br>Intentionally kicking, throwing, or releasing an object (including a snowball) that has a potential to cause a disruption, injury or property damage and/or the object makes physical contact with another student or peer when the act of throwing or releasing the object is not part of a supervised activity. Level 1, 2, 3* (p. 40). | Behavior that disrupts the educational process of others by involvement in misconduct that occurs on a regular basis over a period of time / repeated refusal to follow school rules.<br><br>Throwing objects ▪ Loud/disruptive noises ▪ Objects disruptive to the learning environment (i.e. squirt guns, stink bombs, etc.) ▪ Behavior that interferes with learning<br><br>▪Refusing to follow staff directions ▪Walking away from a staff member at an inappropriate time ▪Speaking in inappropriate manner or tone<br><br>Warning/ detention / parental contact/ suspension/ Removal from class /Withdrawal from class with a failing grade/police referral /Expulsion | Defiant by Action. Examples of defiant by action shall include, but are not limited to, leaving the classroom or school without the teacher's permission; being present on school premises during school hours without an educational purpose or permission; refusing to serve an assigned detention; activating or reporting a false alarm; or refusing to follow or walking away when asked to comply with school rules or instructions. 2. Defiant by Word. Examples of defiant by word shall include, but are not limited to, swearing, cursing, making obscene gestures in written or verbal form; and verbal written or non-verbal threats toward an adult where there is no reasonable fear of bodily harm. 3. Disruption. Examples of disruption shall include, but are not limited to, willfully or intentionally disregarding school rules and expectations; or repeated refusal or repeated neglect by a student to obey school rules and regulations<br><br>Disciplinary action - includes suspension and referral for expulsion. Possible referral to SRO or law enforcement. Potential disciplinary action, requirement to pay restitution or be subject to other sanctions provided by law. |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hallways | Inappropriate or disruptive behavior; including language and displays of affection<br><br>Discretionary Action | Periodically, administration may conduct hallway sweeps. When hallway sweeps are conducted, teachers will be instructed to close the classroom door after the bell rings and not allow any students to enter the room without a tardy/detention pass. During that time, students who are tardy and still in the hallways will be "swept up" and brought to the Commons. Administrators will issue appropriate consequences to all students who are brought to the Commons (p. 10). | Students must have a pass to be in the hallway except during passing time. Students who share a pass, do not have a pass, or forge a pass, will receive a detention and/or other disciplinary action.<br><br>Students are expected to use appropriate language at all times. Students swearing or using inappropriate language will be disciplined accordingly. Repeated offenses or prolonged inappropriate verbiage will be reported to the police as disorderly conduct. |
| Misc. rules | Students are expected to exemplify appropriate hygiene and dress standards that project an appropriate image for the student, school, and district. | It is understood that the rules contained in this handbook are not all inclusive. The administration and teachers may take such action as is necessary and not forbidden by law to insure the discipline and operation of the school. Action may be taken with respect to any offense which interferes with the orderly conduct of the school or which affects the safety and welfare of students either individually or collectively regardless of the existence or non-existence of a rule covering the offense. Acts that are crimes outside of school are also considered crimes in school, and they will be treated similarly (p. 13). | |

| Public Displays of Affection | See Hallways | Non-consensual bodily contact - Level 2, 3*<br><br>Consensual Sexual Activity – engaging in sexual intercourse, including oral sex and/or penetration. Level 3, 4*<br><br>Physically displaying one's buttocks, breasts, or genitals. Level 2, 3*<br><br>Removing or attempting to remove the clothing of another person in a manner that exposes or could expose undergarments or private body parts (e.g. pantsing). Level 3, 4*<br><br>Engaging in non-consensual sexual contact, including but not limited to intercourse, touching genitals, oral sex, penetration Level 5* (pgs. 46-7). | Provocative behavior / Inappropriate/ Excessive physical contact<br><br>Warning / detention / Parental contact/ Counseling referral/ Suspension/ Expulsion |
|---|---|---|---|

Level 1
- Classroom managed
- Is not a record that appears in Infinite Campus
- Classroom intervention before progressing to Level 2

Level 2
- Classroom or Support Staff managed
- May result in a removal from class
- May result in an In-School Suspension (ISS) for up to 1 day

Level 3
- Support Staff managed
- Assistant Principal or Principal may assign a designee
- Will result in 1-3 days of Out of School Suspension (OSS), unless Alternatives to Suspension applies (see "Alternatives to Suspension" accordion below)

Level 4
- Support Staff managed
- Assistant Principal or Principal may assign a designee
- Will result in 4-5 days of Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Level 5
- Support staff managed
- Assistant Principal or Principal lead the investigation
- School will consult with Coordinator of Progressive Discipline
- Will result in a 5 day Out of School Suspension (OSS) and recommendation for expulsio

## Appendix E

*Seclusion and Restraint Data for Districts*

| | 2018/2019 | | | | | | 2019/2020 | | | | | | 2020/2021* Pandemic | | | | | | 2021/2022 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SI | S | SwD | RI | R | RwD | SI | S | SwD | RI | R | RwD | SI | S | SwD | RI | R | RwD | SI | S | SwD | RI | R | RwD |
| MMSD | | | | | | | | | | | | | 90 | 31 | 24 | 238 | 42 | 31 | | | | | | |
| MKE | | | | | | | 91 | 79 | 56 | 753 | 441 | 2451 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 25 | 13 | 10 | 44 | 41 | 23 | 417 | 281 | 165 |
| GBA | | | | | | | | | | | | | 19 | 9 | 8 | 67 | 31 | 22 | | | | | | |
| LC | 312 | 79 | 58 | 180 | nd | nd | 228 | 55 | 41 | 136 | nd | nd | 55 | 19 | 17 | 43 | 18 | 18 | 50 | 23 | 18 | 32 | 24 | 21 |

**Appendix F**

*District Discipline Demographics 2018/2019*

| | School population | Assaults | Drugs & alcohol | Endangering behavior | Weapon related | Other school rule violation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kenosha Unified School District | 21,233 | 1458 | 196 | 651 | 29 | 1,615 |
| Madison Metropolitan School District | 26,917 | 1,107 | 77 | 435 | 42 | 872 |
| Milwaukee School District | 75,431 | 466 | 409 | 6,881 | 147 | 15,058 |
| Green Bay Area School District | 20,391 | 73 | 191 | 1,217 | 42 | 1,310 |
| La Crosse School District | 6,637 | 224 | 37 | 135 | 7 | 400 |

**Appendix G**

*2018/2019 Disciplinary Actions by District, Race, and Gender*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan School District | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expul-sion with services | Male | 51.6 | 37.5 | 51.2 | 87.5 | | | | | 51.6 | 61.5 |
| | Female | 48.4 | 62.5 | 48.78 | 12.5 | | | | | 48.4 | 38.5 |
| | I | 3.75 | 6.25 | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | 7.35 | 1.1 |
| | B | 9.18 | 37.5 | 14.19 | 62.5 | | | | | 51.5 | 77 |
| | H | 28.66 | 31.25 | 28.85 | 12.5 | | | | | 27.2 | 17.7 |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | 44.54 | 25 | 48.74 | 12.5 | | | | | 10.5 | 2.7 |
| | 2+ | | | 6.41 | 12.5 | | | | | 2.9 | 1.6 |

*Appendix G, continued*

| | Demographics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expulsion without services | Male | | | 51.2 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | | | | | | |
| | H | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | | | 48.7 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | 2+ | | | | | | | | | | |

*Appendix G, continued*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | Kenosha Unified | | Lacrosse | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Out of school suspen-sion | Male | 51.6 | | 51.2 | 71.2 | 51.1 | 67.6 | 51 | 57.7 | 51.5 | 61.9 |
| | Female | 48.4 | | 48.8 | 28.8 | 48.9 | 32.4 | 49 | 42.3 | 48.4 | 38.1 |
| | I | 3.8 | 9.1 | .2 | 0.2 | | | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| | A | 7.4 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 9.8 | 0.4 | 8.8 | 1.1 | 7.35 | 0.6 |
| | B | 9.2 | 21.1 | 14.2 | 42.7 | 4.9 | 18.7 | 17.9 | 58.3 | 51.5 | 80 |
| | H | 28.7 | 26.3 | 28.9 | 19.9 | 4.2 | 7.7 | 21.8 | 14.7 | 27.1 | 13.3 |
| | PI | 0.1 | 0.1 | | | | | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.03 |
| | W | 44.5 | 30 | 48.7 | 27.6 | 70.3 | 53.8 | 42.2 | 13 | 10.5 | 2.8 |
| | 2+ | 6.4 | 11.9 | 6.4 | 9.4 | 10.2 | 19.4 | 9.1 | 12.8 | 2.9 | 2.7 |

**Appendix H**

*2019/2020 Disciplinary Actions by District, Race, and Gender*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incident s (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expul-sion with services | Male | 51.4 | 66.7 | 51.5 | 81.3 | | | | | 51.7 | 61.6 |
| | Female | 48.6 | 33.3 | 48.6 | 18.8 | | | | | 48.4 | 38.4 |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | 7.5 | 3.5 |
| | B | | | 13.8 | 18.8 | | | | | 51 | 73.3 |
| | H | 29.7 | 66.7 | 28.9 | 62.5 | | | | | 27.4 | 17.4 |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | 43.1 | 33.3 | 48.5 | 12.5 | | | | | 10.1 | 4.7 |
| | 2+ | | | 6.8 | 6.3 | | | | | 3.3 | 1.2 |

*Appendix H, continued*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incident s (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expul-sion without services | Male | | | 51.5 | 33.3 | | | | | | |
| | Female | | | 48.6 | 66.7 | | | | | | |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | | | 13.8 | 66.7 | | | | | | |
| | H | | | 28.9 | 33.3 | | | | | | |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2+ | | | | | | | | | | |

*Appendix H, continued*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | Kenosha Unified | | Lacrosse | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Out of school suspen-sion | Male | 51.4 | 68 | 51.5 | 70.5 | 50.9 | 66.9 | 51.1 | 63.8 | 51.7 | 63.8 |
| | Female | 48.6 | 32 | 48.6 | 29.5 | 49.1 | 33.1 | 48.9 | 36.3 | 48.4 | 36.2 |
| | I | 3.6 | 9.3 | | | | | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| | A | 7.5 | 0.7 | 1.7 | 0.4 | 9.8 | 0.6 | 8.6 | 1.2 | 7.6 | 0.6 |
| | B | 9.2 | 25.5 | 13.8 | 40.7 | 4.9 | 13.8 | 17.8 | 56.9 | 51 | 80.4 |
| | H | 29.7 | 21.6 | 28.9 | 22.5 | 4.7 | 9.9 | 22.3 | 17.6 | 27.4 | 13 |
| | PI | 0.1 | 0.1 | | | | | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.02 |
| | W | 43.1 | 30.3 | 48.6 | 27 | 69.8 | 50.8 | 41.7 | 10.8 | 10.2 | 2.7 |
| | 2+ | 6.9 | 12.5 | 6.8 | 9.4 | 10.3 | 24.6 | 9.3 | 13.4 | 3.3 | 2.8 |

**Appendix I**

*2020/2021 Disciplinary Actions by District, Race, and Gender (Covid-19 Pandemic)*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expulsion with Services | Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Female | | | | | | | | | | |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | | | | | | |
| | H | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2+ | | | | | | | | | | |

| | Demographics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expulsion without services | Male | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Female | | | 48.7 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | | | | | | |
| | H | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | | | 47.8 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | 2+ | | | | | | | | | | |

*Appendix I, continued*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | Kenosha Unified | | Lacrosse | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Out of school suspen-sion | Male | 51.4 | 72.2 | 51.3 | 73.9 | 50.3 | 73 | 51 | 75 | 51.6 | 33.3 |
| | Female | 48.6 | 27.8 | 48.7 | 26.1 | 49.7 | 27 | 49 | 25 | 48.4 | 66.7 |
| | I | 3.6 | 7.8 | | | | | | | | |
| | A | 8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 0.2 | | | | | | |
| | B | 9.1 | 23.6 | 13.5 | 31.7 | 5.1 | 15.7 | 18 | 75 | 50.4 | 66.7 |
| | H | 30.5 | 17.3 | 29.6 | 21 | 5 | 9 | | | | |
| | PI | 0.1 | 0.4 | | | | | | | | |
| | W | 41.6 | 32.4 | 47.8 | 36.6 | 68.8 | 42.7 | 41 | 25 | 9.9 | 33.3 |
| | 2+ | 7.2 | 16.9 | 7.1 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 32.6 | | | | |

**Appendix J**

*2021/2022 Disciplinary Actions by District, Race, and Gender*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expulsion with services | Male | 51.4 | 100 | 51.1 | 58.8 | | | | | 51.7 | 59.2 |
| | Female | | | 48.9 | 41.2 | | | | | 48.3 | 40.5 |
| | I | | | | | | | | | 0.5 | 1.2 |
| | A | | | | | | | | | 8.1 | 0.6 |
| | B | | | 13.6 | 41.2 | | | | | 50.3 | 76.8 |
| | H | 31.5 | 100 | 30.2 | 41.2 | | | | | 27.8 | 18.5 |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | | | 46.9 | 5.9 | | | | | 9.6 | 1.2 |
| | 2+ | | | 7.4 | 11.8 | | | | | 3.8 | 1.8 |

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | KenoshaUnified | | Granite Valley | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee Area | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Expul-sion without services | Male | 51.4 | 42.9 | 51.1 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | Female | 48.7 | 57.1 | | | | | | | | |
| | I | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | | | | | | | | | | |
| | B | | | | | | | | | | |
| | H | 31.5 | 57.1 | 30.2 | 100 | | | | | | |
| | PI | | | | | | | | | | |
| | W | 40.1 | 14.3 | | | | | | | | |
| | 2+ | 7.8 | 28.6 | | | | | | | | |

*Appendix J, continue*

| | Demo-graphics | Green Bay Area | | Kenosha Unified | | Lacrosse | | Madison Metropolitan | | Milwaukee | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) | Percent of pop (%) | Percent of incidents (%) |
| Out of school suspension | Male | 51.4 | 65 | 51.1 | 68.7 | 50.3 | 70.7 | 51 | 57 | 51.7 | 59.7 |
| | Female | 48.7 | 35 | 48.9 | 31.3 | 49.8 | 29.3 | 49 | 43 | 48.3 | 40.3 |
| | I | 3.6 | 9.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | | | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| | A | 8 | 1 | 1.7 | 0.2 | 9.9 | 0.8 | 7.9 | 2.3 | 8.1 | 1.1 |
| | B | 9 | 24.7 | 13.6 | 34.6 | 5.2 | 13.6 | 18.5 | 57.3 | 50.1 | 79.8 |
| | H | 31.5 | 27.7 | 30.2 | 24.7 | 5 | 8.8 | 23.2 | 17.3 | 27.8 | 13.3 |
| | PI | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | | | 0.04 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | W | 40.1 | 24.4 | 46.9 | 27.9 | 68.5 | 56.2 | 40.8 | 11.5 | 9.6 | 2.4 |
| | 2+ | 7.8 | 12.6 | 7.4 | 12.2 | 11 | 20.5 | 9.4 | 11.3 | 3.8 | 3 |

**Appendix K**

Contract between Kenosha Unified School District and the Kenosha Police Department that was approved on August 26, 2021 and outlined the following services:

1. Act in the capacity of a sworn, on-duty police officers.
2. Provide a law enforcement presence in the school to which assigned.
3. Investigate or assist in the investigation of crimes or Ordinance violations to which students in the assigned school may be a party or have information.
4. Patrol school buildings, grounds and parking lots to which assigned for the purpose of enforcing State and CITY laws under their jurisdiction.
5. Perform school safety drills with the School Administrator.
6. Train students and staff in areas appropriate to their expertise.

**Appendix L**

Milwaukee Independent Evaluator recommendations

1. Clearly define the roles and expectations of the SROs in the documentation of the program, such as the IGA, and in communications and trainings with school administration.
2. Examine the selection process for choosing SROs.
3. Review how SROs are involved in training, as providers and recipients.
4. Review/revise the policy documents that govern the SRO program.
5. Expand engagement with the community.
6. Review the way SVSD tracks SRO activities.
7. Revisit the manner in which SROs are deployed (p. 6)

Independent Evaluators predicted outcomes

1. More clearly defined roles of the SRO program;
2. A stronger, more inclusive selection process yielding the best SROs available;
3. Better, more consistently trained SROs and MPS staff;
4. A more complete policy (IGA) guiding the partnership effort;
5. Greater understanding in the community of the multiple positive objectives of the SRO program, along with greater engagement with the community;
6. Expanded ability to track the wide range of activities the SROs engage in, with more proactive and varied activities, including those aimed at diverting students from justice involvement; and
7. More strategic deployment of SROs to cover schools more frequently within particular police districts so that there is more opportunity for SROs to build meaningful relations with students and staff (p.72).

**Appendix M**

*Green Bay Area School District Survey Results for SRO Focus*

| Survey Statement | Parent Agree (%) | Parent Disagree (%) | Parent Neutral (%) | Student Agree (%) | Student Disagree (%) | Student Neutral (%) | Staff Agree (%) | Staff Disagree (%) | Staff Neutral (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community | 83 | 3 | 12 | 49 | 13 | 27.5 | 83 | 3 | 11 |
| Police | 85 | 4 | 10 | 51 | 12 | 26 | 87 | 1.4 | 9 |
| Crime | 85 | 3 | 10 | 58 | 7 | 22 | 82 | 2.5 | 12 |
| Bullying | 82 | 5 | 11 | 54 | 11 | 26 | 71 | 8 | 17 |
| Friends | 57 | 18 | 24 | 34 | 27 | 30 | 44 | 25 | 27 |
| Presentations | 81 | 3 | 14 | 51 | 12 | 28 | 77 | 4 | 15 |
| Security | 89 | 4 | 7 | 64 | 9 | 19 | 73 | 7 | 14 |

School Climate SRO Parallel Statements

**Community** - It is important for a School Resource (Police) Officer to help students develop a positive attitude toward their community.

**Police** - It is important for a School Resource (Police) Officer to help my child develop a positive attitude toward police.

**Crime** - A School Resource (Police) Officer is important to serve as a resource person for my child to go ask for help about a crime.

**Bullying** - A School Resource (Police) Officer is important to serve as a resource person for my child to go ask for help about bullying.

**Friends** - A School Resource (Police) Officer is important to serve as a resource person for my child to go ask for help with friends.

**Presentation** - It is important for a School Resource (Police) Officer to give classroom presentations about police and the law.

**Security** - A School Resource (Police) Officer is important to serve as person to provide security at my child's school

**Appendix N**

Green Bay Area School District framework for the goals of the program:

The Program will:

1. Work to enhance the safety and security of students, staff and the community in order to maintain an environment in which education and learning can take place.
2. Be characterized by cooperation and mutual respect for policies, duties and responsibilities between the District and the law enforcement agency.
3. Be a balanced approach to police service in the schools reflecting both the community education role and the law enforcement role of the Resource Officer.
4. Focus on relationship building through positive interactions, crime prevention and investigation, and education, in addition to supporting school attendance efforts.

**Appendix O**

La Crosse School District Findings

1. Key findings show that the markers of the school-to-prison pipeline are present in the School District of La Crosse.
2. The School District of La Crosse relies on exclusionary discipline at higher rates than other school districts.
3. The School District of La Crosse disproportionately disciplines and suspends students of color, students in poverty, male students, and students with disabilities.
4. Juvenile arrests occur at higher rates in the City of La Crosse than in comparable cities.
5. Black juveniles are disproportionately arrested in the City of La Crosse.
6. Graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities have declined while graduation rates for reference groups have grown or stayed the same, expanding graduation gaps.
7. The La Crosse SRO program is staffed and funded at a higher rate than other comparable school districts.

**Appendix P**

La Crosse School District Recommendations

1. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and disciplinary practices that reduce punitive approaches to student misbehavior and eliminate the criminalization of students.
2. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and practices that lead to proportionate disciplinary and arrest outcomes for historically marginalized students.
3. Expand and shift to therapeutic and restorative practices for students who have challenges with behavior.
4. Expand proactive social service resources with the School District.
5. Reduce the ongoing, routine presence of SROs in school buildings while retaining consistency of responding officers.
6. Establish an SRO Oversight Committee.

**Appendix Q**
Madison Metropolitan School District Recommendations

1. We recommend that the mandate for EROs to be replaced every 3-5 years be eliminated.
2. We recommend that the DWSD Best Practices guidance document is reviewed by the Board of Education and a recommended advisory committee, every 3-5 years (See: Recommendation #13).
3. We recommend each school have a designated primary contact at the administrator level so that if an officer is needed, clear lines of communication are in place to ensure that the presence of the officers who respond will be less likely to escalate a potentially volatile situation.
4. We recommend that a well-defined complaint procedure, independent from the official DWPD grievance procedure, be added to the ERO contract. This procedure should be readily available to all students, parents/caregivers of students, and staff.
5. We recommend that the contract grant DWSD veto authority over the selection and assignment of EROs.
6. We recommend that the contract grant the DWSD Board of Education the authority to remove an ERO from their assignment for cause.
7. We recommend that DWSD continue and improve ongoing public reporting/record keeping requirements in each school and the district. At a minimum provide disaggregated data (by race, gender, disability status, and by category of offense to the extent allowed by privacy statutes) on the number of calls to classrooms EROs receive, the proportion of those that pertain to criminal activities/actions, the reports to be provided within 30 days after the end of each semester.
8. We recommend that EROs should be required to complete training and demonstrate competency, within a reasonable time from their selection, in all areas of de-escalation; trauma informed interventions, adolescent brain development; trauma response, discipline, security measures, BEP and classroom Code of Conduct.
9. We recommend that referrals to Restorative Justice should be considered the first alternative for all students. Eligibility for participation in Restorative Justice should not be the discretion of the ERO and should be consistent with Dane County Community Restorative Court practices. As such we expect DWSD to expand and improve Restorative Justice practices throughout the school district in accordance with the Strategic Framework.
10. We recommend that protocol be established requiring that in instances other than emergencies, every level of behavioral response be exhausted prior to calling an ERO into a classroom, and that in instances where ERO intervention is necessary, those instances be documented and made available to the DWSD Board of Education. That protocol should prohibit staff from threatening students with the use of an ERO.
11. We recommend that Security Staff's job descriptions be reviewed and enhanced to be more supportive of implementing school behavior policies. Required Security Staff training should parallel that of an ERO. Security Staff presence in schools should be utilized in lieu of EROs for most physical altercations. School staff

should be better trained as to how to use security staff more effectively. Security Staff and their work should be fully integrated into the BEP.

12. We recommend that DWSD and DWPD develop an InterAgency agreement with the appropriate legal offices i.e. DA's office, courts, and the Dane County Department of Human Services, prioritizing referral of students to avoid or defer prosecution and coordinate services without the filing of criminal charges.
13. We recommend that DWSD create an ERO Advisory Committee for the purpose of accountability and oversight.
    a. The committee shall be composed of DWSD Staff, School Board members, DWPD, students and community representatives in a manner that reflects the demographics of the school sites in which the ERO serves with an emphasis on representing youth who are the most cited, suspended, or expelled, or otherwise are / have been involved with the juvenile justice system.
    b. The committee should be a maximum of 20 people, with more than half comprised of community members not employed by DWSD and / or serving as School Board members.
    c. We recommend that these meetings be open to the public and this committee convene quarterly.
14. We recommend that DWSD amend Policy 4400 to limit administrative searches of student possessions or lockers to situations where there is probable cause of a crime or where there is an imminent threat of danger to the school community.
15. We recommend that DWSD arrange for secondary students to be educated annually by DWSD teachers or an independent party regarding their civilian Constitutional rights when interacting with law enforcement.
16. We recommend DWSD, with the goal of reducing and/or eliminating the possibility of harm, gather quantitative and qualitative data from students involved in investigations, arrests or citations, involving EROs, and include this information in the reports to the DWSD BoE and advisory committee (from recommendation #13).

**Appendix Q**

*District Focus and Responsibilities for SRO*

| KenoshaUnified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan | Madison Metropolitan con't | Green Bay Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Act in the capacity of a sworn, on-duty police officers. | Allow School Resource Officers proactive time at schools that are agreed upon between SVSD and SVPD during which SROs can interact with students and staff to build positive relationships; | Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and disciplinary practices that reduce punitive approaches to student misbehavior and eliminate the criminalization of students. | We recommend that the mandate for EROs to be replaced every 3-5 years be eliminated. | We recommend that referrals to Restorative Justice should be considered the first alternative for all students. Eligibility for participation in Restorative Justice should not be the discretion of the ERO and should be consistent with Dane County Community Restorative Court practices. As such we expect DWSD to expand and improve Restorative Justice practices throughout the school district in accordance with the Strategic Framework. | Work to enhance the safety and security of students, staff and the community in order to maintain an environment in which education and learning can take place. |
| Provide a law enforcement presence in the school to which assigned. | Provide training between SVSD and SVPD in areas relevant to each other's needs such as personal safety or SVSD rules and procedures; and | Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and practices that lead to proportionate disciplinary and arrest outcomes for historically marginalized students. | We recommend that the DWSD Best Practices guidance document is reviewed by the Board of Education and a recommended advisory committee, every 3-5 years (See: Recommendation #13). | We recommend that protocol be established requiring that in instances other than emergencies, every level of behavioral response be exhausted prior to calling an ERO into a classroom, and that in instances where ERO intervention is necessary, those instances be | Be characterized by cooperation and mutual respect for policies, duties and responsibilities between the District and the law enforcement agency. |

| Grapevine Unified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan | Madison Metropolitan con't | Green Bay Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Grapevine Unified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan | Madison Metropolitan con't | Green Bay Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigate or assist in the investigation of crimes or Ordinance violations to which students in the assigned school may be a party or have information. | Ensure that SROs are not utilized at schools to enforce school and district rules and procedures | Expand and shift to therapeutic and restorative practices for students who have challenges with behavior. | We recommend each school have a designated primary contact at the administrator level so that if an officer is needed, clear lines of communication are in place to ensure that the presence of the officers who respond will be less likely to escalate a potentially volatile situation. | documented and made available to the DWSD Board of Education. That protocol should prohibit staff from threatening students with the use of an ERO | Be a balanced approach to police service in the schools reflecting both the community education role and the law enforcement role of the Resource Officer. |
| Patrol school buildings, grounds and parking lots to which assigned for the purpose of enforcing State and CITY laws under their jurisdiction. | | Expand proactive social service resources with the School District. | We recommend that a well-defined complaint procedure, independent from the official DWPD grievance procedure, be added to the ERO contract. This procedure should be readily available to all students, parents/caregivers of students, and staff. | We recommend that Security Staff's job descriptions be reviewed and enhanced to be more supportive of implementing school behavior policies. Required Security Staff training should parallel that of an ERO. Security Staff presence in schools should be utilized in lieu of EROs for most physical altercations. School staff should be better trained as to how to use security staff more effectively. Security Staff and their work should be fully integrated into the BEP. | Focus on relationship building through positive interactions, crime prevention and investigation, and education, in addition to supporting school attendance efforts. |

| Grapevine Unified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan | Madison Metropolitan con't | Green Bay Area |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | | We recommend that DWSD and DWPD develop an InterAgency agreement with the appropriate legal offices i.e. DA's office, courts, and the Dane County Department of Human Services, prioritizing referral of students to avoid or defer prosecution and coordinate services without the filing of criminal charges. | |
| Perform school safety drills with the School Administrator | | Reduce the ongoing, routine presence of SROs in school buildings while retaining consistency of responding officers. | We recommend that the contract grant DWSD veto authority over the selection and assignment of EROs. | We recommend that DWSD create an ERO Advisory Committee for the purpose of accountability and oversight.<br>-The committee shall be composed of DWSD Staff, School Board members, DWPD, students and community representatives in a manner that reflects the demographics of the school sites in which the ERO serves with an emphasis on representing youth who are the most cited, suspended, or expelled, | |

| Grapevine Unified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan School District | Madison Metropolitan con't | Green Bay Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Train students and staff in areas appropriate to their expertise. | | Establish an SRO Oversight Committee. | We recommend that the contract grant the DWSD Board of Education the authority to remove an ERO from their assignment for cause. | or otherwise are / have been involved with the juvenile justice system.<br>-The committee should be a maximum of 20 people, with more than half comprised of community members not employed by DWSD and / or serving as School Board members.<br>-We recommend that these meetings be open to the public and this committee convene quarterly. | |
| | | | | We recommend that DWSD amend Policy 4400 to limit administrative searches of student possessions or lockers to situations where there is probable cause of a crime or where there is an imminent threat of danger to the school community. | |

| Grapevine Unified | Milwaukee Area | La Crosse | Madison Metropolitan | Madison Metropolitan con’t | Green Bay Area |
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| | | | We recommend that DWSD continue and improve ongoing public reporting/record keeping requirements in each school and the district. At a minimum provide disaggregated data (by race, gender, disability status, and by category of offense to the extent allowed by privacy statutes) on the number of calls to classrooms EROs receive, the proportion of those that pertain to criminal activities/actions, the reports to be provided within 30 days after the end of each semester | We recommend that DWSD arrange for secondary students to be educated annually by DWSD teachers or an independent party regarding their civilian Constitutional rights when interacting with law enforcement. | |

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| | | We recommend that EROs should be required to complete training and demonstrate competency, within a reasonable time from their selection, in all areas of de-escalation; trauma informed interventions, adolescent brain development; trauma response, discipline, security measures, BEP and classroom Code of Conduct. | We recommend DWSD, with the goal of reducing and/or eliminating the possibility of harm, gather quantitative and qualitative data from students involved in investigations, arrests or citations, involving EROs, and include this information in the reports to the DWSD BoE and advisory committee (from recommendation #13). | |