



SACRAMENTO
STATE

Overarching Research Questions:

What are the experiences of Black students and families that have either contributed to or detracted from their sense of belonging within the district?

What are the policies and practices within the district that are potentially isolating and/or penalizing Black Students?

Context

Data from the Department of Education reveals significant disparities in suspension rates among student racial groups within specific districts in the Sacramento region. Despite constituting a smaller percentage of the overall student population (11.8%), Black students comprise the largest proportion of suspensions (33%) in this district (Mangagnini & Pottiger, 2021). This over-reliance on disciplinary actions has been quantified in educational research, yet less is known about how Black students and families in this district are experiencing this context. This community-based research project aims to bridge this gap by amplifying the voices of Black students and their families within this district, focusing on students and families' sense of belonging and representation.

Research Design

Our research questions are guided by the existing advocacy efforts of Black families in this district and aims to amplify Black students' and families' voices for educational equity. Utilizing a community-based methodology, we held focus groups to allow Black students and families to share their experiences around belonging, academic success, or barriers in the district. The focus groups are each facilitated alongside a current Black staff in the school to create a welcoming and safer space for Black students and families to share their experiences.

Preliminary Findings

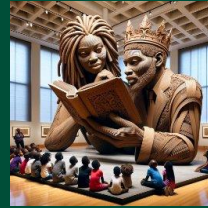
Not Feeling Like You Belong

"They Will love your children for the season ... when that season ends, Oh honey, they throw you out like trash. No, I told them to their face. You loving my son for a season. When he was winning championships ... but have yet to check in on him with his grades [or] reach out trying to get help with tutoring, they don't want to be bothered with your child. But if you're doing something for them, and you bring it home that bacon and winning, Oh, they got you, but when that season is over, it's over." – Mary, Parent



Not Seeing Yourself

"Their history, before slavery, is not something that's been taught. That could uplift these kids in a better way. Slavery is not really strong Black [history] information...[it's not] uplifting for the kids to have pride and self-worth." James, parent



Having to Hide Who You Are to Fit In

"And I just feel like, in that specific room [Black teacher's classroom], I feel comfortable. Like, I can be me, I wouldn't have to change... Like, I don't change myself for everybody else to like me, but I also be mindful of how I act and how loud I am because I get loud." Amanda, student



Not Believed In

"They don't push them for greatness. They don't. They don't put the effort into children to push them for greatness." Mary, parent



Black Student and Family Sense of Belonging in a Local District: Community-based Research, Doctorate in Educational Leadership

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