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Transforming Educators' Social Emotional Learning (SEL): A Mixed-methods Study Exploring the Impact of a Trauma-informed SEL Intervention to Mitigate Educator Implicit Bias

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**TRANSFORMING EDUCATORS' SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL): A
MIXED-METHODS STUDY EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED
SEL INTERVENTION TO MITIGATE EDUCATOR IMPLICIT BIAS**

KEMEN HOLLEY

A DISSERTATION

In the

Isabelle Farrington College of Education and Human Development

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Degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMING EDUCATORS' SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL): A MIXED-METHODS STUDY EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED SEL INTERVENTION TO MITIGATE EDUCATOR IMPLICIT BIAS

Kemen Holley

Dr. Suzanne Marmo-Roman, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

While research has indicated that social emotional learning (SEL) approaches promote essential, long-lasting individual and collective development for students, the literature indicates a lack of evidence that educators are implementing SEL approaches to affirm the assets, lived experiences, and identities of students, particularly those belonging to minoritized groups. This Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) employed a mixed-methods pragmatic, research–intervention process model that utilized a community-based action research approach to evaluate a trauma-informed SEL professional learning (PL) intervention as a viable practice to mitigate high school educators' implicit biases. Through an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework, this study sought to determine the potential influence of a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention on 80 educators' biases, SEL skills and competencies, and experiences at a 9-12 high school in a small suburban district in a Northeastern state. Pre-test and post-test surveys, feedback surveys, and semi-structured focus groups were conducted over a span of 6 weeks. Themes identified in educators' response data reveal that a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention (1) may further develop educators' self-awareness and social-awareness skills and have positive implications for promoting educational equity, (2) may increase transformational educator behaviors, and (3) may

be impacted by whiteness norms as they continue to generate structural barriers that impact educator implicit and explicit biases. Study results suggest that educators require transformational leadership support, including facilitation of professional learning communities (PLC), active learning opportunities that include reflective practices of personal and collective biases, and ongoing peer coaching. Once established, these key components may contribute to teachers reporting a greater development of their cultural awareness and action, which may indicate application of self and social awareness skills and competencies. When educators employ adult SEL skills and competencies, they are empowered to engage in change-making actions to address and eliminate educational inequities throughout their communities. Recommendations to schools and districts on how to implement a trauma-informed SEL approach within their organizations and navigate whiteness norms are presented.

Keywords: Trauma-informed SEL approaches, cultural awareness and action, high school, educator professional learning practices, adult SEL, educator bias

DEDICATION

The realization of this study is the product of a three-year journey where any hardships, setbacks, or frustrations I may have encountered along the way were always mitigated by the love, honesty, and support of my family. I will be forever grateful for my family, as they wiped away tears, reminded me to eat and take care of myself, made me laugh when I needed it, and most of all, reminded me how much they loved me every day. I recognize that I would not be fulfilling one of my lifelong dreams without my team- Myles, Ama, Aita, Jessika, Dad, Mum, Sophie, and Chloe. I dedicate this dissertation to all of you, and it is with my eternal gratitude that I thank you all for your sacrifices and continued love and support.

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The greatest learning from my doctoral endeavor is that authentic, supportive relationships promote an individual's social and emotional well-being to optimize the lived experiences throughout their lifetime. It is my honor to acknowledge those whose relationships are invaluable in my life.

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Chapter One: The Problem of Practice

When examining predictors of student success, educational researchers identify teacher beliefs, expectations, and efficacy as being highly impactful; however, educator bias can be a barrier to success for some students (Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Hattie, 2018). Research in the last two decades has indicated that implicit bias may impact educators' explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups (Cherner et al., 2020; DeCuir-Gunby & Bindra, 2021). The potentially long-lasting consequences of this bias on minoritized student groups' lives include opportunity gaps and disparities in post-secondary success (Blanchett, 2006; Lewis, 2003; Lewis & Diamond, 2017; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Starck et al., 2020; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). As white teachers and administrators continue to be the dominating educator demographic in US public schools, there is a need to examine educator bias as potential contributors to systemic educational inequities amongst minoritized student groups (Starck et al., 2020).

According to The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2020), 79% of public-school teachers are white and students rarely experience having a teacher with a similar race or ethnic identity to themselves. Current public-school enrollment data show that 47% of students are white, 27% ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx, 15% Black and African American, and 5% Asian (NCES, 2021a). Additionally, researchers have found that when compared to their Black and African American colleagues, white teachers were less likely to expect Black and African American students to complete their college degrees, and more likely to have societal stereotypes influence their expectations of performance and behavior of students (Copur-Gencturk et al., 2020; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Quinn & Stewart, 2019). Gershenson and Papageorge (2018) found that white educators were more biased against Black and African

American students than white students. The researchers found that white educators surveyed expected 58% of white high school students to obtain at least a four-year college degree; however, only expected the same for 37% of Black and African American students (Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018). Similarly, Quinn and Stewart (2019) found that white educators were more likely to hold deficit views of Black and African American students and reported reduced quality relationships with minoritized student groups and enthusiasm for educational equity efforts. Additionally, Copur-Gencturk and colleagues (2020) found that both white educators and their colleagues from minoritized groups held deficit views of their students who identified as Black and African American, Hispanic and/or Latinx, and female.

Educational leaders continue concerted efforts to mainstream social and emotional learning (SEL) into their schools with a goal of improving student outcomes for all students (Simmons et al., 2018). However, to improve student outcomes for minoritized student groups, educational leaders' systemic implementation of an SEL approach requires an anti-racist and anti-oppression framework with an intentional commitment from all educators to potentially minimize impact their personal and collective biases on the students they teach (Gorski, 2020; Gorski et al., 2022; Simmons et al., 2018). The scholarly practitioner's inquiry of how to promote educator SEL with anti-racist and anti-oppression considerations with potentially long-lasting social, emotional, and academic benefits for minoritized student groups, is the basis for this Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP).

Background of the Problem

In the United States, schools are often expected to instill pluralistic, democratic beliefs and values in students through their initiation into the explicit and implicit cultural spheres of American democracy so, as citizens, students can simultaneously perpetuate and improve that

democracy in American society (Coppola, 2020). Furthermore, in students' examination of American society, educational leaders in schools can generate forums where educators assist students in developing the skills, understanding, and mindset needed to critically examine the root causes of societal inequities and engage in evidence-based, collaborative actions (Jagers et al., 2019). With regards to topics related to race, ethnicity, and culture, educators can have some power to improve their students' attitudes about race and challenge belief systems (Banks et al., 2005; Starck et al., 2020). However, complications can arise when teachers are expected to impartially address topics "such as power, privilege, prejudice, discrimination, social justice, and self-determination" (Jagers et al., 2019, p. 163) when they may not be aware of their own biases (Nosek et al., 2007; Starck et al., 2020). Biases can either be explicit or implicit. Implicit racial bias occurs within an individual's unconscious cognitive processes, without full awareness of biased behaviors that reflect societal attitudes towards race, ethnicity, and culture (Greenwald et al., 2009; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Chin et al., 2020). Without conscious awareness of implicit biases, specialized intervention methods may be required to change beliefs and behaviors (Chin et al., 2020). Explicit biases involve conscious awareness of attitudes and behavior towards minoritized groups; as they often reflect dominant societal narratives, individuals are more likely to share and participate in them publicly (Starck et al., 2020).

Educational researchers have identified educator bias as a potential root cause of opportunity gaps among minoritized student groups (Dixson & Rosseau, 2005; Starck et al., 2020; Warikoo et al., 2016). These opportunity gaps have been suggested to be the result of societal perception of individuals' genetic and/or social identifiers (i.e., gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and economic status) impacting the types of opportunities individuals have access to in their lifetimes (Mooney, 2018). When comparing educators to non-educators, Quinn (2017)

found that the racial attitudes reported by teachers were not unlike those reported by other professions.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disproportionate impact on minoritized student groups may suggest a further urgency for educators (NAACP, 2020). States across the United States, such as Connecticut, placed flexibilities on traditional educator evaluation guidelines to ameliorate the educational inequities due the COVID-19 pandemic, which included an emphasis on SEL (Cardona, 2020). As such, approaches to reducing educational inequity through SEL implementation are at the cornerstone of nation-wide district and schools' strategic and improvement goals (Pyscher & Crampton, 2020).

When effective SEL is implemented with fidelity, students and educators can both develop skills and competencies to facilitate their experience, management and expression of emotions, engagement in sound decision-making, and cultivation of essential relationships (Simmons et al., 2018). Furthermore, researchers found that SEL has the potential to protect students from development of maladaptive behaviors and emotional dysregulation that can contribute to poor health and academic outcomes (Simmons et al., 2018). However, Simmons and colleagues (2018) suggest that effectiveness of SEL implementation can be decreased by educators who do not possess the skills to identify personal bias against minoritized student groups. Therefore, any SEL effort can be improved with the inclusion of educators' engagement in anti-bias training grounded in a framework of equity.

Two theories that inform such SEL approaches at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER approach, Self-Determination Theory and Implicit Theories of Intelligence, may provide further guidance as to how educational leaders can optimize SEL approaches by examining and addressing educator behavior (Brackett et al., 2015) Brackett and

colleagues (2015) found that, in conducting field observations of the RULER approach, Self-Determination Theory informed the RULER approach to better explain why positive student outcomes are correlated to students' relationship needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991). A specific relationship need that Brackett and colleagues identified (2015) included students believing that individuals with differing backgrounds value and respect their opinions. Therefore, as students are increasingly more likely to be taught by teachers who do not share their "cultural, racial, linguistic, socioeconomic, and educational diversities" teachers may require antibias training to view their students' diverse learner characteristics as assets to foster impactful, authentic relationships (Yuan, 2017, p. 9). Likewise, Implicit Theories of Intelligence can aid educational leaders in optimizing SEL approaches at their schools and districts through an examination of educator mindsets (Brackett et al., 2015). According to Dweck (2000), Implicit Theories of Intelligence explain why an individual may possess a fixed or growth mindset about their physical and intellectual abilities and talents, where an individual with a fixed mindset believes their abilities and talents to be unchanging and another with a growth mindset perceives theirs as constantly evolving (Brackett et al., 2015). Therefore, Brackett and colleagues (2015) hypothesized that if educational leaders generate a school climate that promotes a growth mindset in teachers, through such efforts as antibias training, students may possess a greater likelihood of perceiving their teachers as caregivers who support, empower, and respect them.

Statement and Definition of the Problem

The problem of practice to be addressed in this study is disproportionally worse outcomes in academic and disciplinary data for minoritized students enrolled at the scholarly researcher's setting of practice, Esquivel High School (EHS), which may be a result of educator bias (Starck

et al., 2020). To maintain school and district anonymity, the scholarly practitioner utilized the pseudonyms “Esquivel High School (EHS)” and “Esquivel Public Schools (EPS).” EHS’ universal implementation of the RULER approach has thus far not included optimal forums for staff to develop aspects of their self and social awareness skills, to reflect on their beliefs, values, and biases (Jagers et al., 2018b). For EHS’ RULER approach to be transformative, staff must develop an equity lens to foster authentic relationships and develop skills to examine causes and formulate solutions for educational inequity at EHS (Jagers et al., 2018 b). If educational leaders do not provide opportunities for staff to examine and address collective and personal biases, they may limit educators’ ability to promote educational equity (Starck et al., 2020). Furthermore, when educational leaders do not facilitate this type of learning experience for educators through forums such as peer-based, professional learning communities (PLCs), an increased opportunity for initiative failure exists (Pawlo et al., 2019).

At EHS, racial and ethnic dynamics impacting teacher-student relationships are not unlike other districts’ dynamics between the majority white teacher workforce and their increasingly diverse students (NCES, 2020). For example, nation-wide in schools where the student body’s racial/ethnic composition was 50% or more white with representation from Black and African American, ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx, and Asian student groups, teachers were 93% white (NCES, 2020). At EHS, both educators and students are 89.0% and 75.1% white respectively (EdSight, 2022a; EdSight, 2022b). Moreover, the school district’s inclusive message in its strategic coherence plan prioritizes successful outcomes for all student groups, however, achievement and discipline data indicate that opportunity gaps among minoritized student groups persist. For the purposes of the ISDiP, when the scholarly practitioner refers to Black and African American and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx students, the scholarly practitioner will

utilize the term “minoritized student groups” (Sotto-Santiago, 2019). Researchers have begun to use the term “minoritized” in lieu of “minority” to acknowledge that it is the inherently racist and oppressive systems operating in society, which favor dominant white culture, that force the socially constructed term “minority” or “minorities” upon individuals and groups respectively as opposed to their own identifying characteristics (Sotto-Santiago, 2019). The researcher performed an equity assessment of EHS in the spring of 2020, which revealed an achievement gap in performance data, an underrepresentation of minoritized student groups in AP courses, and an overrepresentation of minoritized student groups receiving Ds and Fs as well as in discipline referrals (see Tables 1-3).

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Demographics of EHS Students Enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses in the 2019-2020 School Year

Enrollment	Total student population in EHS	Total student population in EHS	Total students in A.P. courses	Total students in A.P. courses
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.1	0	0
Asian	78	9.0	56	10.6
Black and African American	22	2.5	9	1.7
Hispanic/Latinx of any race	103	11.9	39	7.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	.2	0	0

Enrollment	Total student population in EHS	Total student population in EHS	Total students in A.P. courses	Total students in A.P. courses
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity				
Two or More Races	1	.1	0	0
Unspecified	2	.2	27	5.1
white	660	75.9	395	75.1

Table 2

Suspension Rate in the 2019-2020 School Year: Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

Variables	Students receiving ISS, OSS or expulsion	Percentage of population in suspension rate count	Total in EHS Population	Percentage of EHS population
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity				
Black and African American	5	13.5	22	2.5
Hispanic/Latinx of any race	10	27.0	103	11.9
white	22	59.5	660	75.9

Note. The suspension rate of a school in the state of Connecticut is calculated by adding up the number of students who were issued at least one in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS) suspension or were expelled. From “Suspensions and Expulsions in Connecticut” by Connecticut State Department of Education, 2017. Copyright 2017 by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Table 3

EHS' Ds and Fs List in the 2019-2020 School Year: Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

Variables	Students with Ds	Percentage of population with Ds	Students with Fs	Percentage of population with Fs	Percentage of EHS population
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Race/Ethnicity					
Asian	2	3.7	4	3.3	10.6
Black and African American	5	9.2	4	3.3	2.5
Hispanic/Latinx of any race	8	14.8	34	27.9	11.9
white	39	72.2	80	65.6	75.9

Note. The percentages among the student groups show that the Black and African American and Hispanic/Latinx student groups made up 2.5% and 11.9% of the total student population at EHS. However, these student groups made up 9.2% and 14.8% of the population of students with Ds in their classes and 3.3% and 27.9% of the student population with Fs in their classes respectively. Black and African American and Hispanic/Latinx student groups were overly represented in EHS Ds and Fs list.

Due to poor student performance data, the US Department of Education awarded EHS the School Improvement Grant (SIG), and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) awarded Esquivel Public Schools (EPS) five days of technical assistance training to develop, implement, and sustain Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) procedures at each school building. With regards to the SRBI technical assistance, a communication from the assistant superintendent in 2018 stated that the CSDE site visit identified a need for EHS, along with the three other schools in the district, to develop an effective SRBI procedure. Precisely, the

CSDE recommended that a district-wide group at EPS develop SRBI procedures with the supervision of a consultant. Regarding the SIG grant, according to the US Department of Education (2020), a SIG is awarded to “substantially raise the achievement of students” in low performing schools, which describes EHS’ student performance data.

In examining existing opportunity gaps, particularly among minoritized student groups, EPS educational leaders elected to implement a district-wide RULER approach. Educational leaders widely adopted the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2021) RULER approach to teacher development education to improve school climate, enhance student performance, increase student connectedness, and decrease bullying and aggressive behaviors in schools (Cipriano et al., 2019; Hagelskamp et al., 2013). However, given the complexity of the educational context due to societal inequities further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, the school’s educational leaders found that additional updates to the framework may be needed for RULER for educators to effectively implement the approach in a manner that transforms student outcomes.

The school district prioritized the universal implementation of the RULER SEL approach in 2017, and the district leadership tasked the high school principal with sending small groups of three staff members that would be charged with planning, implementing, and sustaining the RULER SEL approach in EHS. Thus far, seven out of the 80 teachers trained as the RULER implementation team in the summers of 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, of the seven educators trained, none of them have met as an implementation team to begin developing and realizing an action plan for the RULER approach. Therefore, most EHS staff remain without a comprehensive understanding of the purpose or benefits of SEL, which may contribute to collective and individual biases.

Additionally, due in part to the grievances expressed by the Connecticut Education Association, the Connecticut teachers' labor union, the CSDE informed public school administrators that the barriers presented by the COVID-19 pandemic required a critical focus on both SEL and trauma-informed strategies (Cardona, 2020). The CSDE allowed for school district flexibilities on educator evaluation guidelines to mitigate some of the root causes of educational inequities due the COVID-19 pandemic, such as an increase in perceived stress and trauma experienced by students and educators (Cardona, 2020). Furthermore, the CSDE recommendation guidelines prompted both district and EHS administrators to revise their RULER SEL guidelines to incorporate trauma-informed strategies. Therefore, EHS leadership partnered with School Climate Consultants (2020) to develop EHS teachers' ability in trauma-informed strategies to optimally address student need in the hybrid and remote learning environments. However, the EHS leadership communicated the newly revised guidelines to the EHS RULER approach through online forums, such as email and faculty Zoom meetings, seeking minimal teacher input. At a faculty meeting EHS staff expressed frustration with their minimal exposure to the RULER approach and having to adhere to newly revised guidelines, which prompted EHS leadership to allocate time for teachers to engage in the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's (2020) online course designed for Connecticut educators, *Social and Emotional Learning in Times of Uncertainty and Stress: Research-Based Strategies*. The online course, combined with the virtual training from School Climate Consultants (2020), though both addressed the state recommendations on PL, did not impact EHS teacher perception of the value of SEL or trauma-informed practices. Teaching staffs' perceived lack of input into both the SEL and trauma-informed PL opportunities may be compounded by the internal and external informational structure at EHS that is primarily controlled by district and EHS leadership.

Furthermore, EHS teachers communicate increased distrust and decreased autonomy of EHS' SEL and trauma-informed strategies PL opportunities (Berman et al., 2018; Santoro, 2018).

Nevertheless, as part of its current approach with SEL and trauma-informed practices, EHS leadership continues to provide training for teachers utilizing the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence's (2021) RULER and School Climate Consultants (2020) for trauma-informed practices training frameworks respectively (Fullan, 2011). Despite positive outcomes of the RULER training framework, potential limitations due to educator bias and minimal focus on trauma-informed practices may decrease effectiveness of SEL in its mitigation of educational inequities for minoritized student groups (Simmons et al., 2018). Given the complexity of the social and educational context of systemic racism, compounded by COVID both in society and in the Esquivel community, it is possible that additional updates to the framework may be needed for educators to continue to perceive RULER as transformative for educational systems (Jagers et al., 2018b). For SEL efforts to positively impact the outcomes of all students, and to become transformative SEL in the current context of post-pandemic return to school and heightened awareness of educational inequities, educators must also further develop their own self-awareness and social awareness skills, including Gorski's (2020) perspective on trauma-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppression framework.

In this inquiry, the population targeted for support were the educators at EHS. The school was in a small suburban district in a Northeastern state. The scholarly practitioner's selection of this site for the inquiry was based upon the demographic distribution of the educators in comparison to the students, which was appropriate for an investigation in the mitigation of educator biases with an SEL approach. The dynamics at EHS reflected nation-wide demographic trends that while student body diversity was on the rise, educator demographic remain mostly

white (NCES, 2020). While Esquivel’s town population was in a state of decline as of 2020, EHS’ student enrollment and population diversity were on the rise. The town of Esquivel experienced a 2.7% population decline from the years 2017-2020; however, EHS’ school enrollment increased by 2.5% from the years 2016-2021 (Connecticut Economic Resource Center, 2020; EdSight, 2022c). As shown in Table 4, in the years 2016-2021 EHS’ Asian student group increased by 13.2 %, Black of African American student groups by 29.4%, ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx student groups by 53.7%, and white student groups experienced a 1.9% decrease (EdSight, 2022c). Conversely, as shown in Table 5, an overview of educator demographics from 2016-2021 reveals a 0% or incalculable increase or decrease in American Native or Alaska Native, Black and African American, ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx, and white educator groups, a 300% increase in Asian educators, and a 100% decrease in educator groups who identify as having two or more races (EdSight, 2022b). Similarly, as shown in Table 6, while Esquivel’s population was 86% white in 2019 as per the latest population data in AdvanceCT (2021), EHS educators and students were 89.0% white respectively in 2021 (EdSight, 2022b; EdSight, 2022c).

Table 4

Percentage Increase of Racial/Ethnic Student Groups in Esquivel High School

Student group	Total students in 2016	Total students in 2021	Percentage increase
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian	68	77	13.2
Black and African American	17	22	29.4
Hispanic/Latinx of any race	67	103	53.7
white	700	687	-1.9

Note. From “Student Counts by School and Year” by EdSight, 2022

(<https://EdSight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>). Copyright 2022 by the Connecticut State

Department of Education.

Table 5

Percentage Increase of Educator Groups in Esquivel High School

Educator group	Total educators in 2016	Total educators in 2020	Percentage increase
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
Race/Ethnicity			
American Native or Alaska Native	0	0	-
Asian	1	4	300.0
Black or African American	0	0	-
Hispanic/Latinx of any race	5	5	0
Two or more races	1	0	-100.0
white	73	73	0

Note. From “Educator Race/Ethnicity Trend Report” by EdSight, 2022

(<https://EdSight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>). Copyright 2022 by the Connecticut State

Department of Education.

Table 6

Percentage of white Groups

white group	Total percentage in population
	%
Town of Esquivel	86.0
Educators	89.0
Students	89.0

Note. From “Connecticut Report Cards: Esquivel High School by EdSight, 2022

(http://EdSight.ct.gov/SASStoredProcess/guest?_district=Esquivel+School+District&_school=Esquivel+High+School&_program=%2FCTDOE%2FEdSight%2FRelease%2FReporting%2FPublic%2FReports%2FStoredProcesses%2FConnecticutReportCard&_select=Submit). Copyright 2022 by the Connecticut State Department of Education. From “Esquivel, Connecticut- CERC Town Profile 2019” by AdvanceCT, 2021

(https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/About_DECD/Research-and-Publications/04_Access_TownProfiles/Connecticut-Town-Profile-Data). Copyright 2021 by the Connecticut Data Collaborative.

For SEL programs, such as the RULER approach, to be transformative educators engage in processes to examine and address educational inequities that stem from systemic racism, which may be hindered by educator bias (Jagers et al., 2019). Educators who are committed to educational equity require further development of their self-awareness and social awareness skills to engage in meaningful efforts to simultaneously acknowledge the “unique protective factors” that minoritized student groups may develop (Jagers et al., 2018b, p. 2). If educators recognize these factors as students’ intrinsic assets due to minoritized student groups’ lived experiences with discrimination, economic insecurity, and traumatic experiences, it may facilitate their change-making actions (Jagers et al., 2018b). Educators’ change-making actions include prioritizing minoritized student groups’ interests to eliminate the educational inequities that may be obstructing these students’ paths toward their optimal social, emotional, and academic development (Jagers et al., 2018b).

The goal for the EPS’ implementation of RULER curriculum is to be a transformative approach that allows all students to optimally develop and apply SEL skills and competencies.

Based on previous research into transformative SEL approaches to increase effective implementation by teachers at EHS, teachers will require opportunities to examine and address their implicit and explicit biases (Jagers et al., 2018a; Jagers et al., 2018b; Jagers et al., 2019). At present, the EHS educational leadership have identified a transformative SEL approach to support educators' examination of biases, while promoting their social, emotional, and cultural competencies, as a trauma-informed SEL approach (Pawlo et al., 2019). For an SEL approach to be truly trauma-informed, Gorski (2020) states that educational leaders must infuse anti-racist and anti-oppression considerations meaningfully and intentionally as part of the organization's commitment to educational equity. Only when a trauma-informed SEL approach is guided by transformational commitments can educational leaders guarantee the optimal social, emotional, and academic development of minoritized student groups (Gorski et al. 2022).

Root Cause Analysis

To reveal factors impacting educators at EHS that may contribute to their personal and collective biases, which may be yielding worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups, the scholarly practitioner engaged in a causal system analysis (CSA) (Perry et al., 2020). The scholarly practitioner integrated models of improvement science and qualitative research into the ISDiP that guided the design of the CSA. Improvement science is a methodological framework that the scholarly practitioner utilized in the identification of the root causes believed to contribute to the problem of practice (PoP) (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). As the scholarly practitioner sought to conduct a systematic inquiry within her professional context and as part of her practice, the ISDiP utilized aspects of qualitative research with an exploratory case study (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Yin, 2017). Specifically, the scholarly practitioner sought to develop precise explanations and descriptions of the particular exploratory case study conducted

at EHS (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Yin, 2017). In accordance with the exploratory case study design, the scholarly practitioner conducted observations of the quotidian operations at EHS to reveal processes, engaged in document review, and realized educator (end-users) consultations (Yin, 2017).

The scholarly practitioner's goal was to gain a more profound understanding of how the school culture and contexts influenced educators' viewpoints with regards to the worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized students at EHS (Perry et al., 2020). Finally, the scholarly practitioner conducted a triangulation process to validate the data collected from observations, documents, and interviews. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner compared the shared experiences from the end-user consultations, observational fieldnotes, and artifacts and in interviews with field notes, observations, and other collected data to member-check the results on a fishbone diagram (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Through the utilization of a fishbone diagram as a framework for CSAP, the scholarly practitioner's objective was to examine and discover the concealed causes of the PoP, and allow the end-users impacted by the PoP to brainstorm and gain consensus as to how to address the PoP (Perry et al., 2020). The diagram informed the scholarly practitioner to further understand the PoP, develop evidence-based interventions, examine possible root causes contributing to the PoP, categorize causes, and facilitate brainstorming and consensus (Perry et al., 2020).

Classroom Observations

As part of the scholarly practitioner's daily practice as an administrator, the scholarly practitioner engaged in classroom walkthroughs with a focus on student engagement and teacher-student relationship (Perry et al., 2020). Due to the existing COVID-19 pandemic, EHS administrators were concerned with students' engagement levels and teacher-student interactions

in a traditional classroom model after participating in a virtual or hybrid model for a school year and a half. The scholarly practitioner utilized Schlechty's (2011) *Indicators of Responses to Work* as an evidence-based tool to measure student-teacher relationships and student. In the 2017-2018 school year, all EHS administrators were formally trained with Schlechty's (2011) engagement tool and calibrated its usage. The scholarly practitioner adapted Schlechty's (2011) tool into a quadrant-style collection tool to indicate the instances of observed student engagement (high attention and commitment), strategic compliance (high attention, low commitment), ritual compliance (low attention, low commitment), retreatism (no attention, no commitment), and rebellion (diverted attention, no commitment). Schlechty (2011) defines engagement as students embodying the role of active learners with high levels of both commitment and attention due to the high levels of value and meaning of the particular task. Additionally, the student's perceived quality of the task may impact the student's perceived relationship type with their teacher (Schlechty, 2011).

The scholarly practitioner entered 17 out of a possible 70 classrooms across disciplines for a time period no longer than five minutes, as is customary of informal classroom walkthroughs in the district. The classroom observations occurred in the winter of 2020-2021 school year. The scholarly practitioner focused on whole-class and individual student considerations during the observed time period. As seen in Table 7, the scholarly practitioner observed the majority of students in the stages of ritual (41.7%) and strategic (27.9%) compliance, which indicated lower levels of value and meaning for the student (Schlechty, 2011). Additionally, with regards to the teacher-student relationship, the teacher is placed in the role of conflict manager, which can lead to higher opportunities of misunderstandings and exclusionary discipline practices with students (Schlechty, 2011).

Table 7*Indicators of Student Engagement in EHS Classrooms Across Disciplines in Winter of 2021*

Variables	Instances in classrooms	Percentage of total instances
	<i>n</i>	%
<hr/>		
Indicator		
Engagement	3	8.3
Strategic compliance	10	27.9
Ritual compliance	15	41.7
Retreatism	7	19.4
Rebellion	1	2.8
<hr/>		

Furthermore, the observations provided minimal evidence to the scholarly practitioner that educators were employing EHS' RULER approach to foster authentic relationships with students, and develop skills to examine causes and formulate solutions for educational inequity at EHS (Jagers et al., 2018b). In classrooms with varying levels of student compliance, little evidence existed of educators assisting students in developing the skills, understanding, and mindset needed to critically examine the root causes of societal inequities and engage in evidence-based, collaborative actions (Jagers et al., 2019). The compliance context of a classroom environment generates barriers for teacher and students to engage in genuine inquiry regarding topics of race, ethnicity, and culture (Schlechty, 2011).

End-user Consultations

The scholarly practitioner conducted end-user consultations to evaluate perception of the existing RULER approach, and its ability to empower educators to engage in meaningful

discussions with students regarding topics of race, ethnicity and culture. End-user consultations are described as practical quantitative and qualitative evaluation items that are woven into daily instruction for the purpose of sensitivity to short-term changes, and quick reporting and analysis by educators (Bryk et al., 2015). As part of the scholarly practitioner's administrator role at EPS, and for the purpose of a previous class assignment in the EdD program at Sacred Heart University, end-user consultations were conducted to explore educators' perception of impact of trauma-informed practice and social emotional learning (SEL) training programs in the district. The interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes and consisted of four open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Table 8 provides a description of the demographics of the end-users.

Table 8

Demographic Data for the Participants of the End-User Consultations

Participant (Pseudonym)	Role	Education Level	Age Range	Race/ Ethnicity	Years in Role	Years in Education
Charles	Administrator	Master's	30-39	white	4	11-15
Carlotta	Regular Education Teacher	Bachelor's	20-29	white	2	3-5
Inez	Special Education Teacher	Master's	40-49	white	7	11-15
Septima	Administrator	Master's	40-49	white	4	15+
Jeanne	Support Staff	Master's	40-49	white	10	15+
Edmund	Regular Education Teacher	Master's	50-59	No response	13	15+

Document Review

The scholarly practitioner's document review consisted of analysis of student achievement data, EHS staff survey data from Yale (2019) and Panorama Education (2021a), a review of equity assessment data, a review of curricula utilizing the ATLAS curriculum mapping software, a review of student and staff demographic data on the EdSight platform, and review of district artifacts. Based on the aims of the scholarly practitioner's inquiry, the areas of focus were as follows: (a) the goals and strategies of EPS to improve the academic and disciplinary outcomes of minoritized student groups with SEL approaches (b) feedback from educators regarding to support from district and school leadership; and (c) trends in the district's SEL efforts.

The scholarly practitioner's purpose to investigate existing and historical data aligned with the constructivist paradigm present in qualitative research (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). In particular, the scholarly practitioner sought to elevate the voices of the end-users with regards to the phenomenon in the inquiry (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Therefore, through the scholarly-practitioners collection of existing and historical data in the form of observations, interviews, and documents, the scholarly practitioner intended to increase her comprehension and further definition of the ISDiP's PoP (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Confidentiality

When collecting end-user consultation data, the scholarly practitioner protected the confidentiality of the interviewees through not collecting any names nor any other identifying information from those interviewed (Yin, 2017). No identifiers were linked to data, which was collected through careful note taking by the scholarly practitioner during consultation. These notes were stored on a password protected computer, which were only accessible to the scholarly

practitioner, and all notes were destroyed after study's completion. In addition to the end-user consultation data, data on classroom walkthroughs, existing school climate and SEL survey measures, and publicly available data on district, town, and state data bases were also analyzed in the CSA study. No names of any party were collected in this process and all identifiers were either not collected or were removed and deleted from the data. All interviews were conducted, in compliance with current state and CDC COVID recommendation and best practice guidelines to reduce transmission, including maintaining recommended distance from interviewee, usage of masks or utilization of secure FERPA compliant virtual communication platforms.

Data Analysis

An exploratory case study design framed the scholarly practitioner's CSA, that led to the identification of worse disciplinary and academic outcomes for minoritized student groups possibly exacerbated by educator bias as the ISDiP's PoP (Yin, 2017). The improvement science theoretical framework guided the scholarly practitioner's causal analysis, as the scholarly practitioner sought to scrutinize and dissect the PoP into identifiable root causes, rather than mere symptoms of the PoP, to effectively intervene on the PoP (Perry et al., 2020). Perry and colleagues (2020) propose a comprehensive data analysis process followed by the scholarly practitioner that consisted of: categorizing and familiarizing herself with historical and existing data, utilizing a fishbone diagram to identify themes and code the data, perspective-taking with end-users as to alternative root causes, and summarizing root causes contributing to the PoP. Through the utilization of a fishbone diagram as a framework for CSA, the scholarly practitioner's objective was to examine and discover the concealed causes of the PoP, and allow the individuals affected by the PoP to brainstorm and gain consensus as to how to address the PoP (Perry et al., 2020). The diagram informed the scholarly practitioner and the intervention

team to further understand the PoP, develop evidence-based interventions, examine possible root causes contributing to the PoP, categorize causes, and facilitate brainstorming and consensus (Perry et al., 2020).

Organizing the Data

The scholarly practitioner utilized various data organization methods during the causal analysis stage of the inquiry. For classroom observations, the scholarly practitioner recorded field note observations in a password protected computer, which were time stamped on a Word document and organized according to Schlechty's (2011) indicators of student engagement. Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner recorded notes on the semi-structured end-user consultation protocol in a Word document, which was stored in a password protected computer (see Appendix A). The scholarly practitioner assigned pseudonyms to each end-user, and organized the interview data according to the time, location, and date of the end-user consultation. Finally, the scholarly practitioner organized the collected documents according to source, purpose, and retrieval date.

Generating Categories and Themes

The scholarly practitioner imported the data from the classroom walkthroughs, end-user consultation, and document review into Word documents and coded the data manually. The scholarly practitioner engaged in data interpretation, and categorized components that represented a corresponding idea, and coded the text with a word or short phrase (Glesne, 2016). Finally, the scholarly practitioner triangulated the data to validate the data and end-user lived experiences. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner juxtaposed the classroom observational data with the end-user responses and the reviewed documents to engage in member-checking. The scholarly practitioner member-checked themes and results with the interviewed end-users, and

analyzed how the observational classroom data, end-user consultation data, and document review data substantiated each other.

Discussion

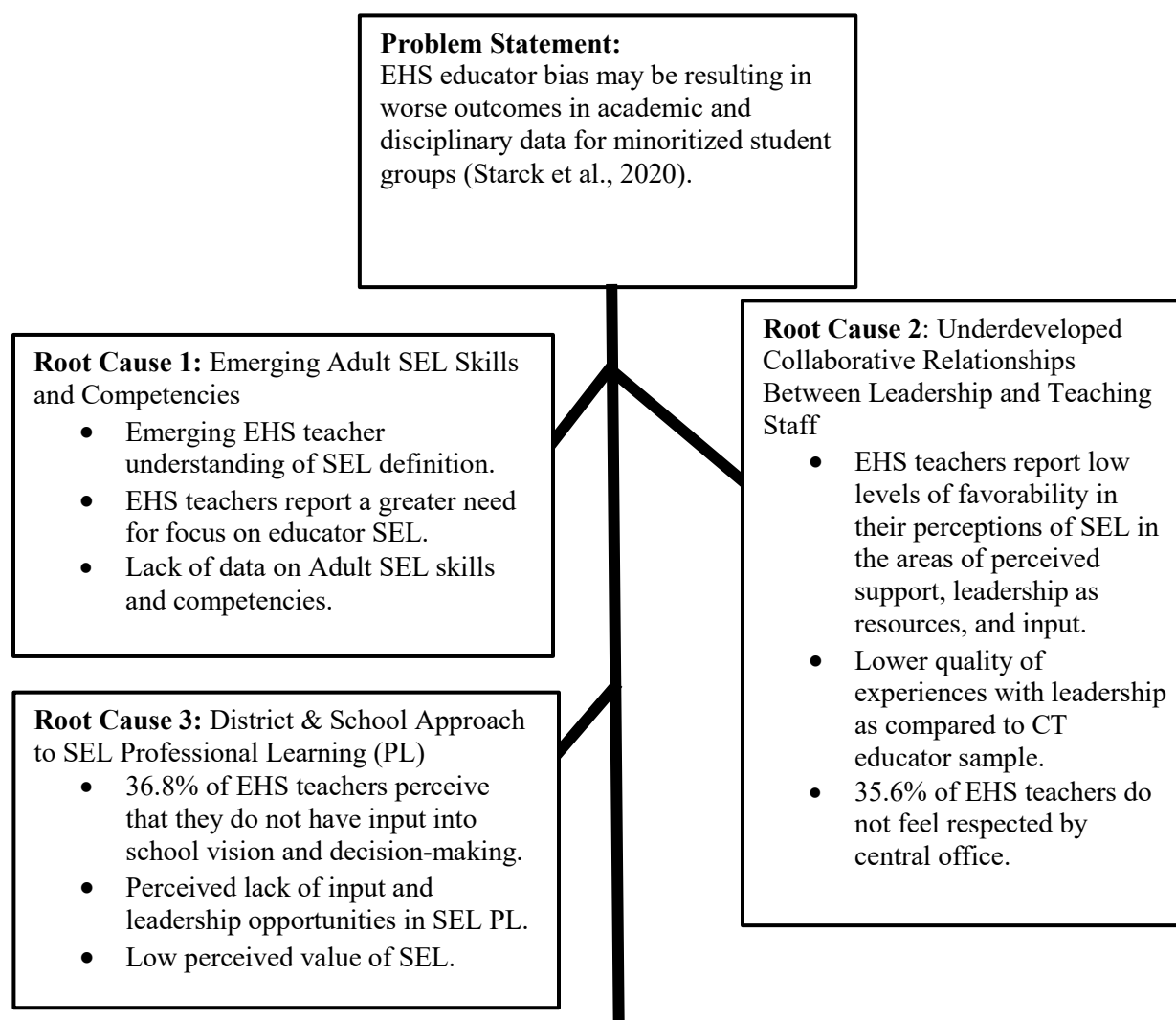
Among the salient themes emerging from the data review and analysis were the perceptions from staff of structural causes (i.e. racist societal systems), organizational causes (i.e. suboptimal forums for teachers to engage in self-reflection and collegial conversations to address their personal and collective biases in the school context.), policy causes (i.e. suboptimal Board of Education emphasis on adult, trauma-informed SEL), ideological causes (i.e. minimal efforts from district and school administrators to prioritize the development of an equity lens in staff), capacity causes (i.e. suboptimal professional learning (PL) opportunities regarding antibias efforts), historical causes (i.e. the majority white, upper-middle class make-up of Esquivel), resource causes (i.e. minimal teacher access and input of resources to develop their SEL and trauma-informed skills and competencies, and address curricular challenges), and practice causes (i.e. overrepresentation of Black and African American and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx students in suspensions and expulsions, underrepresentation of diverse students in A.P. courses) (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

To engage in a CSA of why EHS' educator biases may contribute to worse disciplinary and academic data for minoritized student groups, the scholar utilized the CSA to identify three root causes of the problem of practice (see Figure 1). The process included an analysis of student achievement data, EHS staff survey data from Yale (2019) and Panorama Education (2021a), a review of equity assessment data, a review of curricula utilizing the ATLAS curriculum mapping software, a review of student and staff demographic data on the EdSight platform, classroom walkthroughs, and review of district artifacts. As a result of the CSA, the researcher identified

the following root cause categories: emerging adult SEL skills and competencies, underdeveloped collaborative relationships between leadership and teaching staff, and district and school approaches to SEL PL. The three root causes demonstrated that both EPS and EHS' leadership was emerging in their practice to promote optimal adult SEL skills and competencies with cultural competency considerations. When adults possess strong social, emotional, and cultural competencies, a higher likelihood exists for educators to apply their skills and develop meaningful relationships with minoritized groups across all contexts in their lives (CASEL, 2022d). In education, educators with strongly developed SEL and cultural competencies have the potential to improve student academic and disciplinary outcomes, particularly those of minoritized student groups (CASEL, 2022d).

Figure 1

Fishbone Diagram of Problem and Possible Root Causes



Root Cause #1: Emerging Adult SEL Skills and Competencies

The first root cause identified by the scholarly practitioner, in collaboration with end-users, was that EHS educators are emerging in their adult SEL skills and competencies, which would aid in mitigating their biases and contribute to increased positive academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups (CASEL, 2022d). Upon the scholarly practitioner's review of EHS staff SEL data, the scholarly practitioner identified two survey measures which provided data on levels of adult SEL skills and competencies of EHS educators. The first, administered in the fall of 2019, was the Yale (2019) *Educator Well-Being and Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Survey*. While staff self-reported on their social, emotional, and work place well-being, the scholarly practitioner found that the survey measure did not measure explicitly measure the five SEL skills and competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness (CASEL, n.d.). Additionally, the scholarly practitioner did not find any instances of data reporting on any of the adult skills with regards to Yale's (2021) RULER framework on emotional intelligence, which are: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions. While self-assessment scales exist such as Yoder's (2014) tool to measure adult SEL skills and competencies and education, the scholarly practitioner found minimal evidence of levels of adult SEL skills and competencies. Additionally, the scholarly practitioner's review of the EPS district coherence plan did not find a mention of developing educator SEL skills and competencies as a priority.

However, in the spring of 2021, the EHS leadership team collaborated on a second survey measure with quantitative and qualitative questions items to capture the perceptions of EHS staff with regards to their PL experience. While the survey measure was not pilot-tested, increasing

validity concerns for the scholarly practitioner's analysis, the leadership team did peer-review and provided feedback on the question items, which were modeled after the Panorama Education's (2021a) *Adult SEL Measures* survey. The survey was voluntary, which led to the collection of 21 respondents' self-reported data out of the 82 certified staff members. When staff were asked to identify an area of further development in EHS' current SEL approach, the majority of responses revealed staff's desire to further strengthen adult SEL (see Table 9).

Table 9

EHS Staff Suggestions for PD SEL topics in April 2021 (N=21)

Suggestion	Example quote	Frequency, <i>n</i> (%)
Focus on Educator SEL	"I believe that in order to support our students' social emotional growth, we need to also find ways to better support teachers."	10 (47.6)
Student Outcome Analysis	"We should conduct our own surveys that reflect our student body. The faculty should have conversations that reflect that data"	5 (23.8)
Instructional Strategies	"Sample lessons for all subject areas that are grade appropriate ."	4 (19.0)
None	<i>*Two staff members left field blank</i>	2 (9.5)

Additionally, informed by McKown's (2019) work, the second qualitative, open-ended question item that the leadership team included was "What is your definition of social-emotional learning SEL?" The purpose of this question was two-fold, 1) to gauge staff's understanding of SEL and 2) to eventually assess SEL, EHS must identify which student SEL skills are most important according to the identities and lived experiences of all of the members of the EHS

learning community to clarify assessment goals and select the right assessment tool (McKown, 2019). Table 10 displays gaps EHS' educator in understanding of SEL.

Table 10

EHS Staff Definitions of SEL in April 2021 (N=21)

Definition Type	Example quote	Frequency, n (%)
Skill for Emotion Management	"Becoming aware of and employing methods of emotional awareness and management."	9 (43.9)
Instructional Strategy	"Social emotional learning is associated with strategies that support and develop the interpersonal and emotional needs of students."	5 (23.8)
Process	"The process of developing self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are important for succeeding in life."	4 (19.0)
None	"I do not have one."	3 (14.3)

Educators possessing strongly developed adult SEL skills and competencies report increased self-efficacy when teaching and modeling SEL skills and competencies with their students (Palomera et al., 2008). Additionally, part of adult SEL skills and competencies is cultural competency, which is the ability to explore an individual and others' identities in society and culture to gain an evidence-based, historically-accurate appreciation of diversity (CASEL, 2022d). An informed appreciation of diversity may contribute to educators' empathy and compassion and decreased biases towards minoritized student groups (Jagers et al., 2018a). Furthermore, educators demonstrating high levels of cultural competence engage in meaningful relationship building with students, particularly minoritized student groups (CASEL, 2022d).

Finally, as educators with high levels of cultural competence are more likely to address educational inequities and implement long-lasting, effective changes for minoritized student groups (CASEL, 2022d). In particular, educators with high levels of cultural competency are more likely to report evidence of increased academic motivation, interest and confidence among minoritized student groups in their classrooms (Bui & Fagan, 2013; Hubert, 2014; Martell, 2013). Culturally competent educators also report increased efficacy in classroom management skills, which leads to decreased disciplinary referrals of minoritized student groups (Durlak et al., 2011). Therefore, the emerging adult SEL skills and competencies of EHS educators demonstrated to the scholarly practitioner that they may be a root cause of the worse academic and disciplinary outcomes among minoritized student groups.

Root Cause #2: Underdeveloped Collaborative Relationships Between Leadership and Teaching Staff

The second root cause contributing to educator implicit biases possibly worsening the academic and discipline outcomes of minority student groups is the underdeveloped collaborative relationships between EHS leadership and teaching staff (CASEL, 2022c). Figures 2-3 display the self-reported data of the 21 respondents in two of the 7 quantitative, close-ended question items that the EHS leadership team modeled after the Panorama (2021a) *Adult SEL Measures* survey regarding staff perceptions of the PL experience at EHS. Figure 2 demonstrates a 19% favorability among the staff's perceptions of the EHS leadership as effective resources of SEL strategies. Figure 3 displays the 33.3% favorability among staff's perceptions of the type of support in SEL that EHS leadership provide.

Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner analyzed data points from the Yale *Educator Well-Being and Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Survey* (2019) which provided

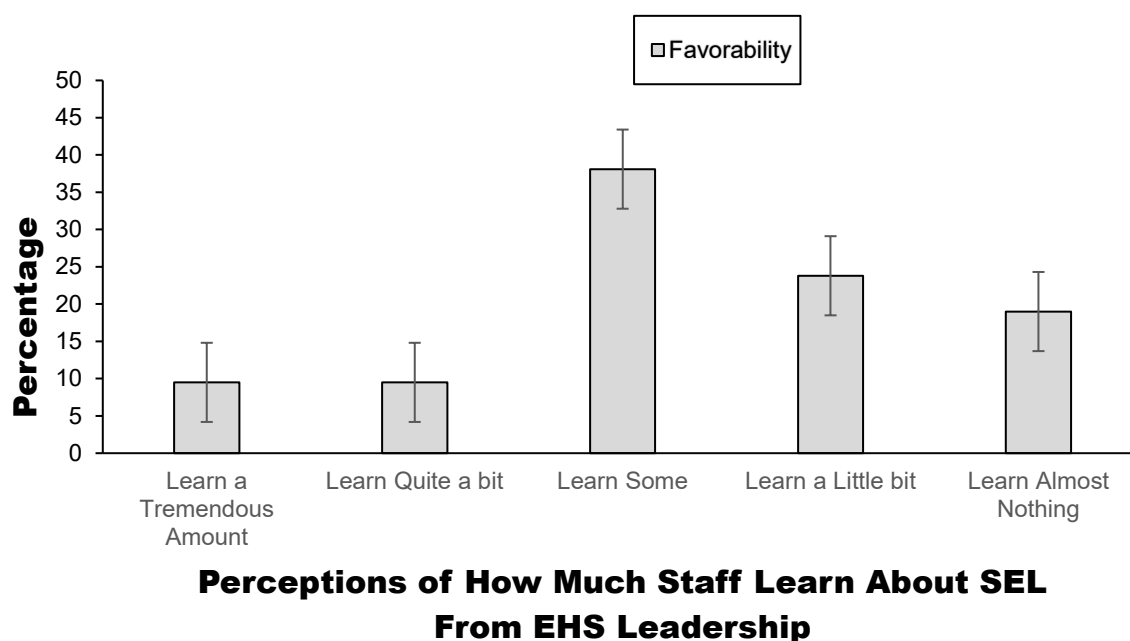
further evidence of underdeveloped collaborative relationships between EHS leadership and the teaching staff. When analyzing experiences with leadership, there are six factors that the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2019) recognizes as impactful: (educator voice, instructional autonomy, constructive feedback, educator recognition, disciplinary support, and nonteaching demands. Consequently, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2019) measures the indices in each of these categories. EHS teaching staff score lower in every single area of experiences with leadership when compared to the state of Connecticut sample of educators as displayed in Figure 4 (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, 2019).

After conducting a *t*-test with two-samples assuming unequal variances, we fail to reject the null hypothesis since *p* was greater than .05. We conclude that there is not a significant difference in test scores between the EHS staff (*M* = 3.48) and the sample of Connecticut educator (*M* = 3.64) responses on the *Yale Educator Well-Being and Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Survey* (2019), $t(51) = 0.540$, $p = .591$. However, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2019) advised schools to review the data for low means, which may indicate points for intervention. Therefore, though not statistically significant, the scholarly practitioner identified most of the means as representing lower favorability regarding EHS teachers' perceptions of their experiences with EHS leadership as compared to other Connecticut teachers. The lower means of EHS teachers may support the scholarly practitioner's hypothesis that their relationship quality with leadership was a root cause that contributed to EHS' teacher bias, which may be resulting in worse academic and disciplinary data for minoritized student groups (Starck et al., 2020). When educational leaders prioritize relationships with teachers, a potential exists to increase teacher connectedness and compassion and decrease implicit and explicit biases and prejudices (Hughes et al., 2005; Lueke et al., 2014; Simmons et al., 2018).

Finally, EHS teaching staff communicated a suboptimal relationship with central office leadership in Panorama Education’s (2021b) staff survey measure. As seen in Figure 5, the statement, “I feel respected by the central office leadership team,” received the lowest favorability rating of 67% (Panorama, 2021b).

Figure 2

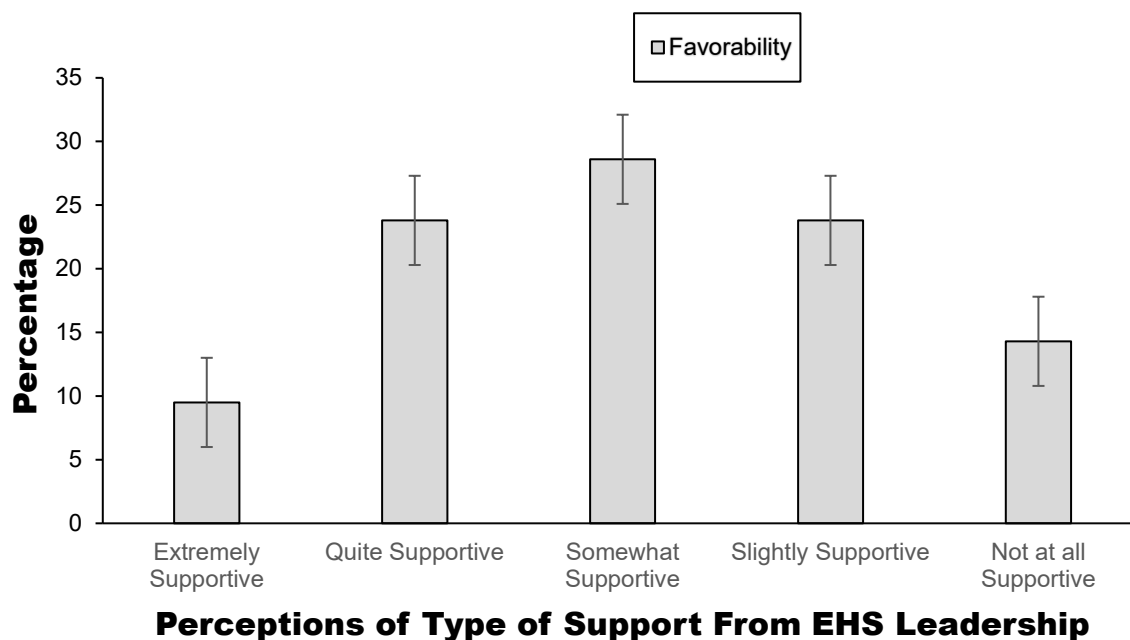
EHS Staff Survey Respondents by Perceptions of Leadership as Resources of SEL (N=21)



Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “learn a tremendous amount” or “learn quite a bit.” The non-favorable responses included, “learn some,” “learn a little bit,” and “learn almost nothing.” From “Professional Learning About SEL” by Panorama, 2021 (see Appendix B). Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

Figure 3

EHS Staff Survey Respondents by Perceptions of Leadership Support in SEL (N=21)

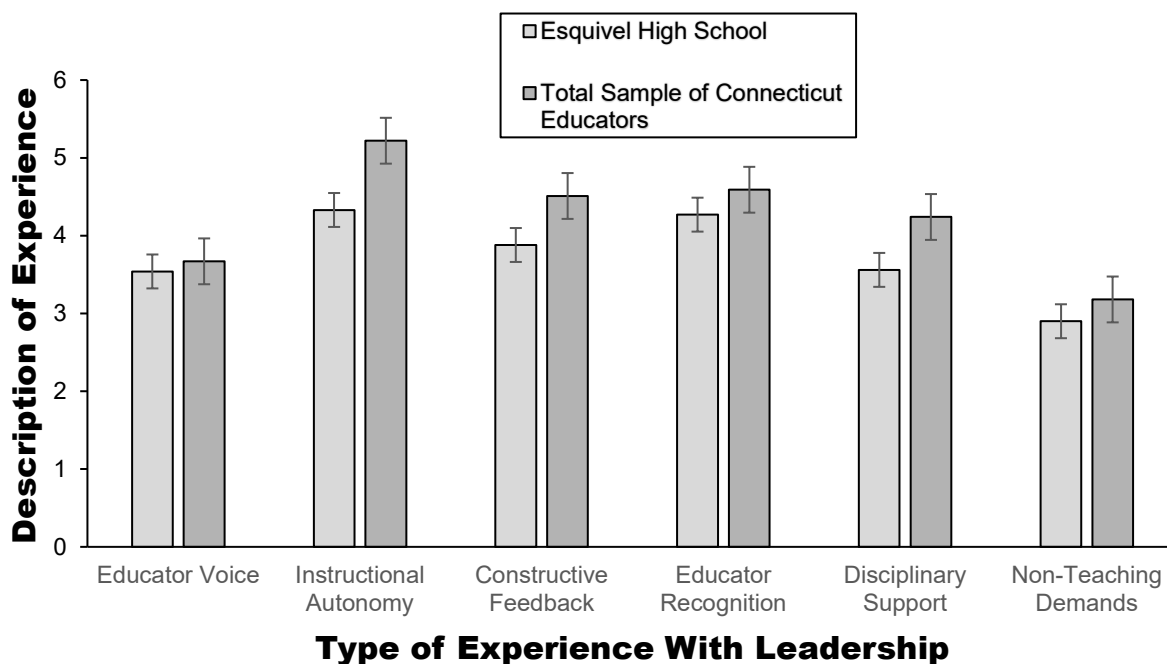


Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “extremely supportive” or “quite supportive.” The non-favorable responses included, “somewhat supportive,” “slightly supportive,” and “not at all supportive.”

From “Professional Learning About SEL” by Panorama, 2021

(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QTxfwu0CtL9vt_PoXoA-xKFLY52PH6d5/edit).

Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

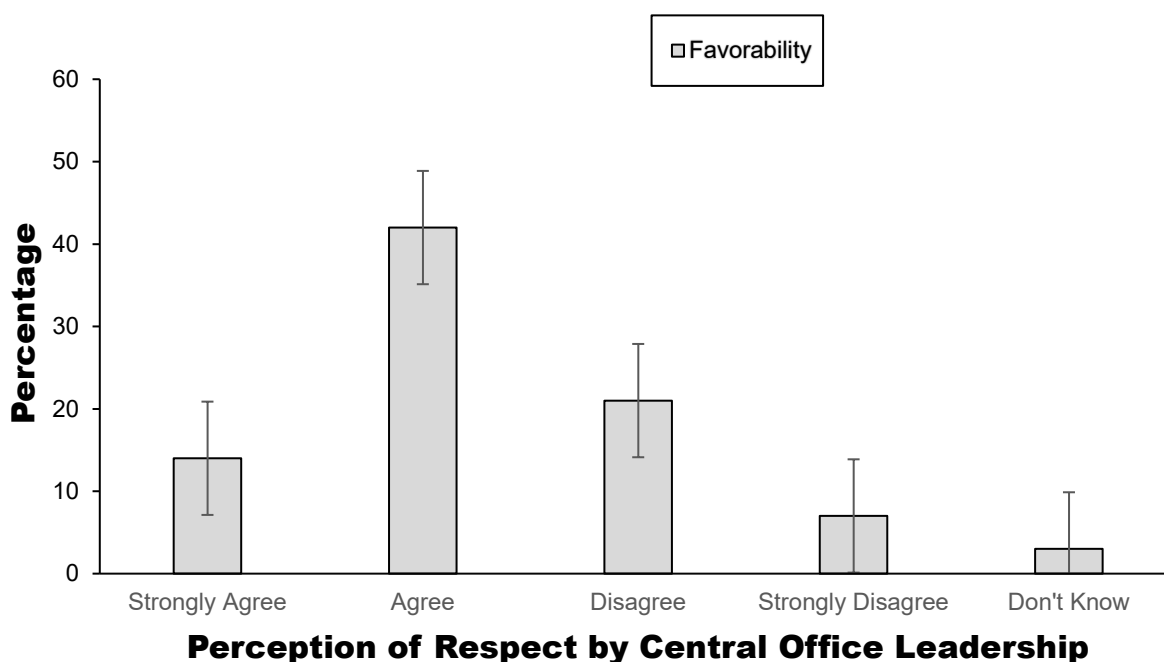
Figure 4*Perceived Experiences With Leadership by EHS Staff*

Note. Each survey respondent indicated the degree to which a type of experience with a leader described their experience on a scale from 1 to 7, where a 1 was “does not describe my experience well” and a 7 was “describes my experience very well.” A respondent understood “educator” as school leaders consulting them in decision-making processes. “Instructional autonomy,” indicated that the respondent perceived that the school leadership allowed for them to be creative in the instructional process, and “constructive” meant that a respondent perceived their supervisors as sources of constructive feedback. A respondent understood “educator recognition” as school leadership recognizing their contributions to the school, and “disciplinary support” as school leadership supporting them with issues of student discipline. Finally, a respondent understood “non-teaching demands” as school leadership assigning an excessive amount of non-teaching duties to them. From “Yale Educator Well-Being and Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Survey” by Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, 2019

(<https://dochub.com/holleyk/eOLPG9YKjmLngg2RZpXz6y/wendy2t3-schoolreport5-Esquivelhigh-pdf>). Copyright 2019 by Yale University.

Figure 5

EHS' Staff Perceived Favorability of Respect by Central Office Leadership in 2021



Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “strongly agree” or “agree.” The non-favorable responses included, “disagree,” “strongly disagree” and “don’t know.” From “Esquivel High School Staff Survey Results 2021” by Panorama, 2021. Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

Simmons and colleagues (2018) found that educators with negative perceptions of school climate, which includes relationships with leaders, are at risk of providing suboptimal opportunities for students to develop their social, emotional, and academic competencies. In particular, the types of relationships between leadership and teaching staff within a school and across a district contribute to the efficacy of educator implementation of an SEL approach, the degree of collaboration among staff, and the quality of adjustments made by educators due to

acceptance of leadership feedback (CASEL, 2022c). Moreover, leaders possess a higher likelihood to positively impact student academic achievement when they optimize school climate through increased collaboration among all educators (Allensworth & Hart, 2018). Goldin and Khasnabis (2020) found that when school leaders identify and address causes within a school, such as their relationships with teaching staff, they can decrease deficit ideologies in teachers that can potentially focus on student behavior and may further traumatize students at school. When teaching staff perceive to have supportive, respectful, meaningful relationships with leaders, the quality of their relationships with students are also positively impacted (CASEL, 2022c; Goddard et al., 2004; Sosa & Gomez, 2012). Additionally, when teaching staff and leadership possess strong collaborative relationships, teachers possess increased stamina to adjust their instruction in response to student learning needs (CASEL, 2022a; Goddard et al., 2004; Sosa & Gomez, 2012). With regards to minoritized student groups, strong collaborative relationships among all educators are essential in educational communities as, due to educator bias, a high likelihood exists for educators to have deficit views of minoritized student groups that generate educational barriers that may lead to worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for these students (CASEL, 2022c; Sosa & Gomez, 2012). Therefore, the scholarly practitioner surmised that minimal evidence existed that EHS leadership were leveraging their relationships with teaching staff to mitigate personal and collective educator biases, which may contribute to worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups.

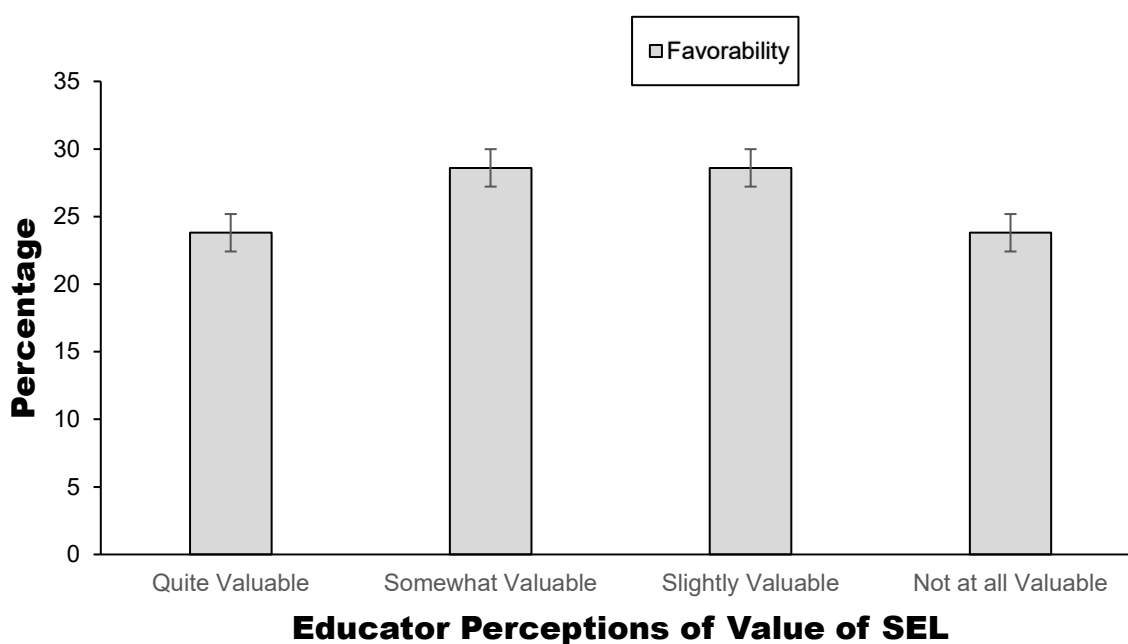
Root Cause #3: District & School Approach to SEL Professional Learning (PL)

The scholarly practitioner identified EPS and EHS' approach to SEL PL as the third root cause, which may be contributing to worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups due to educator bias. While EPS and EHS' administration values and regularly

collects teacher input to provide optimal forums for staff to engage in capacity building, EHS teachers' perceptions of SEL professional development reflected the growing distrust and deficit views of teachers nation-wide PL initiatives lacking teacher agency and voice (Berman, 2018; Santoro, 2018). For example, when EHS administrators surveyed teachers utilizing the "Professional Learning About SEL" scale from Panorama's (2021a) *Adult SEL Measures* survey, staff reported low levels of value and input in EHS' RULER and trauma-informed strategies PL offerings. Figures 6-7 demonstrate the low favorability percentages among EHS educators with regards to their perceived value of SEL (23.8%) and their perceived amount of input in their PL experiences (14.3%).

Figure 6

Sorted-EHS Staff Survey Respondents by Perceptions of Value in SEL (N=21)

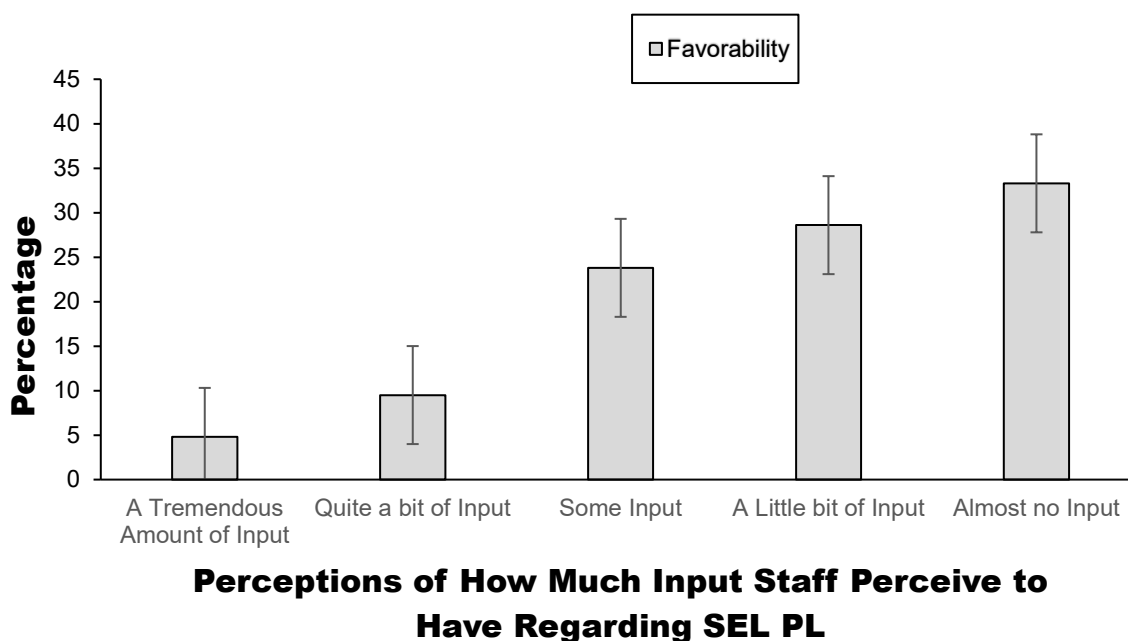


Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, "extremely valuable" or "quite valuable." The non-favorable responses included, "somewhat valuable," "slightly valuable," and "not at all valuable." From

“Professional Learning About SEL” by Panorama, 2021 (see Appendix B). Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

Figure 7

Sorted-EHS Staff Survey Respondents by Perceptions of Input in SEL PL (N=21)



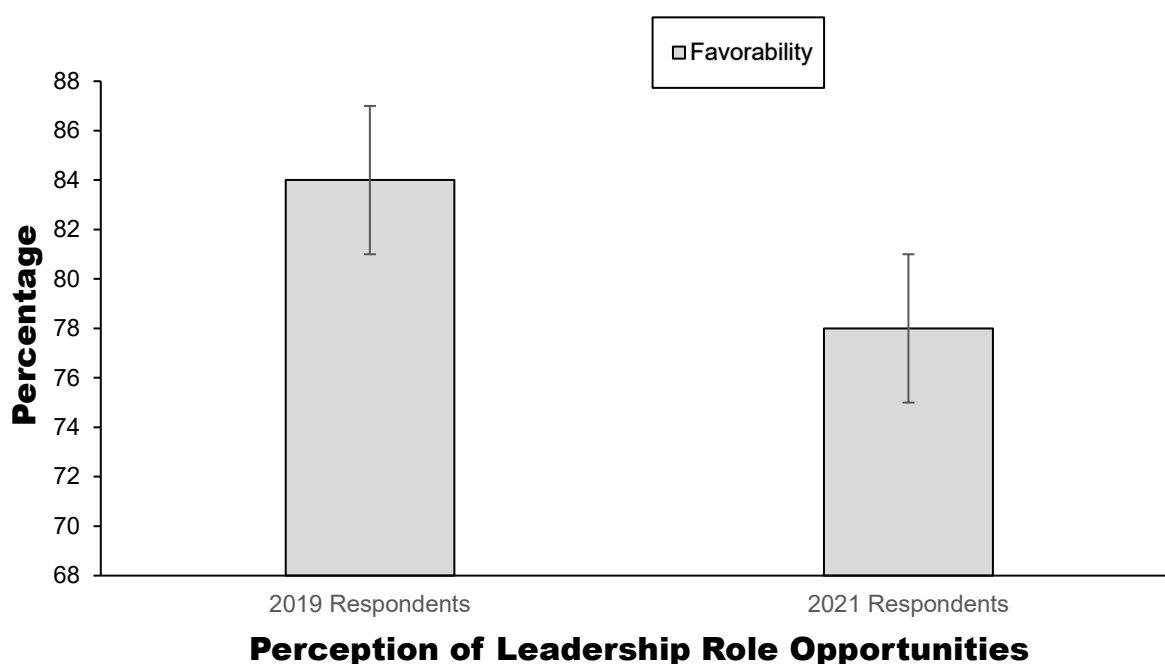
Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “a tremendous amount of input” or “quite a bit of input.” The non-favorable responses included, “some input,” “a little bit of input,” and “almost no input.” From “Professional Learning About SEL” by Panorama, 2021 (see Appendix B). Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

The latest Panorama (2021a) staff survey on school climate administered to EHS staff revealed various data points that further supported the district and school approach to SEL PL as a potential root cause. Downward trends existed in school climate data regarding teacher perceptions of leadership and decision-making input regarding SEL PL opportunities. There was a 6% favorability point drop in EHS’ staff perceptions of their ability to participate in leadership

roles and to engage in the decision-making processes regarding PL opportunities as seen in Figures 8-9. In 2019, EHS teacher respondents perceived opportunities to engage in leadership roles and decision-making with an 84% and 74% favorability rating respectively; however, in 2021 those ratings dropped to 78% and 68%, as seen in Figures 8 and 9 (Panorama, 2021b).

Figure 8

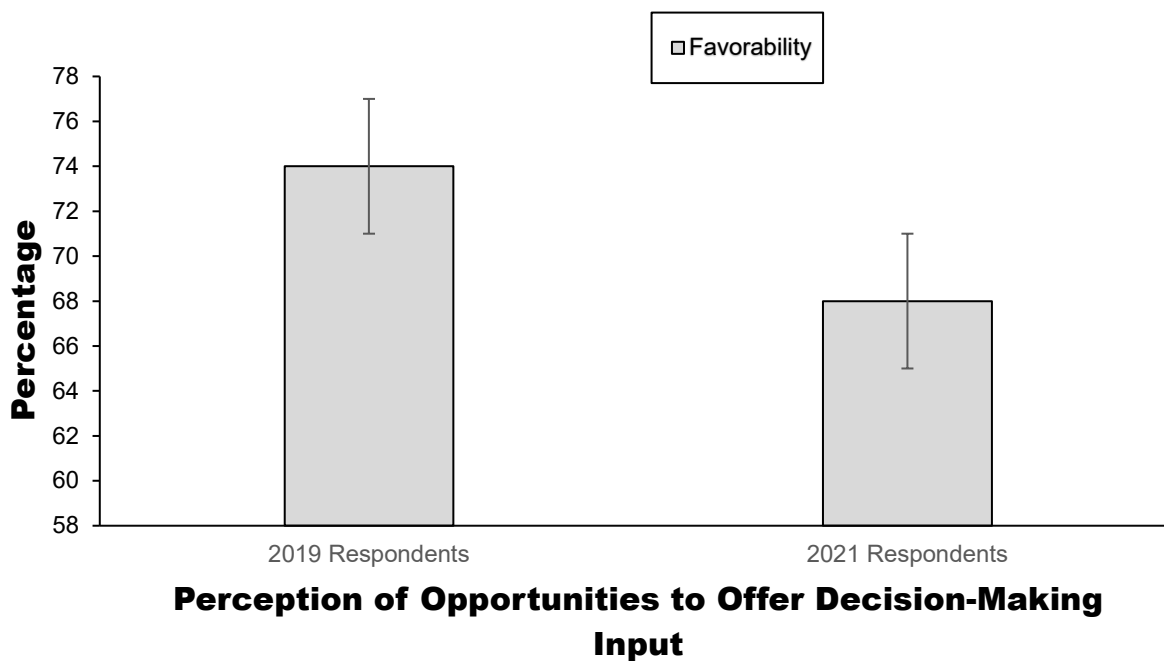
EHS' Staff Perceived Favorability of Leadership Role Opportunities in SEL PL in 2021



Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “strongly agree” or “agree.” The non-favorable responses included, “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” The EHS leadership did not administer the 2020 Panorama Staff Survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From Panorama, 2021 (see Appendix B). Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

Figure 9

EHS' Staff Perceived Favorability of Opportunities to Offer Decision-Making Input in SEL PL in 2021



Note. The survey calculated perceived favorability percentage by accounting for the percentage of staff who responded, “strongly agree” or “agree.” The non-favorable responses included, “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” The EHS leadership did not administer the 2020 Panorama Staff Survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From Panorama, 2021 (see Appendix B). Copyright 2021 by Panorama Education.

A comprehensive SEL PL approach requires educational leaders to ensure that all educators have a clear understanding of what SEL is, and have experiential learning opportunities to understand how optimal development of educator and student SEL skills and competencies contribute to short and long-term student outcomes (CASEL, 2022a). When educational leaders prioritize educator agency, voice, and understanding in SEL PL matters, they

increase the likelihood of educators supporting a school's mission and vision to implement SEL to optimize the social, emotional, and academic of all students, and in particular, minoritized student groups (CASEL, 2022a). Additionally, a comprehensive SEL PL approach can aid educators in implementing strategies that will mitigate their personal and collective biases towards minoritized student groups in school operations and classroom practice (CASEL, 2022a).

Implications

The scholarly practitioner's inquiry suggested that there are various implications regarding educational policy, procedures, and practices. As identified in the ISDiP's statement of the problem, educators need to explore how a comprehensive SEL approach can aid in the mitigation of educator bias, which can lead to improved academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups. After analyzing the data collected for the CSA, the scholarly practitioner identified several recommendations of relevance to educators as they consider an implementation of a comprehensive SEL approach with the goal of improving academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups. The recommendations include the universal implementation of a trauma-informed SEL approach, further development of educators' self-awareness and social awareness, opportunities for peer coaching and mentorship, and on-going, individualized PL opportunities. The scholarly practitioner discussed these recommendations in further detail in Chapter Two as related to literature and practices under the potential strategies to mitigate the problem section.

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

The scholarly practitioner framed the ISDiP within a pragmatic paradigm due to the dynamic school environment, which required changes in the scholarly practitioner and

intervention team's approaches (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner applied a pragmatic, mixed-method research–intervention process model (Morgan, 2014; Nastasi et al., 2007) that utilized a community-based action research approach to facilitate change through collegial involvement in the research process (Openjuru et al., 2015; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). The mixed-method model combined with the action research approach facilitated the scholarly practitioner's intention to be culturally responsive and adaptive to the educators' needs (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). The scholarly practitioner collaborated with educators and external consultants, who made up the intervention team, to better comprehend the PoP in the EHS community. The intervention team worked toward co-creating spaces of trauma-informed SEL, social action, and positive change for EHS educators and students through the use of multiple knowledge sources and research methods (Openjuru et al., 2015; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Accordingly, by acknowledging a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention in educator practice and describing how it can apply to educators' diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, the scholarly practitioner expected to influence educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, thus contributing to an increase in their self-reported favorable perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL.

Inquiry Questions

- 1) Do high school educators' perceptions of belonging to the school community, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL change through participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?

- 2) How do educators' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL change over time after participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?
- 3) Which leadership styles, if any, did educators identify as supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

Participants

The ISDiP's target population were high school educators across disciplines and roles at EHS. While 80 educators received the intervention, 50 participants engaged in the inquiry through purposeful, convenience sampling (Martella et al., 2013). Due to the scholarly practitioner's collegial relationships with educators at EHS, recruiting both administrators and teaching staff was the strategy that the scholarly practitioner utilized to gain participants. All EHS educators received an email explaining the scholarly practitioner's inquiry with information for participants to engage as either peer coaches or intervention participants. The scholarly practitioner's ISDiP consisted of pre-test and post-test survey measures, focus groups to substantiate survey responses, field notes, and coordination meetings with the intervention team. Appendices B- are samples of closed and open-ended questions utilized in the survey measures and the interview protocols.

Significance of the Study

The ISDiP may inform educational leaders' planning and actions when exploring access points to universally implement a trauma-informed SEL approach to address educational inequities with minoritized student groups "mindfully and equitably" (Gorski, 2020, p. 15). Elias and Leverett (2011) found that when schools combine SEL and trauma-informed approaches the effectiveness of interventions within both approaches increase, particularly with minoritized

student groups. Furthermore, Jagers et al. (2018b) claimed that an intentional effort by educational leaders to develop educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies can potentially increase educational equity by eliminating the systemic, institutional, and individual obstacles that minoritized student groups are more likely to experience in the schooling contexts. Educational leaders can empower educators to engage in perspective-taking to compare their own educational experiences and opportunities with that of their students' to engage in effective change-making action (Jagers et al., 2018b). Jagers and colleagues (2018b) theorize that educators who increase their perspective-taking, reflective practices also increase their ability to both empathize and address the needs of all students regardless of their background. Furthermore, Gorski and Swalwell (2015) theorize that when educational leaders provide teachers with forums to acknowledge, address, and remedy their personal and collective biases, the potential exists for them to generate and sustain educational spaces that are remove bias, discrimination, and inequity for minoritized student groups.

Finally, the societal impact of systemic racism, magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, presents an urgency for schools and districts across the United States to build educator capacity to implement trauma-informed SEL approaches with students. Precisely, minoritized student groups experience a disproportionate amount of trauma both inside and outside of schools due to the adverse impacts of systemic racism, which places them at a disadvantage to optimally develop socially, emotionally, and academically due to their heightened emotional states (Pawlo et al., 2019). Regarding educational considerations given the effects of systemic racism, the educational leaders in schools and districts who intentionally leverage SEL approaches to include trauma-informed considerations have a higher likelihood to engage impactful decision-making to effectively prioritize and address the needs of minoritized student groups experiencing trauma

and, subsequently, meaningfully commit to educational equity (Pawlo et al., 2019; Gorski, 2019). Moreover, the scholarly practitioner's analysis presented in this study conveys beneficial insights for future research that will explore the various benefits of strengthening educator SEL with a trauma-informed-SEL PL intervention.

Definition of Key Terms

Educators measure a student's **academic achievement** when comparing evidence of a student's learning to the grade-level, content-area standards, where a student's learning is either at or surpasses a content area's standard at a particular grade-level (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). In Connecticut, educators utilize the following summative state assessments to measure student achievement in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science respectively: The Connecticut Smarter Balanced Assessment in grades three through eight, the SAT in grade eleven, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) assessment for students in grades five, eight, and eleven (CSDE, 2021).

Action research is a model for inquiry that a scholarly practitioner can utilize to approach improvement science in education to address a PoP (Glesne, 2016). As part of the action research model, the scholarly practitioner, alongside the NIC, may engage in cyclical research phases to observe, reflect, and act to address an organization's PoP by utilizing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data sources within each phase (Glesne, 2016).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood, between the ages of 0 and 17, which can include instances of abuse, violence, and/or neglect. Additionally, ACEs may include a negative environment where a child perceives that their stability or safety is threatened (Centers for Disease Control, 2021).

Scholarly practitioners perceive an individual with an **asset view** when they acknowledge, respect, and value all aspects that make-up that individual, particularly what they contribute to the improvement science process (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

A **change idea** is when a scholarly practitioner intentionally alters a system and tests the change idea through an SIAR cycle to determine its efficacy in enhancing an identified driver within the scholarly practitioner's working theory of improvement (Byrk et al., 2015; Perry et al., 2020).

Closed-ended questions are question items that contain evidence-based scales or categories that participants respond to in a measure that scholarly practitioners utilize to collect quantitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

A scholarly practitioner utilizes **convenience sampling method** when the participants or end-users of their ISDiP are readily available to the scholarly practitioner in their contexts (i.e., teacher colleagues in the scholarly practitioner's school, for example), and is a type of non-probabilistic sampling method as the end-users will typically not be representative of a population (Martella et al., 2013).

Deficit ideologies are mindsets where educators consciously choose to identify and place the blame on a students' family, community, and/or other external contexts as causes of the inequitable experiences that negative impact the development of social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies of non-white and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx students (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Gorski, 2020). Eugenics, or the belief or practice of reducing the occurrence of what individuals may subjectively deem as inferior traits in human genetics, contributes to deficit ideologies, which are increasingly concerned with a cultural hierarchy where individuals subjectively deem certain cultures inferior when compared to others (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Deficit ideologies may be also traced to “hegemonic/dominant beliefs about superiority and inferiority” (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, pp. 69-70).

A **didactic learning** context is one where the student engages in a passive role in the learning process, and the teacher utilizes lecture-style teaching methods to relay the content to the student (Raja & Khan, 2018). In the didact learning context, the teacher is the primary source of knowledge for the student (Raja & Khan, 2018).

Drivers are key points within a system that scholarly practitioners identify and influence with change ideas to enact impactful changes within a system (Byrk et al., 2015; Perry et al., 2020).

Driver measures are instruments scholarly practitioners utilize to demonstrate that if the change ideas implemented generate an observable improvement to the identified primary and secondary drivers are impacting the system (Perry et al., 2020).

Educational equity is when educators enact systems that ensure that every student, at an individualized level, has an equal opportunity to that of their peers for educational and post-secondary success (Perry et al., 2020). Therefore, educators must examine existing systems to identify, simplify, and eliminate barriers that result in individual students or specific student populations requiring additional resources to have equal opportunity (Perry et al., 2020).

End-users are the individuals that are the closest to the PoP that the scholarly practitioner identifies, and who aid the scholarly practitioner in further understanding and refining the PoP if the scholarly practitioner approaches the end-user(s) with an asset view and understanding of the existing power dynamics that impact an end-user’s lived experience, which includes their relationship with the scholarly practitioner (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

End-user consultations are practical quantitative and qualitative evaluation items that are woven into daily instruction for the purpose of sensitivity to short-term changes, and quick reporting and analysis by educators (Byrk et al., 2015).

An **equity assessment** is a process that a scholarly practitioner can enact in their context to examine historical and existing data for persisting inequities and the extent of those inequities in that specific aspect (i.e., in education- academic performance data, discipline data, attendance data, etc.) (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

An **equity detour** is the process that provides educators with the perception that they are engaging in progressive reforms to combat racial inequity when they are in fact concealing racial inequities in the educational context (Gorski, 2019). To protect their privilege and avoid discomfort, equity detours allow white educators to be relieved of the responsibility of identifying and eliminate the barriers that generate systemic racism in schools (Olsson, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Gorski, 2019).

When educators apply an **equity lens** in their practice, they are prioritizing the interests of non-white and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx students through the identification and elimination of barriers that these students face to access a to a quality education so that their educational process and life outcomes (i.e., health, well-being, educational access, housing, career, safety) are improved (Simmons et al., 2020).

To develop educators' **equity literacy** is to have educators admit and respond to the most subtle of biases and inequities by responding to their personal and collective biases, examining societal impacts on race and ethnicity, and working towards the development and sustainability of a bias and discrimination-free educational community (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015).

An **experiential learning** context differs from the didactic learning context in that the student takes an active role in the learning process, as the teacher engages the learner through such methods as collaborative learning and real-world simulations, where students have an opportunity to directly apply their learned skills and competencies within the context of the disciplinary content (Raja & Khan, 2018).

An **exploratory case study** is utilized when scholarly practitioners are interested in collecting and analyzing quantitative data and follow the process up with a collection and analysis of qualitative data to aid in the explanation of the quantitative findings (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The scholarly practitioner may utilize the approach as part of their RCA where the lived experiences and perspectives of the end-users may help explain the quantitative findings within a school or district (Perry et al., 2020; Yin, 2017).

Explicit racial bias involves conscious awareness of attitudes and behavior towards groups of diverse racial and ethnic identities; as they often reflect dominant societal racial narratives, individuals are more likely to share them in public (Starck et al., 2020).

A **fishbone diagram** is a tool that scholarly practitioners utilize to categorize root causes of an identified PoP (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

An educational institution's **graduation rate** is the percentage of students who graduate within the expected timeframe for that institution (i.e., for a four-year degree program it is four years) (NCES, 2021b).

Implicit Theories of Intelligence state that individual mindsets regarding their physical and intellectual abilities and talents can be categorized into two types: a fixed mindset-an individual perceives that their talents and abilities are unlikely to change, and a growth mindset-

an individual perceives that their talents and abilities are always evolving (Dweck, 2000; Brackett et al., 2015).

Implicit racial bias occurs within an individual's unconscious cognitive processes, without full awareness of biased behaviors that reflect societal racial attitudes (Greenwald et al., 2009; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Chin et al., 2020). Without conscious awareness of implicit biases, specialized intervention methods may be required to change beliefs and behaviors (Chin et al., 2020).

The **Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP)** is a methodology and skills set scholarly practitioners utilize as part of the EdD program and in their professional contexts. The ISDiP develops a scholarly practitioner's skill set to engage in the improvement science process to identify a PoP that is actionable, design evidence-based change ideas, implement the change ideas within a 90-day action plan and study their impact, and disseminate findings to stakeholders, professors, and colleagues across professional sectors (Perry et al., 2020).

City and colleagues (2009) describe the **instructional core** as three interconnected constructs (teacher, student, and content) that drive student performance. City and colleagues' (2009) theory of action suggested that educators cannot impact student performance without impacting all three constructs where improving teacher knowledge and skill set leads to a positive impact in content, which primes the role of the student to be active in the learning process.

A **lived experience** is an individual's personal account of an empirical encounter with a specific phenomenon (van Manen, 2016).

Minoritized student groups are those student groups whose social, emotional, and academic outcomes are directly and indirectly impacted by the oppressive systems operating

within educational contexts, which favor dominant white culture, and force the socially constructed term “minority” or “minorities” upon these students as opposed to their own identifying characteristics (Sotto-Santiago, 2019).

A **mixed methods design** is a type of complex research design where a scholarly practitioner incorporates a core design (i.e., explanatory, convergent, and/or exploratory) into a theoretical framework that aids the scholarly practitioner in analyzing data and interpreting results (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

An **opportunity gap** is the result of an individuals’ genetic and social identifiers (i.e., gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and economic status), which impact the types of opportunities individuals have access to in their lifetimes (Mooney, 2018).

Outcome measures are instruments scholarly practitioners utilize to both understand the holistic performance of the system, and if the change ideas that they introduce as part of the SIAR cycle produce impact at a systems level (Perry et al., 2020).

Pragmatism is a philosophical approach that a scholarly practitioner can utilize to conduct mixed methods research utilizing models of action research and improvement science, where they are primarily concerned with the consequences of their improvement effort, the research questions asked, and their data collection methods that will aid them in understanding and refining their PoP (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Perry et al., 2020).

Problems of practice (PoPs) are issues within the scholarly practitioner’s context that are on-going, contextualized, and distinct, which if addressed, can potentially lead to improvements in understanding, experiences, and outcomes (Perry et al., 2020).

Process measures are instruments that allow scholarly practitioners to understand if the change idea is generating the results that the scholarly practitioner hypothesized (Perry et al., 2020).

The term **professional learning (PL)** refers to the ongoing, collaborative, active learning process that can potentially improve both student and teacher outcomes as it provides models, coaching, incorporates teacher agency, and is connected to school and district goals, content area standards, assessments (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017; Labone, & Long, 2016).

A **professional learning community (PLC)** is a common, evidence-based practice that facilitates an on-going, collaborative process among educators to engage in action research and improvement science efforts with the collective aim of improving student outcomes (Prenger et al., 2018).

Causal System Analysis (CSA) is a process that a scholarly practitioner engages in to determine the underlying causes of a PoP, as outcomes that scholarly practitioners deem undesirable may be symptoms of PoPs (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Scholarly Practitioner is a graduate of a Doctor of Education (EdD) program, that follows the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) framework, who possesses the ability to apply pragmatic insight and skills acquired from their profession to identify, formulate, and resolve problems of practice (PoPs) (Perry et al., 2020). Additionally, the scholarly practitioner integrates research and theories to enact change within their context to promote equity and social justice (Perry et al., 2020). Collaborative by nature, a scholarly practitioner disseminates their work and findings in multiple forums and works to resolve PoPs alongside

stakeholders within an educational institution, community, or as a group of individuals (Perry et al., 2020).

Self-Determination Theory is a theory that states that student social, emotional, and academic outcomes are correlated to the quality and types of relationships that students have with the adults in their lives to meet students' basic developmental needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci et al., 1991; Brackett et al., 2015).

An **SIAR cycle** is an improvement science tool that allows scholarly practitioners to strategize (S) an action plan with outcomes to advance equity and social justice, implement (I) change ideas rapidly, collect and analyze (A) results, and reflect (R) on the results to revise theories of action on how to achieve the outcomes of the action plan (Perry et al., 2020).

Social emotional learning (SEL), for the purposes of this dissertation, is the process that facilitates the optimal development of skills and competencies that educators and students need to experience, manage, and express their emotions, engage in sound decision-making, and cultivate essential relationships (Simmons et al., 2018). Furthermore, SEL can protect individuals against developing maladaptive behaviors and emotional dysregulation that may inhibit positive health and academic outcomes that contribute to success in post-secondary life (Simmons et al., 2018).

Solutionitis is the common practice of educators to implement solutions in their contexts prior to fully understanding, refining, and defining the PoP (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Teacher agency is when teachers are empowered by educational leaders to engage in decisive and change-making actions to improve their professional practice to enact systemic changes in schools and districts (Calvert, 2016)

Toxic stress is when trauma activates a fight or flight response on an on-going basis in the brain (Burke Harris, 2015). An individual experiences toxic stress often without the support of a caring individual or other variables that may increase that individual's sense of protection (Burke Harris, 2015).

The term **Transformative SEL** in this dissertation refers to a concerted effort within an SEL approach to ameliorate the various types of societal inequities (i.e., educational, social, economic, etc.) that disproportionally impact minoritized student groups due to the impact of systemic racism both in the United States and across the world (Jagers et al., 2019).

Trauma refers to an experience that is not only unique to an individual but can also be experienced either directly or indirectly in the context of isolated and/or on-going events in an individual's life (O'Leary, 2020). When an individual experiences trauma, their emotional experience becomes overwhelmed which results in an individual's heightened perception of a threat to their own life or that of a loved one's (O'Leary, 2020).

Trauma-informed SEL is the inclusion of trauma-informed interventions within an SEL approach to intentionally address the needs of traumatized educators and students. Specifically, the integration of SEL and trauma-informed interventions facilitates access points to the SEL skills that individuals who have experienced or are experiencing trauma require to overcome the psychological and somatic effects of trauma (Pawlo et al., 2019). Interventions may include but are not limited to: addressing and eliminating racial and ethnic inequities in the institutional practices, policies, and parts of school culture that retraumatize minoritized student groups at schools, understanding and responding to traumas deriving any type of systemic oppression (racism, heterosexism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, etc.), and dismantling any cultures, ideologies, and/or practices that are punitive towards minoritized student groups (Gorski, 2020).

A scholarly practitioner develops **working theory of improvement** when they hypothesize how they envision change ideas enacting improvement in the system (New York City Department of Education, 2018; Perry et al., 2020).

Chapter Summary

The scholarly practitioner's realization of a CSA was a step to validate the ISDiP's PoP that EHS teachers' biases may be contributing to worse academic and disciplinary data for minoritized student groups (Starck et al., 2020). The quantitative and qualitative data that the researcher analyzed revealed that the following root causes: emerging adult SEL skills and competencies, underdeveloped collaborative relationships between leadership and teaching staff, and district and school approaches to SEL, which are substantiated by research literature on educator implicit bias. The scholarly practitioner's ISDiP aimed to explore the potential impact of a trauma-informed PL intervention as method to mitigate educator implicit bias.

Chapter Two: Review of Scholarly and Professional Knowledge

Educator Bias through the Student Lens

Review of Scholarly Knowledge

The cognitive and somatic impacts of trauma place minoritized student groups at a disadvantage, preventing them from optimally developing social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies (Finkelhor et al., 2009; Simmons et al., 2018). A traumatic experience refers to one that is not only unique to an individual but can also be experienced either directly or indirectly in the context of isolated and/or ongoing events in an individual's life (O'Leary, 2020). When traumatic experiences occur in childhood or between the ages of zero and 17, they are referred to as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Centers for Disease Control, 2021). A staff member or a student who experiences trauma may additionally experience toxic stress, which occurs when trauma activates a fight-or-flight response on an ongoing basis in the brain, resulting in negative psychological and somatic effects (Burke Harris, 2015). An individual experiences toxic stress often without the support of a caring individual or other variables that may increase that individual's sense of protection (Burke Harris, 2015). Therefore, this inquiry's trauma-informed SEL strategy prioritized educator well-being to better prepare educators to be ready to receive instruction. The strategy also considered the potential anticipation of staff experiences with fear and toxic stress, which the scholarly practitioner hypothesized would facilitate authentic, meaningful relationships among students and the staff and lead to increased empathetic and patient responses to students (Pawlo et al., 2019).

Educational researchers have investigated the risk of educators' implicit bias and its potential impact to further traumatize minoritized student groups. Specifically, researchers explored how educators' implicit bias may generate racial and ethnic disparities in academic and

disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups. Credible research (Cook et al., 2018; Ibrahim & Johnson, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 2006) echoes the potential impact of educators' implicit bias on worse disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups, while demonstrating potential academic ramifications.

As postulated by Ladson-Billings (2006), adult practices and actions can both cause and alleviate inequitable student outcomes in education. Educators' implicit bias is suggested to contribute to the overrepresentation of minoritized student groups in suspensions, referrals, and explicit exclusionary disciplinary behaviors (Cook et al., 2018; Ibrahim & Johnson, 2020). Cook and colleagues (2018) echo Ladson-Billing's (2006) claim that disparities exist when demographics and socioeconomic variables are considered in educational outcome analysis, specifically when it relates to disparities in student discipline outcomes. Ibrahim and Johnson (2020) found that primarily white educators issued both in-school and out-of-school suspensions to 45% of Black and African American and 43% of ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx student groups, even though both groups comprised roughly a quarter of the sample size. Ibrahim and Johnson (2020) correlated educator exclusionary disciplinary practices, targeting Black or African American and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx student groups, to long-term trends of decreased achievement in mathematics. Similarly, Ibrahim and Johnson (2020) attributed the white educators' reproduction of societal racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in educational context to parallel disparities in mathematics achievement among student groups.

Educational researchers may risk a myopic, overly simplified correlation between student outcomes and systemic variables, such as educators' implicit bias; however, researchers have found additional evidence of how minoritized students are classified in special education (Gregory et al., 2010). Farkas and colleagues (2020) utilized publicly available student data sets

from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Stanford Educational Data Archives, and Common Core, and they found a proportionately higher representation of Black and African American and ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx student groups compared with other racial and ethnic student groups in the special education category. Similarly, Connor (2017) identified an overrepresentation of racial minorities, particularly Black and African American student groups, in special education and also noted a lack of educator awareness about whiteness norms of student expectations and behaviors, potential limitations in culturally responsive pedagogy, and the lack of awareness of educators' own participation in systemically racist practice (p. 228).

Whiteness norms are ongoing behavioral patterns that aid and favor white people on a systemic level (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020), Farkas and colleagues (2020) found that minoritized student groups were more likely to encounter white norms that resulted in educational barriers, such as educators' implicit bias, lower teacher expectations, decreased quality of teacher-student relationships, and discriminatory grading and disciplinary practices, when compared with their white counterparts.

One of the educational barriers that may be reinforced by educators' implicit bias against minoritized student groups is their underrepresentation in college readiness and completion (Cook et al., 2018; Robinson, 2020). Cook and colleagues' (2018) engaged in a mixed-method study of the experiences of minoritized student groups regarding their perceptions of school supports to assist in college readiness. Themes reported by the student participants included explicit racist behaviors by teachers; perceived lack of caring, encouragement, and availability by teachers and school counselors in addressing their academic concerns; programmatic inequity, which included their lack of access to gifted and talented programming; and minimal

collaboration among school staff and their families regarding their academic and post-secondary opportunities. Cook and colleagues (2018) argued for the need to increase educators' cultural responsiveness and equitable behaviors to mitigate implicit biases and prioritize the needs of minoritized student groups. Robinson (2020) also supported this suggestion of a link between educator mindsets and their impact on the outcomes of diverse student groups. Robinson (2020) cited case studies where equitable educator behaviors positively influenced the college readiness of urban student groups and provided evidence that educators who possessed favorable views of racial and ethnic minority student groups also demonstrated equitable instructional practices, including prioritization of students' social, emotional, and academic needs. Such practice is suggested to facilitate student access to college pathways. While educator researchers continue to contribute to the literature by postulating that educators' implicit bias may generate worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups, a root cause has been suggested to be educators' tendency to perceive white norms in the educational system.

Adult Actions and Educator Bias

Review of Scholarly Knowledge

It has been suggested that implicit bias influences educators' explicitly biased behaviors and actions across educational contexts and that this contributes to worse academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020; Gullo & Beachum, 2020; Nadelson et al., 2019). Chandler and Wiborg (2020) note that for educational leaders to minimize educators' implicit bias and explicitly biased behavior and to bring about organizational change, educational leaders need to reveal and scrutinize behaviors that are considered normal by the school community and primarily benefit white individuals. In a study of school administrators, Gullo and Beachum (2020) found that 67% of administrators

demonstrated preference for white student groups, as indicated by greater severity in subjective disciplinary decision making Nadelson and colleagues' (2019) survey study. The study involved mostly white, female teachers ($n = 452$), and researchers provided evidence of conflicting mindsets and teacher behaviors that ignored equity considerations, reflected a lack of cultural responsiveness, and promoted differential treatment of student groups (Nadelson et al., 2019).

Staats (2016) and Warikoo and colleagues (2016) suggested that white educator bias can be compounded by work conditions. Factors such as perception of restrictions on time, a lack of clarity in quotidian practice and processes, and feelings of exhaustion and being overwhelmed can amplify the implicitly biased mindsets (Warikoo et al., 2016). Additionally, situations that require educators to engage in swift decision making, along with educators' likelihood of perceiving their school context as stressful and demanding of their cognitive load can further contribute to a higher likelihood of implicit bias. Staats (2016) and Warikoo and colleagues (2016) recognize the potential role for educational leaders in alleviating unsatisfactory work conditions and improving school climate and culture. Both researchers suggest addressing educators' own social and emotional needs to better prepare teachers to be emotionally equipped to make a positive impact on outcomes for minoritized student groups.

When educational leaders fail to address the work conditions, educators' explicitly biased behaviors can have a negative impact on the instructional core (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011; Chin et al., 2020; Copur-Gencturk et al., 2020; Denessen et al., 2020; Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Quinn, 2020; Trang & Hansen, 2021). As defined by City and colleagues (2009), the instructional core comprises the influential relationships among educators, students, and content that affect the quality of instructional practice aimed at improvement of social, emotional, and academic development of students. Therefore, any

impacts on the educator, student, and/or content variables should additionally influence student learning (City et al., 2009). Minoritized student groups' decreased likelihood to receive quality educational instruction, infused cultural competency considerations, and experience in addressing the needs of diverse learners learning remains a nationwide concern (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2011). Chin and colleagues (2021) built on Adamson and Darling-Hammond's (2011) research through their exploration of educators' implicit racial biases and explicit biased behaviors and such biases' impacts on student learning outcomes. They found that in some US counties, there were relationships between educators' higher levels of implicit/explicit racial bias and gaps in achievement and disciplinary expulsions and suspensions when comparing Black and African American student groups and white student groups. Other studies showed that teachers' higher levels of adoption of whiteness norms contributed to decreased efficacy in promoting cultural competency in their instruction and settling conflicts with students that arose from ethnic differences (DeCuir-Gunby & Bindra, 2021; Kumar et al., 2015). Similarly, Trang and Hansen (2021) found that when teachers had higher expectations for their students, they experienced less conflicts and higher quality relationships with students. When examining teachers' expectations for and the quality of their relationships with ethnically Hispanic and/or Latinx student groups, Trang and Hansen (2021) found higher conflict occurrences between teachers and students, which the researchers attributed to the possible educator deficit view of the students' ethnicity. In their review of longitudinal educational data to examine teachers' expectations, Gershenson and colleagues (2016) and Gershenson and Papageorge (2018) provided evidence that white educators set lower expectations than their Black and African American educator colleagues for Black and African American student groups. Furthermore, white educators may hold higher expectations for and more optimism

regarding college degree completion of white student groups compared with Black and African American student groups (Gershenson et al., 2016; Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018).

Working Theory of Improvement

Introduction and Overview

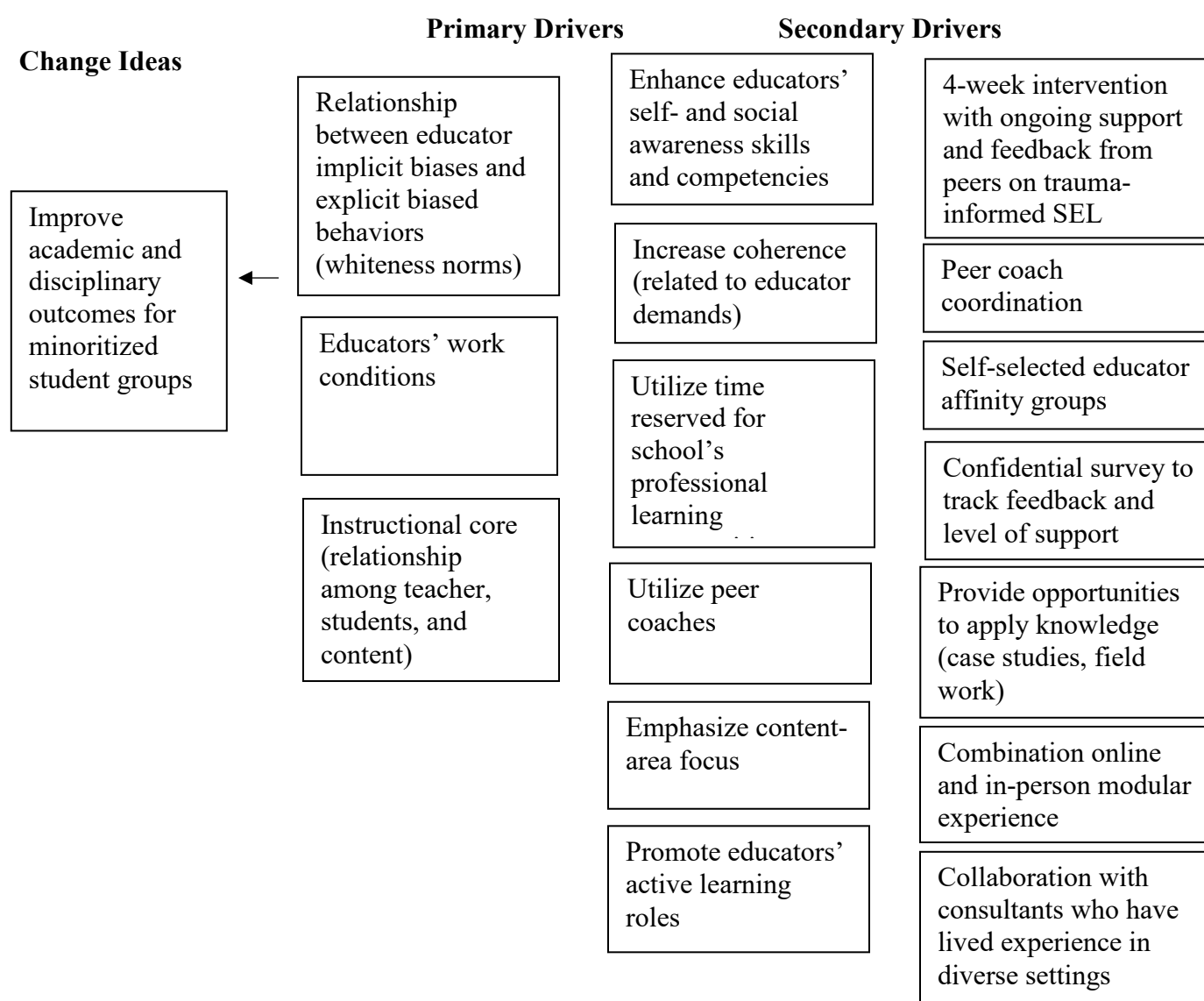
As described in this chapter, educational researchers have identified educators' implicit bias as a potential root cause of opportunity gaps among minoritized student groups (Dixson & Rosseau, 2005; Starck et al., 2020; Warikoo et al., 2016). When comparing educators with non-educators, the implicit biases reported by educators do not differ much from those reported by other professions (Quinn, 2017). Disciplinary policies that utilize out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and arrests have had a disproportionate impact on minoritized student groups (Center for Public Education, 2016). Additionally, academic achievement and graduation rate gaps remain wide between white student groups and minoritized student groups (Center for Public Education, 2016). It has been suggested that efforts made by educational leaders and teachers to address educational inequity may benefit from an emphasis on examining and addressing how educators' implicit bias influences their explicit behaviors toward minoritized student groups (Starck et al., 2020).

After concluding a CSA at EHS with the identified root causes and system, as seen in Figure 10, the scholar-practitioner identified that impactful evidence-based drivers, ideas for positive changes, and process measures may initiate improvement of student outcomes at EHS. The scholar-practitioner hypothesized that if educational leaders at EHS implemented educational programs for educators on implicit bias, then the number of staff responding favorably to perceptions of belonging, their capacity for cultural awareness and action, their readiness to educate all students, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of equity-

focused PL opportunities may increase, in Panorama Education's (n.d.) *Equity and Inclusion Survey* by February 2022. The intervention involved promoting adult trauma-informed SEL to develop staff self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies through their reflections on their existing self-perceptions and presumptions and how society perceives them and others (Jagers et al., 2018b). Furthermore, the researcher hypothesized that the PL intervention would contribute towards the development of a trauma-informed SEL approach at EHS to improve student academic and disciplinary outcomes.

Figure 10

Driver Diagram – Problem of Practice



To improve educator self and social awareness skills and competencies with a trauma-informed SEL approach, research findings have suggested an implementation and sustainability of a professional learning community (PLC) with self-selected affinity groups. An institution needs to allocate enough time for PL to be effective in improving educators' knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practice in the context of a PLC (Barr et al., 2015). Barr and colleagues (2015) state that for professional learning to be effective, educational leaders must mindfully identify time for PL experiences that are intensive and continuous. Therefore, the scholar-practitioner and the intervention team utilized professional learning time as identified by the district leadership. They also applied the three essential elements for an effective PLC, which are ensuring a content focus, active learning, and coherence. Desimone (2011) found that addressing the specific challenges that teachers encounter in their content area, particularly with regard to discussing and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture, increased the rate of their understanding and skill development. Desimone's (2011) also informed the scholar-practitioner's decision to permit the participants to self-select their affinity groups.

The effectiveness of a school-based PLC may depend on the ongoing nature of the coaching and feedback process, with a school-based staff member in the role of peer mentor (Desimone, 2011). This peer coach system aims to facilitate "discussions about complex, controversial, and sensitive civic, moral, and political issues as they will with their students" (Barr et al., 2015, pp. 7–8). Typically, when educational leaders do not prioritize peer-based PL experiences, PLCs will have an increased risk of initiative failure (Pawlo et al., 2019). Through the use of peer coaching, varied skills of individuals in the organization can facilitate collaborative environments among peers to achieve goals (Kiral, 2020). Furthermore, in previous research, when educational leaders delegate positions of authority to other educators in the

organization, educators report an increased commitment to their educational community, professional satisfaction, motivation, and effectiveness of communication and decision-making skills and competencies (Kiral, 2020). Finally, in an effective PLC, educational leaders focus intentionally on the professional learning that is directly related to the demands that educators face inside and outside the classroom or in their professional contexts (Anderson & Herr, 2011; Gurskey & Yoon, 2009).

Peer coaches collaborated with consultants who have acquired the lived experiences and knowledge of minoritized individuals, to design a curriculum for the four-week, intensive PLC experience to facilitate the development of adult trauma-informed SEL skills and competencies (Anderson & Herr, 2011; Barr et al., 2015; Desimone, 2011; Gurskey & Yoon, 2009; Kiral, 2020; Pawlo et al., 2019).

Review of Scholarly Knowledge: Mitigation Strategies

Pre-service Educator Preparation Program Interventions

Long-term interventions to further develop educators' self-awareness and social awareness in a pre-service educator preparation program are among the interventions that educational researchers have selected in their studies, with the aim to minimize educators' implicit bias (Cherner et al., 2020; Raskin et al., 2015; Whitford & Emerson, 2019). Cherner and colleagues (2020) found that increasing pre-service teachers' awareness of Noble's (2018) construct of "algorithmic oppression," also known as biased internet search engine results, improved teachers' self-awareness of implicit bias. When studied amongst teachers, 62.5% of the participants effectively identified biased imagery based on racial, gender, economic, and political considerations, and 33.4% of the participants reported an impact on their instructional practice when utilizing search engines in the classroom (Cherner et al., 2020, p. 657). The

findings utilize Mathew's (2015) input-output framework to demonstrate that raising awareness of implicit bias (input) may reduce explicit biased behaviors (output) (Cherner et al., 2020).

Administrator Preparation Program Interventions

Raskin and colleagues (2015) sought to develop educators' self-awareness and social awareness competencies through a two-year intervention experience within an administrator preparation program. In the two-year span, a convenience sampling of 32 principals participated in an institutional program to simultaneously increase their awareness of racial equity considerations and the effectiveness of their leadership strategies and implementation with the goal of improving academic outcomes for students of color (Raskin et al., 2015). Similar to Cherner and colleagues (2020), the researchers lacked evidence of the intervention's impact on student outcome data; however, the participants reported an increased awareness of racial disparities in student learning outcomes, which resulted in the administrators prioritizing student-centered and cultural considerations in their leadership strategies and implementation (Raskin et al., 2015). Whitford and Emerson's (2018) findings differed from the results reported by Raskin and colleagues (2015) and Cherner and colleagues (2020). Utilizing the Implicit Association Test (IAT) as pretest and posttest measures, Whitford and Emerson (2018) found minimal impact on implicit bias of White female pre-service educators against Black and African American students. Whitford and Emerson's (2019) findings did not include a change in explicit behaviors but did find a decrease in educators' implicit bias and higher levels of empathy toward Black and African American students in the school setting. While educational researchers cannot determine a causal relation between' implicit bias and student outcomes, they widely recognize that further developing educators' self-awareness and social awareness by examining their own implicit

biases in a pre-service setting may be correlated to a reduction in explicitly biased behaviors in a classroom setting (Cherner et al., 2020; Raskin et al., 2015).

Counternarratives

Another intervention type that supports the hypothesis that targeting educators' implicit biases through the development of their self-awareness and social awareness may reduce explicitly biased behaviors minoritized student groups is one that facilitates individuation and perspective-taking (Ispa-Landa, 2018). Ispa-Landa (2018) suggests that an intervention that involves educators familiarizing themselves with their students as individuals, known as individuation, along with paying attention to a student's race and ethnicity, may reduce the impact of stereotypes that educators impose consciously or unconsciously on students and this could potentially decrease racial and ethnic disparities in student outcomes. When an intervention combines individuation with perspective-taking or generating opportunities for an educator to visualize another individual's perspective, the effects can potentially decrease educators' racial and ethnic bias, as well as increase their empathy and the quality of their relationships with minoritized student groups (Ispa-Landa, 2018). Aronson and colleagues (2020) implemented Ispa-Landa's (2018) framework of individuation and perspective-taking through an intervention with counternarratives or "voices not considered in master narratives of history" in a two-year literacy workshop attended by 57 majority white, female pre-service teachers (p. 2). The results included a self-reported increase in the participants' self-awareness and social awareness of dominant white narratives systemically present in the educational process (Aronson et al., 2020). Participants also reported an increased awareness of dominant white narrative present in United States history textbooks and developed action plans to take ownership of knowledge gaps to counteract narratives infused in curricula and school practice

(Aronson et al., 2020). Similarly, Fitzgerald and colleagues (2019) conducted a review of research studies that challenged White participants' stereotypes of Black and African American individuals but only found short-term impacts on the participants' implicit biases. However, in contrast to Aronson and colleagues (2020), Fitzgerald and colleagues (2019) prioritized studies that included non-educational settings and utilized the IAT as a quantitative measure.

Nonetheless, similar to the conclusion drawn by Aronson and colleagues (2020), a lack of evidence of the intervention's impact on student outcomes challenges the assumption that the mitigation of educators' implicit bias through counternarratives decreases educators' explicitly biased behaviors toward their students (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). It remains challenging to determine whether addressing implicit biases through perspective-taking and individuation with counternarratives decreases racial and ethnic disparities in student outcomes. However, educational researchers recognize the promise of interventions that directly engage educators in individuation and perspective-taking due to positive short-term results in the participants' behaviors and mindsets (Aronson et al., 2019; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Ispa-Landa, 2018).

Community-based Fieldwork

Community-based professional learning approaches have been shown to encourage pre-service and in-service teachers to integrate community-based fieldwork experiences and data into curricula, instruction, and assessment practices (Yuan, 2018). In Yuan's (2018) review of the literature, the researcher emphasized the success of pre-service preparation programs in Alaska that infused community-based fieldwork experiences to increase educators' cultural responsiveness and empathy towards minoritized student groups. As part of their pre-service training, Alaskan educators participated in community-based events and practices outside of the school context, which informed their curricular, instructional, and assessment practices with

indigenous student groups (Yuan, 2018). Among the fieldwork conducted, pre-service teachers engaged in volunteering events alongside students and consulted with adults in the community, which later informed the content and skills that they prioritized in their pedagogical practices with students (Yuan, 2018).

Azam's work (2020) also found that when interventions encouraged teacher participants to better assess characteristics of diverse student groups, educators' biased behaviors toward students decrease in science classrooms. Although Azam's (2020) study did not determine the causality between equitable educator behaviors in the classroom and student outcomes, the researcher found that when educators conducted fieldwork to examine students' identities both inside and outside the classroom, the educators were more likely to adapt their instructional behaviors to their students' needs. Azam (2020) found that science teachers who taught in classrooms with a large number of minoritized student groups were more likely to revise their science curriculum to include culturally relevant imagery and respected community figures. Othman and Ruslan's (2020) findings support Yuan's (2018) and Azam's (2020) claims that exposure to and examination of community-based data may decrease explicitly biased behaviors in educators' instructional practice. In their interviews with 15 participants comprising in-service teachers and students, Othman and Ruslan (2020) found that when educational leaders prioritized forums for individuals belonging to different cultures in order to communicate within their schools, both teachers and students reported an increased awareness and understanding of the diverse identities in their school communities. Similar to Azam (2020), Othman and Ruslan (2020) noted the in-service teacher participants' lack of formalized training in multicultural education and recommended that educational leaders facilitate community-based fieldwork interventions as part of professional learning opportunity offerings. However, unlike Azam

(2020), Othman and Ruslan (2020) lacked evidence of changes in the teachers' implicit biases and behaviors. The works of Azam (2020), Othman and Ruslan (2020), and Yuan (2018) contribute to the literature by claiming that community-based fieldwork as a professional learning intervention may mitigate implicit biases of educators through the development of their self-awareness and social awareness skills and the decrease in their explicitly biased behaviors.

Greet-Stop-Prompt and My Teaching Partner-Secondary Interventions

Cook and colleagues (2018) investigated the Greet-Stop-Prompt (GSP) strategy as a way to potentially mitigate inequitable educator disciplinary practices. The GSP strategy targets educators' implicit bias to reduce reactive classroom behavioral management strategies, increase awareness of implicit bias through educators' self-regulation strategies, and approach students' maladaptive behavior with consistency and empathy (Cook et al., 2018). Testing the impact of the GSP strategy on a sample of 40 white female teachers across three elementary schools in the United States showed a reduction in discipline referrals of Black and African American male student groups (Cook et al., 2018). Furthermore, Cook and colleagues (2018) found that following this intervention, Black and African American male student groups reported increased levels of connectedness to their school. Gregory and colleagues (2015) utilized My Teaching Partner-Secondary (MTP-S) professional learning intervention strategy, which reduced the number of exclusionary disciplinary practices of 39 in-service teachers toward their Black and African American students when compared to the control group of 43 of their peers. MTP-S is ongoing-technical coaching support where the type of support a teacher receives depends on the videorecorded findings displaying their interactions with students (Gregory et al., 2015). The coach evaluates the videorecorded student-teacher interactions with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary (CLASS-S) rubric to determine whether the quality of each

interaction (Gregory et al., 2015). The testing of this majority male and roughly 30% Black and African American in-service teacher population produced results similar to those of Cook and colleagues' (2018) study, specifically, the reduction in racial disparities in the exclusionary disciplinary data on Black and African American student groups. However, unlike Cook and colleagues (2018), Gregory and colleagues (2015) found that Black and African American in-service teachers issued a similar number of discipline referrals to Black and African American student groups when compared with colleagues from other racial and ethnic groups

Trauma-informed SEL Interventions

The promotion of adult trauma-informed SEL is one of the most comprehensive interventions to address educators' implicit bias through the development of adults' self and social awareness (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Kim et al., 2021; Simmons, 2021). Gregory and Fergus (2017) and Simmons (2021) warn of the risk of SEL approaches in school-based learning contexts generating further inequitable outcomes among diverse student groups if the approach is applied in the context of a dominant white culture. In a dominant white culture, a danger exists for educators to utilize SEL with an intent to recondition student behavior that does not conform to what educators may consider appropriate as defined in a dominant white culture (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Simmons, 2021). Therefore, minoritized student groups are at a higher risk of experiencing lower quality interactions with their teachers in the classroom, which can negatively impact their social, emotional, and academic outcomes (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Simmons, 2021). A trauma-informed SEL approach infuses anti-racism and anti-oppression considerations into educators' application of SEL with minoritized student groups to promote an asset-based view of students (Gorski, 2020).

Gregory and Fergus (2017) reported positive outcomes in a California school district, where educational leaders promoted adult SEL with a trauma-informed approach. The district-wide approach included developing adult skills and knowledge regarding restorative and trauma-informed practices as part of the district's systematic implementation of an SEL approach, which resulted in a change of educators' disciplinary practices and possibly reduced discipline referrals of Black and African American students (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). However, Gregory and Fergus (2017) acknowledged their study's limitations that included a lack of evidence about the long-term effects of a universal trauma-informed SEL approach on racial and ethnic disparities in student disciplinary outcomes due to the short-term scope of study. Similarly, Kim and colleagues (2021) utilized a mixed-method design in their research study to examine the impacts of a trauma-informed SEL intervention on 112 educators' SEL skills and competencies. As in Gregory and Fergus' (2017) study, the researchers noted a positive effect on educators' well-being and an increased sense of self-efficacy when implementing the organization's SEL approach with students who were at greater risk of trauma and adversity or had experienced such incidents, which included minoritized student groups (Kim et al., 2021). Despite a literature gap on the impact of a trauma-informed SEL approach on long-term academic and disciplinary outcomes among minoritized student groups, educational researchers echo Simmons' (2021) claim that promoting adult trauma-informed SEL can potentially lead to a decrease in educators' explicitly biased behaviors and practices, which may have a positive impact on academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Kim et al., 2021).

Review of Professional Knowledge

High-leverage Strategy

To inform the scholar-practitioner's identification of a high-leverage strategy, the scholar-practitioner engaged in an environmental informant consultation with educational leaders from urban and suburban settings in the northeast region. The purpose of this environmental scan was to gain insight into potential strategies that other settings have found effective, or not effective, to improve educational equity. As seen in Table 11, the educational leaders identified strategies targeting educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, inclusive of the needs of students who experience racial and ethnic disparities in academic and disciplinary outcomes.

Table 11

Educational Leaders' Identified Strategies to Mitigate Educators' Implicit Biases (N = 12)

Suggestion	Example quote	Frequency n (%)
Equity-focused framework	"We have implemented Brown's (2018) <i>Dare to Lead</i> with educational leaders and Brown's <i>Daring Greatly</i> with staff to communicate that it is not a judgment that you have biases, yet we are not afraid to have these types of conversations courageously."	2 (16.7)
Trauma-informed practices	"There is a need to continue our trauma-informed work to force ourselves to analyze what sets us off, what sets our students off ... is it the tone, the attitude, the frequency, not complying with something? And why might this be occurring more frequently in black and brown students, and how are you contributing to the students who feel this way?"	1 (8.3)
Peer coaching capacity building	"Our school prioritized Elena Aguilar's (2013) <i>The Art of Coaching</i> , as she not only emphasizes an SEL approach but essential relationship building among staff with a coaching model."	1 (8.3)

Suggestion	Example quote	Frequency <i>n</i> (%)
Keynote speaker	“The staff still mention how moved they were by the inclusion and equity consultant that provided a keynote speech to kick-off our PD day. She highlighted the importance of perspective-taking.”	1 (8.3)
No response	<i>*Educational leaders did not respond to the scholarly practitioner’s interview request.</i>	7 (58.3)

From the environmental informant consultations, the scholar-practitioner noted that the strategies prioritized by educational leaders not only promoted adult SEL but also infused trauma-informed elements. Specifically, each of those strategies that educational leaders identified as effective anticipated the need to develop educator skills in caring, supportive environments in order to reduce feelings of stress or fear and lay the foundation for authentic, meaningful relationships (Pawlo et al., 2019). The working theory in trauma-informed SEL approaches is that if educational leaders prioritize staff well-being, the staff will then promote feelings of safety and care among their students and minimize environmental stressors, which students may perceive as threatening, to counteract the cognitive and somatic effects of trauma on students and allow their brains to increase creativity and learning, as well as engage in reflections on their behaviors (Brackett et al., 2015; Pawlo et al., 2019).

Accordingly, the scholar-practitioner prioritized an adult-focused trauma-informed SEL approach as a high-leverage intervention (Gorski, 2020; Simmons, 2021). For an adult-focused SEL intervention to positively impact the outcomes among all students, educators must further develop their self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, which may lead to increased perspective-taking and educator actions to address educational inequities experienced by minoritized student groups (Jager et al., 2019). Further inspired by Gorski’s (2020)

framework that to be trauma-informed is to be anti-racist and anti-oppression, the strategy was be equity-focused and will strengthen adults' social, emotional, and cultural competence (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2021). Adults' social and emotional learning facilitates educators' feelings and display of empathy, development and maintenance of meaningful relationships, and responsible, compassionate decision-making (CASEL, 2022d). For its part, cultural competence contextualizes educators' skills and competencies through their examination of individual and collective sociocultural identities; development of an asset-based, historically accurate appreciation of diversity; recognition of and response to cultural needs and opportunities; and development and maintenance of intercultural relationships (CASEL, 2022d). Additionally, Hoover (2019) found that positive outcomes of trauma-informed SEL interventions translated to exemplary educator behavior and practice when educational leaders employed a combination of virtual and in-person coaching to allow educators to practice their skills in realistic scenarios.

The peer coaches collaborated with consultants, both virtually and in person, to increase EHS educators' understanding of how RULER and trauma-informed strategies can be combined to yield a trauma-informed SEL approach. The peer coaches adjusted the intervention to respond to the likelihood of the staff's perceived realities of feeling stressed, burned out, traumatized, and reluctant to act in the face of what they may perceive to be a new initiative (Pawlo et al., 2019). A trauma-informed SEL approach has been suggested to be both responsive to and inclusive of the needs of the staff and students who experience the cognitive and somatic effects of trauma and can also contribute to minimizing barriers to teacher–student relationships due to perceived differences in regulating and expressing emotions (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Safdar et al., 2009; Simmons et al., 2018). Miscommunication that arises between students and teachers due to

perceived differences has been suggested to contribute punitive disciplinary practices, opportunity gaps, and disconnectedness experienced by minoritized student groups (Simmons et al., 2018). The scholar-practitioner's goal was to address the PoP while also providing EHS educators an opportunity to implement universal, trauma-informed SEL approaches with their students. Ultimately, this may positively influence academic and disciplinary outcomes for minoritized student groups (Perry et al., 2020).

To increase clarity, coherence, and continuity for the EHS staff, the scholar-practitioner's strategy leveraged previous collaborative work between the EHS leadership and School Climate Consultants (2020). Previous collaboration aimed to target staff's self-awareness and social awareness identified and eliminated barriers to minoritized student groups' optimal development of social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies (Simmons et al., 2018). During the training with the School Climate Consultants (2020), EHS staff learned that roughly 60% of the students whom the teachers educated either directly or indirectly likely experienced some form of mistreatment, bullying, abuse, economic insecurity, and other traumatic events.

Minoritized student groups are disproportionately impacted by traumatic events due to inequitable access to early intervention related to mental health (Simmons et al., 2018). Therefore, the high-leverage strategy selected by the scholarly practitioner promoted adult trauma-informed SEL to shift EHS school culture and teacher mindsets to be more inclusive of the social, emotional, and academic needs of students who may have experienced trauma (Simmons et al., 2018; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). The scholarly practitioner collected minimal evidence that either RULER or trauma-informed efforts were improving EHS staff's self-awareness and social awareness skills to examine and address collective and personal biases to positively impact outcomes among

minoritized student groups. The minimal evidence indicated the need for the school to prioritize a universal implementation of a trauma-informed SEL approach, which the high-leverage intervention addressed.

Educational researchers noted how trauma-informed SEL approaches could potentially motivate educators and lead to increased positive disciplinary and academic outcomes for minoritized student groups. In their work with educational leaders and teachers across schooling contexts, Koplow and colleagues (2020) reported the potential of a trauma-informed SEL approach to further develop empathy skills and feelings of connectedness among educators, which can disrupt cycles of trauma and retraumatization in school settings as they are more likely to validate and respond to the needs of students in their classrooms. Additionally, Pawlo and colleagues (2019) emphasized that educators are likely to increase their efficacy in making decisions about pedagogy and programming for students when they implement SEL in their instructional practice and contexts with an assumption of the impact of their own and their students' trauma. Similarly, Hoover (2019) found that integrating trauma-informed practices and SEL may increase positive impacts on students' school lives, with decreased experiences of bullying, isolation, and threats of weapons, as well as increased experiences of academic successes and positive stakeholder relationships. Hoover (2019) also cited schools in Massachusetts, Washington, Illinois, and Wisconsin, reporting increased positive academic and disciplinary outcomes across student groups in their integration of SEL and trauma-informed practices.

Chapter Summary

Educational research seeking to address racial and ethnic disparities in academic and disciplinary student outcomes across the United States confirms the urgent need to address educators' implicit bias while at the same time address the need to adopt teaching practices that implement strategies to create trauma informed classrooms. Trauma-informed SEL interventions have been shown to yield positive outcomes, which position them as effective, feasible, and evidence-based strategies in a school and/or district context. However, gaps in knowledge and the literature continue to call for further studies of the correlation between trauma-informed SEL and mitigation in educators' implicit bias.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The scholarly practitioner, in collaboration with peer coaches and consultants, considered the PoP in EHS to be addressed, integrated supporting knowledge, and described the scope of the change that the intervention team expected in the development of the aim statement (Perry et al., 2020). The scholarly practitioner and the intervention team aimed to increase the number of staff members responding favorably to each of the five outcome variables by 2% on Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey by February 2022. The five outcome variables included staff's perceptions of belonging to the school community, their capacity for cultural awareness and action with adult and student foci, their readiness to educate all students, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of equity-focused PL opportunities. As informed by previous staff responses on Panorama Education (n.d.) survey measures, the leadership at EHS defined effective improvement by 4% increase in staff favorable responses to the outcome variables. Due to the limited, 90-day improvement time frame, the goal for improvement identified by the scholarly practitioner and intervention team was 2%. Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner hypothesized that if educational leaders in EHS mitigated the adverse effects of whiteness norms on the relation between educators' implicit bias and their explicitly biased behaviors toward minoritized student groups with a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention, then they would contribute to an increase in favorable perceptions of the identified outcome variables among the staff.

The intervention team (i.e., the scholarly practitioner, 13 staff peer coaches and 2 consultants) developed a modular, trauma-informed SEL PL series intervention that acknowledged EHS educator realities and feedback, and integrated them into the intervention strategy. The modular series merged the district-wide Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

(2021) RULER approach with trauma-informed practices to commence a systemic implementation of a trauma-informed SEL approach in EHS, guided by CASEL's (2021) Theory of Action. Specifically, the intervention team adopted Woolf's (n.d.) trauma-informed SEL definition, which is a school-wide SEL approach that prioritizes the needs of those who experience trauma to increase student access to the SEL skills. Moreover, the intervention team designed the trauma-informed SEL PL series to enhance educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, increase coherence as related to the demands faced by educators both inside and outside the classroom, utilize the time reserved for PL opportunities, use peer coaches' support, emphasize content-area connections, and promote active educator roles (Barr et al., 2015; Desimone, 2011; Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). By completing all these steps and promoting a low-risk, welcoming learning environment, the intervention team expects to influence EHS educator mindsets and habits to increase trauma-informed SEL approaches in their instructional practice, thus contributing to enhanced perceptions of favorability in the identified outcome variables. Additionally, the scholarly practitioner hypothesized that if educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies were further developed during the intervention experience, an increase would occur in their self-reported favorability in perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL.

The following questions guide this inquiry.

Inquiry Questions

- 1) Do high school educators' perceptions of belonging to the school community, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL change through participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?

- 2) How do educators' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL change over time after participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?
- 3) Which leadership styles, if any, did educators identify as supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

Theory of Improvement (SIAR Cycle)

The scholarly practitioner's inquiry approach followed a circular, iterative improvement science framework based on a PoP and centered on end-users (i.e., EHS educators), where the inquiry questions guided the intervention team's efforts (Perry et al., 2020). Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner utilized Perry and colleagues' (2020) cyclical model, designed to develop scholarly practitioners' (i.e., doctoral candidates in EdD programs seeking to address PoPs) leadership and intellectual skills and competencies to effectively lead 90-day improvement efforts in schooling environments. Perry and colleagues (2020) refer to their model as an SIAR cycle to emphasize educational leaders' critical thinking and leadership skill building as they strategize (S), implement (I), analyze (A), and reflect (R) on change-making actions and efforts.

The scholarly practitioner and the intervention team designed and implemented the 90-day, SIAR cycle as a procedural framework to address the following questions, as identified by Perry and colleagues (2020, p. 124):

- What is the scholarly practitioner aiming to improve?
- What is the most reasoned change to try?
- How will the scholarly practitioner know if the change was an improvement?
- What steps need to be taken next?

In the strategizing (S) stage, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team held coordination meetings. The coordination meetings served as a non-judgmental, realistic, and optimistic forum for the intervention team to proactively ask questions about anticipated problems, collaboratively design change ideas within an intervention action plan that is grounded in educational research literature, hypothesize about the changes, and design the process, driver, and outcome measures to make a determination of possible improvements (Perry et al., 2020). During the implementation (I) stage, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team implemented the research-based change ideas as part of the intervention action plan. They collected data ethically, with process and driver measures to identify and address any barriers or unintended consequences without bias (Perry et al., 2020). When collecting qualitative data, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team utilized deidentified conversations and observations from end-user consultations and semi-structured interviews during focus-group meeting times (Perry et al., 2020). Similarly, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team utilized Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey to collectively design survey measures using the Survey Monkey platform. The question items were close-ended, 5-point Likert rating scales to understand what worked for which individual and why, including any individuals who may have felt ostracized (Perry et al., 2020). As seen in Appendices H–P, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team prioritized a culturally sensitive approach to all question items in interview or survey measures in accordance with the pragmatic, mixed-method research–intervention process model (Morgan, 2014; Nastasi et al., 2007) that utilized a community-based action research approach (Glesne, 2016; Openjuru et al., 2015).

In the analyzing (A) stage, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team held further coordination meetings, where they utilized content theme analysis for qualitative data,

and the Excel data analysis data pack for descriptive and bivariate analysis to interpret data impartially and cautiously draw conclusions (Perry et al., 2020). Finally, the analyzing (A) stage led the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team to the reflection (R) stage, where the members engaged in collaborative decision making to adjust, expand, or abandon change ideas and formulate the subsequent steps (Perry et al., 2020). The scholarly practitioner and the intervention team's steps were informed by their application of an equity lens, where they will engage in perspective taking, conduct self-awareness exercises to reflect on past actions and decisions, resist drawing partial conclusions and fear of change, and continuously ask *why* questions concerning findings (Perry et al., 2020).

To ensure ethical treatment of the participants and transparency, the scholarly practitioner notified all participants through consent procedures (see Appendices D–E) regarding the purpose and the timing of the data collection. Additionally, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team conducted interviews in compliance with the current CDC COVID recommendations and best practice guidelines to reduce viral transmission, including maintaining the recommended distance from interviewees and wearing masks or using secure FERPA-compliant virtual communication platforms. Finally, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team did not collect any name or identifier of any staff member in the SIAR process, and scholarly practitioner stored all data in a password-protected computer, accessible only to her. At the conclusion of this study, the scholarly practitioner deleted all data.

As seen in Figure 11, the inquiry consisted of a pragmatic, mixed-method research–intervention process model (Morgan, 2014; Nastasi et al., 2007) that utilized a community-based action research approach (Glesne, 2016; Openjuru et al., 2015). The first quantitative phase utilized Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey as a pre-test measure to assess

the favorability of the perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action with a student and adult focus, the readiness to educate all students, and the effectiveness of equity-focused PL opportunities for EHS educators. The concurrent qualitative and quantitative phases included in vivo memos and ongoing process field notes that utilized quantitative data from participant feedback surveys for the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team to engage in an ongoing evaluation of the trauma-informed SEL intervention. Moreover, the scholarly practitioner member-checked the concurrent qualitative and quantitative phases in coordination meetings with the intervention team. The sequential quantitative phase utilized Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey as a post-test measure. The final sequential qualitative phase included one semi-structured 30-minute interview with three peer coaches. While the scholarly practitioner sought out non-peer coach participants for a second semi-structured interview, the drop off in participation prevented the scholarly practitioner from conducting further interviews. The themes that the scholarly practitioner identified from the interviews were member-checked in a coordination meeting with the intervention team, while exploring the participants' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and equity-focused PL.

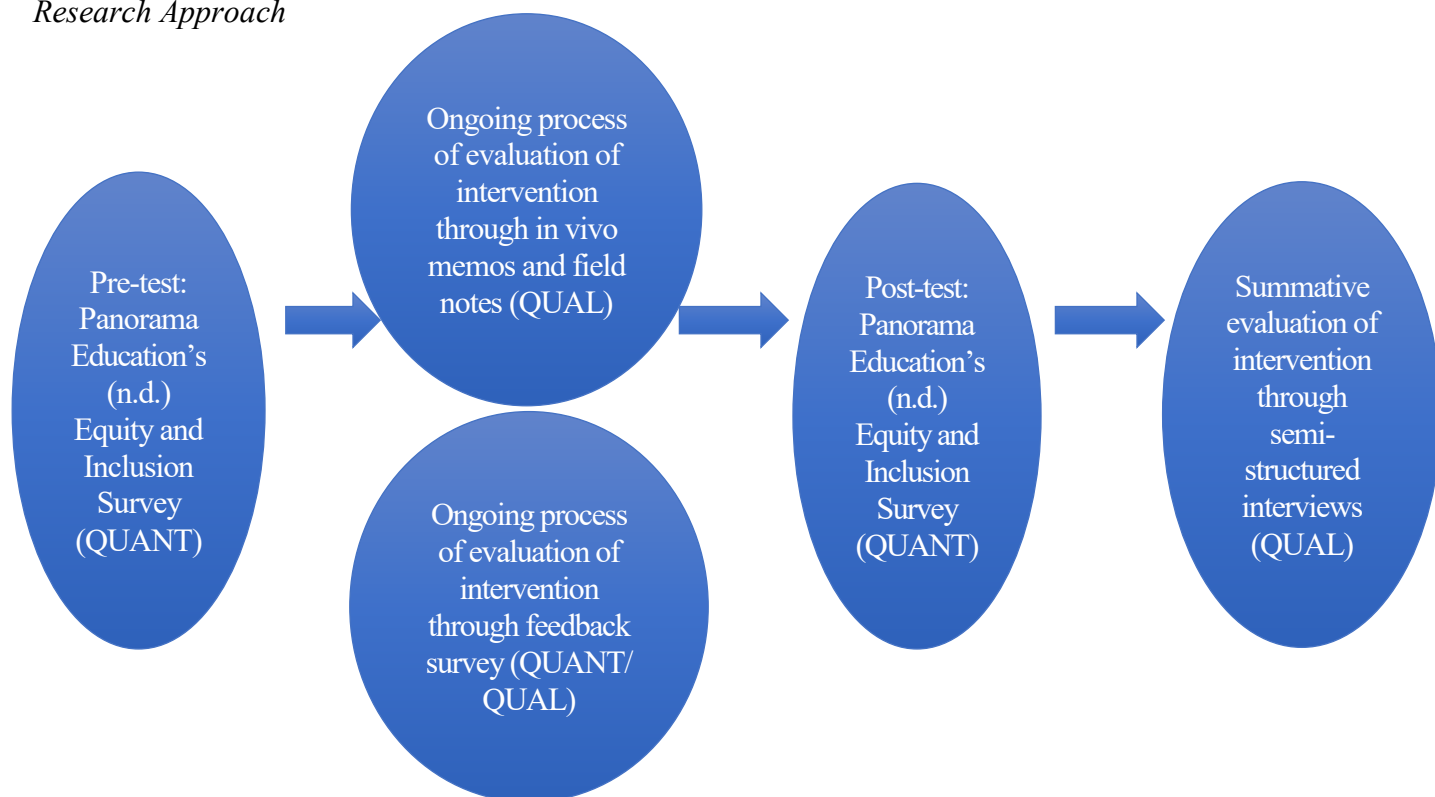
The scholarly practitioner prioritized a pragmatic research design due to the unpredictability in a school environment, which required changes in approach. To be culturally responsive and adaptive to the educators' needs, the scholarly practitioner's research applied a pragmatic, mixed-method research–intervention process model that utilized a community-based action research approach to facilitate change through collegial involvement in the research process (Openjuru et al., 2015; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). The scholarly practitioner worked alongside the peer coaches and external consultants, who made up the intervention team, to gain

a better understanding of the PoP in the EHS community. The intervention team worked toward co-creating spaces of trauma-informed SEL, social action, and positive change for EHS educators and students through the use of multiple knowledge sources and research methods.

Figure 11

Pragmatic, Mixed-Method Research–Intervention Process Model with Community-Based Action

Research Approach



Setting

EHS is a public, non-profit organization located in the northeastern United States, specifically in a suburban city whose residents have higher incomes, lower poverty levels, and above average educational attainment levels when compared with surrounding towns and cities (Connecticut School Finance Project, 2016). With a total enrollment of over 900 students, EHS has a history of working toward increasing the optimal development of all students' social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies.

Specifically, during the 2018–2019 school year, the central office leadership prioritized adult SEL with trauma-informed considerations, with the implementation of district-wide training for a cohort of administrators and teacher leaders. In the fall of 2019, EHS began conducting a needs assessment with an adult focus by conducting the Yale Educator Well-Being and Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Survey among its entire staff. Then, from the summer of 2019 to the 2020–2021 school year, the adult focus continued with several in-person and virtual training sessions in the areas of RULER and trauma-informed SEL, facilitated for the EHS staff by the School Climate Consultants (2020). However, while the EHS leadership recognized that an adult focus is essential in effective implementation of SEL, the training offered by district and building leadership did not include all staff, leaving a small number of staff members trained only in either RULER or trauma-informed practices.

Furthermore, as the EHS leadership remained in the emerging states of implementing a universal trauma-informed SEL approach, little evidence existed that staff and student outcomes improved. When the EHS leadership conducted a needs assessment using the Panorama Education's (n.d.) SEL Survey, it showed that discrepancies remained among the staff regarding the definition of SEL, sources of support for SEL, and the benefits of implementing SEL in their instructional practice. Additionally, after conducting an equity assessment in the spring of 2020 and 2021, the EHS leadership team found that minoritized students remained overrepresented in disciplinary referrals and in earning Ds and Fs in a school semester. To remedy the problem, the EHS leadership focused on the first two stages of CASEL's (2021) theory of action, where the leaders were collaboratively working toward building foundational support and planning for the implementation of universal, trauma-informed SEL while strengthening the EHS staff's trauma-informed SEL skills, competencies, and capacities. Additionally, the leadership team

acknowledged that for any SEL effort to have a positive impact on all students' outcomes and become trauma-informed SEL, educators must develop an anti-racist, anti-oppression, and equity lens (Gorski, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Simmons, 2021). Specifically, Jagers and colleagues (2019) report that an examination of the mainstreaming of SEL approaches in school districts nationwide yields little evidence that educators utilize these approaches to help mitigate the interrelated legacies of racial and class oppression in the United States and internationally or ensure that access points are provided for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. Furthermore, Simmons (2021) identifies educators' preoccupation with the fact that SEL approaches are contextualized in organizations affected by whiteness norms, leading to a culture that is intent on fixing students rather than appreciating and integrating their assets into the instructional core.

EHS's ascribed value to a trauma-informed SEL approach guided by Gorski's (2020) and Simmons' (2021) anti-oppression and anti-racism frameworks ignited a polarity across the organization's culture and processes. Garvey-Berger and Johnston (2015) define polarities as generated by a pendular effect, where a pendulum swings to one end and overly corrects to the other, thus generating a polarity. Furthermore, as each side of the polarity is mutually generated by the other, an interdependence exists, making one end of the polarity contingent on the other (Garvey-Berger & Johnston, 2015). Garvey-Berger and Johnston (2015) further emphasize that while leaders may be unable to solve polarities, they may manage them. The polarity in EHS involved the question of whether the institution, with a majority white, non-Hispanic, and/or Latinx staff, were responsible for the optimal social, emotional, and academic development of all its students to improve disparities in outcomes among student groups or whether students were responsible for improving their own academic and disciplinary outcomes, given the presence of

whiteness norms. Additionally, the political divide among the EHS community members impacted the implementation of a trauma-informed SEL approach that utilizes anti-oppression and anti-racism frameworks based on the critical race theory (CRT) (Gorski, 2020; Simmons, 2021). Therefore, the scholarly practitioner theorized that if the EHS leadership prioritized one belief system and neglected the other, a possibility existed of generating barriers in the leaders' goal to universally implement a trauma-informed SEL approach. In particular, the scholarly practitioner ascribed to the philosophy that it is the communal responsibility of all stakeholders to work towards the optimal development the social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies of all students (Simmons, 2021).

Creating a positive impact on all students' academic and disciplinary outcomes was part of the scholarly practitioner's responsibility as a district-wide curriculum specialist. According to the EPS improvement plan, all EHS staff had a responsibility to optimally develop the social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies of all students. Additionally, central office leadership placed an emphasis on equity that further motivated the EHS leadership to attain its goals for a universal implementation of trauma-informed SEL. The EPS 2016-2021 Strategic Coherence Plan and an Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee communicated evidence-based strategies on how the district could continue to promote equity, social justice, and inclusivity to reduce outcome disparities among student groups. The scholarly practitioner's review of these and other artifacts in EHS (i.e., strategic plan, academic and disciplinary policies, mission and value statements) emphasized that a primary barrier to change toward the goal of implementing a universal trauma-informed SEL approach to positively impact academic and disciplinary outcomes among minoritized student groups was that only a small number of EHS educators were solely responsible for achieving the goal.

Population (Sampling Plan)

In the first phase, the aim was to establish the intervention team, the scholarly practitioner sent an email to 20 EHS staff members who could potentially be part of the intervention team as peer coaches. The criteria for determining peer coach eligibility were as follows: 1) they were high school staff who were actively employed by EPS, and 2) they were trained in the SEL approach, RULER, and/or trauma-informed practices. The two consultants on the intervention team trained each of the 20 EHS staff members utilizing EPS' preferred training model, the evidence-based "Train the Trainer Model" (Wojciak et al., 2022). During the 2020-2021 school year, the district leadership identified high school personnel to be trained utilizing the trauma-informed SEL PL modular series with the goal of delivering the same trauma-informed SEL PL modular series to their colleagues in the 2021-2022 school year (Wojciak et al., 2022). The email invitation included all necessary information for participants to provide informed consent (see Appendix B). The consent form included the assurance that if potential participants declined the invitation, their decision would not affect their staffing position as EPS employed the scholarly practitioner as a department supervisor.

Educators interested in participating as peer coaches responded with an email to the scholarly practitioner. Once the scholarly practitioner determined the list of potential peer coaches, she invited all candidates to an information workshop, in person, regarding their role as peer coaches, prior to signing the consent form. To become peer coaches and active participants in the study, the candidates signed and submitted their consent forms electronically to the scholarly practitioner at the conclusion of the workshop and prior to the pre-test survey measure (see Appendix D).

At the conclusion of the intervention phase, the scholarly practitioner approached the peer coaches to request their participation in structured focus group(s) and asked to sign consent forms again for this phase of the scholarly practitioner's data collection (see Appendix E). The informed consent form included their permission for the audio recording of the focus group interview(s) that was held via a password-protected Zoom platform that EPS approved. The scholarly practitioner utilized a structured interview protocol to better understand the experiences of the peer coaches as members of the intervention team as they designed and implemented the study's intervention (see Appendix F). Furthermore, the peer coaches provided their perceptions of the impact of their participation in the study on their pedagogy.

In the second phase, which aimed to recruit the intervention participants, the primary method of sampling involved the scholarly practitioner sending an email to a maximum of 80 high school staff members who were actively employed by EPS. The email invitation included all necessary information for the participants to provide their informed consent (see Appendix C). The consent form included the assurance that if potential participants decline the invitation, their decision would not affect their staffing position as EPS employed the scholarly practitioner as a department supervisor. All 80 EHS staff were given the intervention; however, not all chose to participate in the study.

Educators interested in participating responded with an email to the scholarly practitioner. Once the scholarly practitioner determined the list of potential participants, she invited candidates to an information workshop via Zoom regarding their role as intervention phase participants, prior to signing the consent form. To become active participants in the study during the intervention phase, the candidates indicated their consent electronically by clicking the "I agree" button on all evaluation measures.

At the conclusion of the intervention phase, the scholarly practitioner approached the intervention phase participants to request their participation in structured focus group, and provide informed consent forms for their signature for this phase of the scholarly practitioner's data collection (see Appendix E). The informed consent form included their permission for the audio recording of the focus group interview(s) that the scholarly practitioner would have held via a Zoom platform that EPS approved. The scholarly practitioner sought to utilize a structured interview protocol to better understand the experiences of the second-phase participants during the intervention phase (see Appendix G). Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner sought to collect the intervention phase participants' perceptions of the impact of their participation in the study on their pedagogy. While it was the aim of the scholarly practitioner to utilize participant feedback to further inform the next steps as EPS addresses educators' implicit bias and implements a trauma-informed SEL approach, a lack of participation prevented the second focus interview from occurring.

Intervention

As part of the study, EHS educators participated in a trauma-informed SEL PL series in December 2021 and January 2022. The trauma-informed SEL PL included three, one-hour modular experiences divided into four separate meeting times, with one final one-hour meeting for the completion of the post-test Equity and Inclusion Survey (Panorama Education, n.d.). Before, in between, and after each of the four meetings, the intervention team held coordination meetings to review the survey feedback data, share coaching experiences, and make adjustments as necessary to each of the modules. Appendix A summarizes the coordination and modular activities covered in each meeting. The purpose of the PL was for EHS educators to further develop their self-awareness and social awareness skills through their acquired knowledge and

skills from each module, as well as increase the application of trauma-informed SEL strategies in their classroom spaces.

Prior to the first PL session, the scholarly practitioner sent an email to the peer coaches to remind them of their participation in the study, as the scholarly practitioner collected the data by taking field notes and recording the Zoom meeting. Afterwards, the intervention team held its first coordination meeting via Zoom. The scholarly practitioner, the peer coaches, and the consultants reviewed the pre-test Equity and Inclusion Survey measure (Panorama Education, n.d.) to ensure its cultural relevance. Additionally, the intervention team engaged in preparation conversations to increase their perceptions of self-efficacy in delivering the content of the first module on cultural competence to their assigned educator group. The meeting concluded with the scholarly practitioner sending an email to potential participants to inform them about the PL experience, the pre- and post-test survey measures, and their possible participation in semi-structured interviews.

In the first PL session, the intervention team allotted time for the participants to self-select their affinity group under the guidance of two peer coaches. The intervention team assigned a total of 6 groups, each comprising 12–13 educators, to a team with 2 peer coaches. The scholarly practitioner sent an email to EHS educators, containing the pre-test Equity and Inclusion Survey measure (Panorama Education, n.d.), with an informed consent statement for them to either opt in or opt out as participants of the study. The EHS educators who consented to participate completed the survey measure and moved to the identified learning space in the school to meet with their team. Both the peer coaches and the participants performed the evidence-based experiential learning tasks prepared by the consultants around the theme of cultural competence. The learning tasks and content of each of the three modules included but

were not limited to the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2021) RULER trauma-informed SEL resources; consultant-designed videos, case studies, and discussion questions; and CASEL (2021) opening, closing, and engagement strategies. The first module concluded in the second PL workshop in December 2021, with the peer coaches and participants utilizing a web-based survey as an exit slip to report their perceived capacity building and the efficacy of the PL experience.

In their second coordination meeting, the intervention team reviewed the participant data from the web-based feedback survey in the first module and share coaching experiences. The team then reviewed the content of the second module on cultural humility and the third module on microaggressions and completed their own web-based survey to report their perceptions of the PL experience's impact on their peer-coaching capacity. As a result, the intervention team adjusted the third module from microaggressions to providing staff with the opportunity to examine their curricula for cultural relevance. Specifically, the team identified the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative's (EJ-ROC) (2022) Culturally Responsive Scorecards as an evidence-based tool for EHS educators to evaluate their curricula for cultural responsiveness. The EJ-ROC equates cultural responsiveness to the amount of racism, oppression, and other types of biases present, as the higher the cultural relevance of curricula the lower the opportunity for educators to perpetuate racist, oppressive, or other biased beliefs (EJ-ROC, 2022). The team sought to prioritize educators' application of their learned understandings and skills from the first two modules in the third and final module.

Therefore, the third PL workshop occurred in January 2022, where the peer coaches and the participants gathered to complete the second module on cultural humility. In the fourth workshop two days later, they completed the third module on culturally responsive curriculum.

The participants once again completed a web-based feedback survey to share their perceived impacts of the PL second and third modules on their capacities and their efficacy regarding each of the five outcome variables. In their third coordination meeting, the intervention team reviewed the participant data from the web-based feedback survey on the second and third modules and share coaching experiences. Again, the peer coaches completed a web-based survey to report their perceived coaching capacity as a result of their participation in the PL experience. During the fourth and final PL workshop in February 2022, the scholarly practitioner sent an email to EHS educators, containing the Panorama Education's (n.d.) post-test Equity and Inclusion Survey measure with an informed consent statement for them to either opt in or opt out as participants of the study. The EHS educators who consented to participate completed survey measure, and the scholarly practitioner emailed the survey participants an invitation to participate in a semi-structured focus group interview to confirm the results of the post-survey measure. As only two participants consented, the scholarly practitioner was unable to move forward with a focus group interview for participants in February. The scholarly practitioner collected feedback to explain the drop off in participation, which included lack of time and a lack of incentive. The participant feedback reflected research trends in volunteerism with respondents identifying time and lack of interest in the volunteer opportunity among the top three barriers to their volunteerism (Yotopoulos, n.d.). However, as three peer coaches consented to a focus group interview, the scholarly practitioner was able to complete at least one interview to review post-survey results. In their final coordination meeting, the intervention team planned the next steps of the trauma-informed SEL approach in EHS, and shared their recommendations with the building leadership.

Methods (for Evaluation)

Research Design

To measure the effectiveness of the PL change idea, the scholarly practitioner utilized a quantitative approach through pre-test and post-test surveys administered to EHS educator participants, including several open-ended questions to gain qualitative insights. The scholarly practitioner also planned to incorporate a qualitative approach, where the survey participants were invited to join a semi-structured focus group to further explain the survey data in addition to completing the two open-ended question items on the survey. The scholarly practitioner planned to use multiple data collection methods to develop and corroborate categories and themes from both the survey questions and the interview anecdotes. Appendix A displays what the scholarly practitioner proposed and what actually occurred in the data collection procedures. The scholarly practitioner's data collection procedures are presented below.

Measures

The survey consisted of 34, five-point Likert scale questions that provided five response options to reduce response bias and capture a wide range of educator perceptions (Panorama Education, n.d.). Survey measure included subscales: (1) sense of belonging to the school community, (2) perceived support of their cultural awareness and action, (3) perceived support of their students' cultural awareness and action, (4) mastery confidence and (5) perceived value of the PL experience. The intervention team made slight adaptations to the survey questions to include topics that encompassed all aspects of race, ethnicity, and culture in instances where only race was mentioned. In previous research, Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey utilized with a population of middle and high school teachers with coefficient alpha of 0.70 (cite).

The scholarly practitioner identified the five subscales to measure the dependent variables of the study. The first variable, belonging to an educational community, applies a sociocultural lens of agency, suggesting that educator agency involves engaging with other individuals in social settings with the cultural tools available to them (Dietz & Burns, 1992). The second, third, and fifth variables (educators' perceived support of their own and their students' cultural awareness and action and efficacy of the PL experience) apply a structural view of educator agency. This suggests that agency is about opportunities available in the educational environment, in this case, the support and professional development that the EHS leadership provides to the staff, allowing individuals to view themselves as agents of change (Dietz & Burns, 1992). The fourth variable (educators' mastery and confidence in meeting all of their students' learning needs, regardless of their backgrounds) applies an individualistic lens of agency. This suggests that human agency involves exercising actions related to an individual's goals, which in this study is the educators' goal of meeting the social, emotional, and academic needs of all of their students (in the latter case, the teachers' goal of meeting their students' learning needs).

The scholarly practitioner employed two open-ended questions on the pre- and post-test Equity and Inclusion Surveys (Panorama Education, n.d.). The two qualitative measures included the following questions: "How can school leaders help you better learn about, discuss, and confront issues of race, ethnicity and culture?" "What is the most important thing we can do to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures?" As successful diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in case studies are possibly associated with transformational leadership and behaviors, the scholarly practitioner sought to understand participant insights as to which leadership types and educator actions they identified as supporting DEI efforts through the two

open-ended qualitative question items (Feyes, 2018; Northouse, 2016). Specifically, transformational leadership and behaviors may lead to increased DEI efforts within an organization due to the preponderance of opportunities for individuals to identify personal and collective beliefs, biases, and prejudices (Feyes, 2018). Furthermore, leaders exhibiting transformational traits may garner more support among colleagues due to their propensity for clarity in communication; confident, modeling behaviors; and inspirational motivation (Northouse, 2016). Finally, the survey measure required the participants to indicate the following demographic identifiers: age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, level of education, and number of years as an educator.

Data Analysis Plan

The scholarly practitioner analyzed the quantitative survey data using the SPSS software or the Excel data analysis data pack for descriptive and bivariate statistical analysis. The scholarly practitioner's analysis of the quantitative data involved descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis. A paired *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the pre-test and post-test scores from each group differed (Martella et al., 2013).

The scholarly practitioner then imported the qualitative data from the open-ended question items on the survey and the semi-structured focus group interviews into Word documents and coded the data manually. The scholarly practitioner interpreted the data, and grouped passages together in the participants' responses that represented a corresponding idea, and coded the text with a word or short phrase utilizing Gorski's (2020) trauma-informed framework to further refine the themes. (Glesne, 2016). Finally, the scholarly practitioner conducted a triangulation process to validate the data and participant experiences.

Epistemology and Reflexivity

The scholarly practitioner acknowledges that her lived experiences as a first generation American, white, Hispanic, heterosexual female impacted her philosophical assumptions regarding ontology and epistemology in this inquiry (Glesne, 2016). As the guiding paradigm for the inquiry was pragmatic guided by a community-based action research approach, the central inquiry purpose was “concerned with what works,” to promote equity and social justice in educational contexts (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 18). As such, the scholarly practitioner’s ontological assumption accepted multiple realities to discover ways to optimize her own personal and professional practices to effectively understand and address PoPs in education (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Specifically, the scholarly practitioner sought to apply her self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies to both personal and professional spheres of influence to prioritize the interests of minoritized student groups. In doing so, the scholarly practitioner felt empowered to collaborate with colleagues to identify and eliminate barriers that minoritized student groups face to access a to a quality education to eventually improve their educational process and life outcomes (i.e., health, well-being, educational access, housing, career, safety) (Simmons et al., 2020). Therefore, the scholarly practitioner incorporated “critical, participatory, advocacy, and emancipatory” leanings to drive educational equity and increase educators’ socially transformational efforts (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 16). Therefore, the scholarly practitioner prioritized the representation of minoritized individuals with the presence, input, and expertise of the consultants on the intervention team.

Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner placed an emphasis on mitigating educator implicit bias and developing their self-awareness and social awareness competencies to address educational inequities and implement enduring change for minoritized student groups (Jagers et

al., 2018b). Therefore, the scholarly practitioner's epistemological assumption was one that accepted multiple perspectives to interpret contexts as a way of knowing to effectively address and eliminate educational inequities for students and meaningful assert an institutions commitment to promoting equity and inclusion (Gorski & Swalwell, 2022). Given the scholarly practitioner's epistemological assumption, she hypothesized that changing current practices within EHS' PL processes, and teachers' understandings of a trauma-informed SEL approach in education, may ultimately increase educational equity for all students, particularly minoritized students (Gorski & Swalwell, 2022). Precisely, the lack of intention by schools and districts to facilitate on-going, collaborative forums for educators to engage in further development of their self-capacities with a trauma-informed SEL approach, can contribute to deficit views and explicitly biased behaviors among educators towards minoritized student groups (Pyscher & Crampton, 2020).

Additionally, educational leaders cannot effectively address educator bias without taking the time to analyze educator data and elevate teacher voice and agency to address the power structure between teachers and administrators (Glesne, 2016). Therefore, it was the scholarly practitioner's positionality that educators address their bias by adapting to their strengths, which involves examining educator data and input that emphasizes teacher assets (Jagers et al. 2018b). In particular, if educational leaders adopt an asset view instead of a deficit view of staff, administrators can serve as models to staff to both build their capacity to address the social, emotional, and academic needs of minoritized students (Jagers et al. 2018b). Therefore, the intervention team collaboratively developed the PL modular experience to ensure its content emphasized educator assets beginning with a self-examination of their identities in the first module.

The scholarly practitioner's collaboration with the intervention team reflected her adoption of Paulo Freire's (1970, 2000) concept of humanizing education, which influenced the inquiry's community-based action research approach. Essentially, the process for humanizing education is one that is co-creative in nature and "forged with, not for, the oppressed" (Freire, 2000, p. 48). Freire (2000) also emphasizes the importance of teaching being a dialogical process and insists that genuine dialogue is impossible without humility on the part of all participants. As Jagers et al. (2018b) claim, a trauma-informed SEL approach has the potential to forge authentic, genuine relationships among stakeholders to collaboratively examine PoPs generating educational inequity and develop solutions to address them.

Finally, while the scholarly practitioner is ethnically Hispanic, she is also racially white, which does put the intentionality of this study at risk of veering into equity detours and engaging in whiteness norms (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020; Gorski, 2019). To avoid her own explicit or implicit bias impeding the trauma-informed SEL intervention process because of being a racialized white, Hispanic female, the scholarly practitioner worked alongside an intervention team whose members included minoritized individuals (Olsson, 1997; Gorski, 2019). Furthermore, a collaborative aim of the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team was to further develop their own and EHS educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies to admit and respond to the most subtle of biases and inequities through an examination of personal and collective biases. As Gorski and Swalwell (2022) find, when educational leaders facilitate forums where educators can examine societal impacts on minoritized student groups in the schooling context, the likelihood towards their development and sustainability of a bias and discrimination-free educational community increases.

Chapter Summary

Following a pragmatic, mixed-method research–intervention process model that utilized a community-based action research approach, the scholarly practitioner utilized quantitative and qualitative methods to determine whether a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention influenced educators’ implicit biases. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner sought mitigate the adverse effects of whiteness norms on the relation between educators’ implicit bias and their explicitly biased behaviors toward minoritized student groups with a trauma-informed SEL intervention. Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner sought to examine how the trauma-informed SEL PL intervention may influence educators’ self-reported favorability on each of the following outcome variables: belonging, cultural awareness and action with adult and student foci, educating all students, and equity-focused PL (Panorama Education, n.d.). Finally, the scholarly practitioner sought to understand how an improved trauma-informed PL experience influenced EHS’, a public, suburban high school located in the Northeastern US, educators’ ability to further develop educators’ self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies with a trauma-informed SEL approach. The quantitative data the scholarly practitioner collected via pre- and post-test survey were administered via SPSS. The analysis involved utilizing descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages, mean, standard deviation), and inferential statistics (a parametric, paired *t*-test). Additionally, the scholarly practitioner collected qualitative data via pre and post-test open-ended question items and a focus group interview, and were administered via Word documents. The analysis involved a manual, descriptive coding and frequencies, and a triangulation process with member checking to ensure accuracy when validating the themes and participant experiences. As a first-generation American of white, Hispanic descent, the scholarly practitioner approached this inquiry through a pragmatist lens with “critical, participatory,

advocacy, and emancipatory” leanings to engage in social transformation efforts that strived for educational equity (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 16).

Chapter Four: Presentation of the Findings

The inquiry explored the ways that a trauma-informed SEL PL series may have changed high school educators' implicit biases and explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups. The scholarly practitioner furthermore sought to understand how the trauma-informed SEL PL series influenced high school leadership's ability to change the self-awareness and social awareness skills of their educators. In particular, the scholarly practitioner sought to understand how the high school leadership supported educators through their acquired knowledge and skills from each module to increase the application of trauma-informed SEL strategies in classroom spaces. Therefore, the scholarly practitioner sought to examine how the trauma-informed SEL PL intervention may influence educators' self-reported favorability on each of the following outcome variables: belonging, cultural awareness and action with adult and student foci, educating all students, and equity-focused PL (Panorama Education, n.d.). Specifically, the scholarly practitioner hypothesized that if the intervention further developed educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, their self-reported favorability of their perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues, and equity-focused PL would increase.

The following questions guide this inquiry.

Inquiry Questions

- 1) Do high school educators' perceptions of belonging to the school community, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and PL about equity change through participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?

- 2) How do educators' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and PL about equity change over time after participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?
- 3) Which leadership styles, if any, did educators identify as supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

The scholarly practitioner administered the Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey, as a pre and post-test, to assess high school educators' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action with adult and student foci, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and personal learning about equity (Panorama Education, n.d.). The survey measure included a combination of Likert-scales and two open-ended questions (Panorama Education, n.d.). The scholarly practitioner analyzed quantitative data using descriptive statistics and a parametric, paired *t*-test to evaluate any changes over the course of the intervention. The scholarly practitioner coded and analyzed qualitative data to identify emerging themes, and member-checked these themes with intervention team members. To collect data for qualitative analysis, the scholarly practitioner conducted a semi structured interview (see Appendix H) to better understand the experiences of the participants during the intervention phase, and to develop and corroborate categories and themes. In this chapter, the scholarly practitioner presents the results.

Description of the Sample

Participants

Out of the 80 high school educators who participated in the PL intervention, in total, 50 participants completed the pre-test survey measure, 36 participants completed the post-test survey measure, and 28 participants completed both the pre-test and post-test survey measures.

Of the 28 participants, 25 participants responded to the belonging subsection of the survey, 24 on the cultural awareness and action (student focus) and educating all students subsections, 23 on the cultural awareness and action (adult focus) subsection, and 21 on the professional learning about equity. Table 12 demonstrates the sociodemographic characteristics for educator participants who completed the pre-test survey, which was also the largest sample size. Contingent with the NCES (2020) annual report of the sociodemographics of educators across U.S. traditional public schools, the majority of the educators who participated in the PL intervention identified as women, white, being 30-49 years of age, speaking English as their primary language, having a teaching experience between 10-20 years, and holding a Master's degree as their highest level of education.

Table 12

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Educators Who Completed Pre-Test Survey

Characteristic	Pre-test Survey (<i>N</i> =50)	
	<i>n</i>	%
Gender Identity		
Woman	33	66.0
Man	15	30.0
Prefer not to answer	2	4.0
Race-Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2.0
Hispanic, Latinx, Latino, Latina	4	8.0
White	40	80.0
Prefer not to answer	3	6.0
Age		
20-29	1	2.0
30-39	15	30.0
40-49	15	30.0

Characteristic	Pre-test Survey (<i>N</i> =50)	
	<i>n</i>	%
50-59	14	28.0
60-69	5	10.0
English as primary language		
Yes	47	94.0
No	3	6.0
Teaching experience		
Less than a year	2	4.0
1-2 years	0	0.0
3-5 years	4	8.0
6-10 years	9	18.0
11-15 years	11	22.0
More than 15 years	24	48.0
Highest educational level		
Bachelor's Degree	3	6.0
Master's Degree	42	84.0
Ed.D., Ph.D. or higher	3	6.0
Prefer not to say	2	4.0

Statement of the Results

Research Question 1

The scholarly practitioner collected quantitative data to respond to the first research question:

- 1) Do high school educators' perceptions of belonging to the school community, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and PL about equity change through participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?

Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey measured educator perspectives on five topics. These topics, Panorama Education's research team (n.d.) had identified as essential to effectively addressing inequitable educational outcomes for historically minoritized student groups. The Panorama Education (n.d.) research team developed the following topics: belonging, cultural awareness and action (adult focus), cultural awareness and action (student focus), educating all students, and PL about equity, in collaboration with the Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable School (RIDES) Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Panorama Education, n.d.). Self-rating scales within each topic to reduce participant acquiescence response and social desirability biases, and maximize applicability to the sociodemographic profile of participants. Each topic, which the scholarly practitioner identified as outcome variables for the purposes of the study, contains four to nine closed-question items on a 5-point Likert scale. The least favorable response (i.e., "Not at all...") within the scale received a score of "1," and the most favorable score (i.e., "Extremely...") received a score of "5" for a theoretical range of 34 to 170.

To determine if the scholarly practitioner and intervention team reached their aim of increasing each outcome variable by 2%, the scholarly practitioner utilized the Excel data analysis data pack to determine pre- and post-test survey percentages. The scholarly practitioner and intervention team reached their aim in all but one outcome variable. For the cultural awareness and action with an adult and student foci, educating all students and equity-focused PL outcome variables, all increased by 9.1%, 2.9%, 3.7%, and 5.73%. Participants experienced no change in the outcome variable of belonging.

To evaluate for change, the scholarly practitioner conducted a parametric, paired *t*-test to evaluate whether the trauma-informed PL series affected the outcomes of educators' perceptions in each of the five assessed variables of the study. Table 13 displays the results.

Table 13

Paired t-test for Equity and Inclusion Survey Topics in Pretest and Posttest

Outcome variables		m	sd	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Belonging	pretest	17.32	3.05	25	.638
	posttest	17.56	2.90		
Cultural awareness and action (adult focus)	pretest	20.83	4.99	23	.004**
	posttest	23.87	3.57		
Cultural awareness and action (student focus)	pretest	20.83	5.02	24	.031*
	posttest	23.13	4.10		
Educating all students	pretest	28.83	4.22	24	.239
	posttest	29.92	4.36		
Professional learning about equity	pretest	10.67	2.89	21	.318
	posttest	11.38	2.54		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The results of the analyses showed a statistically significant increase in favorability for the cultural awareness and action (adult focus) $t(23) = -.004$, $p < .01$ and for cultural awareness and action (student focus) $t(24) = -.031$, $p < .05$ outcome variables from pre-test to post-test. There was a lack of a statistically significant increase in favorability in the following outcome variables: belonging, educating all students, and professional learning about equity.

The results suggest that the trauma-informed SEL PL session may have positively influenced the participants' self-rated cultural awareness and action, for adult and student foci, favorability total, which potentially implies a positive impact on the participants' self and social awareness skills. As indicated by Jagers and colleagues (2018b), when educators reflect on their own beliefs, biases, and engage in perspective-taking, they are activating self-awareness and social awareness SEL competencies. While Panorama Education (n.d.) does not explicitly associate the cultural awareness and action outcome variable with the self-awareness and social-awareness SEL competencies, it describes the variable as educators engaging in learning and conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture, which requires highly developed self-awareness and social-awareness competencies. Furthermore, the trauma-informed SEL PL series required educators to reevaluate their own and society's perspectives about themselves and others to empower them to lead change to address inequities in their schooling context (Jagers et al., 2018b).

Research Question 2

The scholarly practitioner collected qualitative data through one of the open-ended questions on Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey and a focus group made up of three peer coaches to respond to the second research question:

- 2) How do educators' perceptions of belonging, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address diversity issues with students, and PL about equity change over time after participating in a trauma-informed SEL PL series?

The survey participants responded to the following question: "What is the most important thing we can do to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures?" The scholarly practitioner sought to deepen the understanding about how the trauma-informed SEL PL

experience may influence EHS educators' perspectives and experiences regarding matters of equity and inclusion in EHS. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner explored the context for understanding how acknowledging EHS educators' feedback and classroom realities in the PL experience will influence their affinity and aspiration towards applying trauma-informed SEL practices with their students in their classrooms.

To analyze participants' open-ended responses, the scholarly practitioner coded the qualitative data manually from the open-ended question items, and conducted a triangulation process to validate the data and participant experiences. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner compared the peer coaches' and the participants' experiences with field notes, observations, and focus group interview collected data to member-check the results, and analyzed how these qualitative data substantiated the quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-intervention surveys. To identify themes of educator action, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team elected to utilize Gorski (2020) and Simmons' (2021) trauma-informed framework, which served as a guide to make revisions to the current Yale (2021) RULER SEL approach at the school.

Three educators volunteered for the semi- structured, focus group interview. The data supported the themes identified by the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team. Table 14 displays the results for the first open-ended question.

Table 14*Descriptive Frequencies of Staff's Responses to Types of Educator Action*

Types of Educator Action	Example quote	Pre-test and Post-test Surveys (N=45)	
		<i>n</i>	%
Shift hyper-punitive behaviors and beliefs			
Listen to student experience	"Truly listen to them [students] and what their needs are."	17	37.8
Equitable treatment of students	"Treat everyone with the same level of care, concern, and respect regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture."	6	13.3
Reevaluate institutional culture (practices, policies)	"Have a very clear system of consequences for students who use slurs, etc. Make it easier for trans students to change their names in their email and portal. Take student complaints of racism, sexism, and LGBTQ bullying seriously."		
Prioritize student representation in curriculum	"Include their [students] identities in the curriculum without only focusing on the negative experiences of that group."	9	20.0
Engage in PL to increase capacity with diverse learners	"The demographics of Riverplain are changing, more PD and options for learning/practicing are needed to support students."	6	13.3
Advocate for minority educator recruitment	"We can hire a more diverse administration and faculty that personally represents a variety of genders, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, races, ethnicity, and cultural perspectives."	1	2.2

Types of Educator Action	Example quote	Pre-test and Post-test Surveys (N=45)	
		<i>n</i>	%
Address student traumas of systemic oppression			
Intervening when witnessing injustice towards student	“Intervene with consequences when students act in ways that are racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic in their conversation and in their actions.”	5	11.1
Unable to identify	“I would love to know.”	1	2.2

Table 14 displays the types of educator action the participants (n=45) identified to support minoritized student groups. As the first two modules of the PL series prioritized a development of educator cultural competence and humility to navigate conversations and circumstances involving race, ethnicity, and culture, the scholarly practitioner suspects the learning may have persuaded participants to identify that a shift in their explicitly biased, hyper-punitive behaviors and beliefs towards students (n=23) would be most helpful to minoritized students. The participants identified that listening to students (n=17) and treating students equitably (n=6) inside and outside of the classroom prior to engaging in action as being beneficial to minoritized students. Participant, “Ellen” identified an activity in the second module where participants were asked to envision a challenging student, as an opportunity to confront her “own biases” that challenged her to engage in perspective-taking before acting with disciplinary measures.

Moreover, a second group of participants (n=16) identified a need for educators to reevaluate the practices and policies within the educational organization to prioritize minoritized student group need. As the intervention team facilitated a third module where participants had

the opportunity to utilize The EJ-ROC (2022) Culturally Responsive Scorecards to evaluate a unit in their curriculum, the scholarly practitioner surmises that the experience prompted participants (n=9) to identify and prioritize the student representation in their curricula. Participant “Susan,” indicated a desire to have teachers “look at curriculum again” using the scorecards during their established collaborative learning time. Specifically, the open-ended responses indicate the increased understanding that participants possess of how equity considerations curriculum and PL practices that are considered part of daily practice by educators may have a profound impact on the lives of diverse students.

Additional learning activities, such as the culture toss where peer coaches asked participants to eliminate a portion of their identities may have influenced participants’ (n=6) acknowledgement that they require further PL to increase their self-capacity with diverse learners. As participant “Gladys,” explained:

“I liked the culture toss, I think that’s, that was probably the one that was most engaging for our group. Um, and then one thing that came up was someone in our group mentioned that, well, they can certainly understand and appreciate why much of the activities were around cultural awareness and action. However, we might be well served by making this a long-term initiative by looking at other minority groups within our building, like our LGBTQ community, umm students with disabilities, like really expanding our awareness and understanding of different populations and groups.”

Therefore, participant “Gladys,” voiced an inclination to expand capacity-building of educators to address the needs of a diverse student population with more PL. The responses may also indicate why the educating all students and PL about equity outcome variables did not indicate a statistically significant change, as participants voiced a desire for continuation of the PL

experience given that they identified a need to further develop their self-capacity when educating minoritized student groups. However, the intervention team designed the first two modules on cultural competence and cultural humility to increase participants' awareness of the quotidian experiences of racially and ethnically diverse students in schools that may accumulate to have traumatic impacts (Nadal, 2018). Nevertheless, the scholarly practitioner noted how participant "Gladys's" suggestion did not account for the intersectionality of student identity, as evidenced by her "other minority groups" comment, which further of iterations of the PL series could expand upon.

Furthermore, one participant recognized the need to diversify the staff demographic, and questioned the districts minority recruitment policy. As "Susan," explained:

"I think the general lack of diversity among the faculty limits the depth of the conversation, um, if there's too much homogeneity around the experience, the iceberg becomes too uniform. And if there's too much homogeneity around, understanding of race or interactions with people of different cultural backgrounds, along with the conversation is limited. I don't know how to fix that factor in the interactions, but I think it's a factor."

"Susan," touches on one of the root causes of the study's PoP, as the homogeneity among the educator demographics may continue negatively impact outcomes for minoritized students.

Battey and colleagues (2018) examined how the relationships between Black or African American students and their teachers impacted the students' achievement in mathematics, and found that white teachers possessed a higher deficit view of Black or African American students than their Black or African American colleagues. Battey and colleagues (2018) research along with "Susan's" observation, continue to add to the literature that culturally mismatched teachers

and students may continue to inequitably impact student social, emotional, and academic outcomes.

The final theme that the scholarly practitioner identified included a desire from the participants (n=5) to intervene when diverse students experience injustices in the school setting. The intervention team exposed the participants to content centered on the systemic oppression, such as racist, heterosexist, and/or transphobic cultures and events, that minoritized students experience in school settings to interrupt and challenge educator biases and deficit views of minoritized students and their families (Gorski, 2020). Explicitly, the intervention team and participants explored the root causes of student behavior and the narratives behind them to avoid educators blaming them or their families and perpetuating cycles of trauma (Goldin & Khasnabis, 2020). However, while participants increased their awareness about the systemic oppression that minoritized students experience in schooling contexts, their thoughts regarding appropriate interventions when witnessing injustice towards a student involved disciplinary action.

An additional theme noted in the analysis, including whiteness norms. Participant “Gladys,” articulated how whiteness norms may have impacted participant experience:

“Let me just say it was not received with open hearts. It was received with a significant amount of resistance and people saying, ‘we already do this.’ Why are we talking about stuff that we already know? And, up, there was a lot of pushbacks, um, within the groups and not a big sense of, ‘oh, this is great that we’re talking about this. I really felt like I had to sell it hard and almost apologetically, like, I’m sorry we have to do this, but here’s why I think it’s important because that’s really how resistant and frankly aggravated and annoyed most of my group was that we were doing it all.”

While “Gladys,” did not explicitly mention whiteness norms, her anecdote is a possible exemplar of a “collision,” which Chandler and Wiborg (2020) describe as an unexpected behavior that breaches the performance of those perpetuating whiteness norms and therefore threatens the illusion of the status quo (p. 720). Additionally, Chandler and Wiborg (2020) encourage organizational leaders to further explore collusions to effectively explore and analyze the whiteness norms to address them. Lastly, as one participant was unable to identify any educator action that would support minoritized students, this evidence may further support educational leaders taking a “whiteness norms approach” in future iterations of the PL series (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020, pg. 720). Specifically, the approach is a framework that educational leaders can utilize to facilitate the exploration and examination of how whiteness norms function within the school (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020).

Research Question 3

To collect qualitative data concentrated upon educator perspectives of the study’s intervention and its impact on which type of leadership style best supported DEI efforts within the organization, the scholarly practitioner utilized participant responses from the second open-ended question on Panorama Education’s (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion survey along with the same semi-structured interview sessions with the three peer coaches to respond the following research question:

- 3) Which leadership styles, if any, did educators identify as supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts?

The survey participants responded to the following question: “How can school leaders help you better learn about, discuss, and confront issues of race, ethnicity and culture?” The scholarly practitioner sought to deepen the understanding about how the trauma-informed SEL

PL experience may influence EHS educators' perceptions of which leadership styles best support DEI efforts in EHS. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner explored the context for understanding how utilizing peer coaches to model behaviors, clearly communicate expectations, and utilize data-driven approaches influenced educators' leaning towards a certain leadership style (Northouse, 2016).

To analyze participants' open-ended responses, the scholarly practitioner coded the qualitative data manually from the second open-ended question items, and conducted a triangulation process to validate the data and participant experiences. Specifically, the scholarly practitioner compared the peer coaches' and the participants' experiences with field notes, observations, and focus group interview collected data to member-check the results, and analyzed how these qualitative data substantiated the quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-intervention surveys. The scholarly practitioner, in conjunction with the intervention team, elected to identify themes of leadership style due to their influence on employee commitment when managing change, such as in the improvement science framework (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Perry et al., 2020), and utilized Hussein & colleagues (2022) framework of leadership styles. Table 15 displays the results.

Table 15*Descriptive Frequencies of Staff's Responses to Types of Effective Leadership Support*

Types of leadership support	Example quote	Pre-test and post-test surveys (<i>N</i> =47)	
		<i>n</i>	%
Transactional			
Manage PL	“Identify more professional development days regarding this issue and offered to ALL staff.”	11	23.4
Disseminate Resources	“Provide us with more resources or curriculum ideas.”	5	10.6
Transformational			
Foster acceptance of PL goals	“Create a time and space for interested teachers to participate in opportunities to learn. This may help explain/justify why this PD is needed.”	11	23.4
Clarify performance expectations	“Start with grassroots movements that begin with teachers expressing their needs and build professional development to align with faculty need, which clarifies what is expected of them.”	4	8.5
Provide individualized support	“Individual support is needed for teachers where content-aligned strategies are shared, and administrators are meeting teachers where they are.”	2	4.3
Articulate data-driven vision	“Provide data on how our own students perceive they are affected by ethnic and cultural concerns to revise our current mission and vision.”	2	4.3
Charismatic			
Model behavior, beliefs, and expectations	“Provide a safe forum for open discussion, and model behaviors.”	5	10.6

Types of leadership support	Example quote	Pre-test and post-test surveys (N=47)	
		<i>n</i>	%
Provide stakeholder conflict support	“Understand the position we are put in as community members and the backlash that arises from parents when we try to address sensitive topics in our courses. They are not always well received, and we need to know that our administration will back us and defend our choices without question.”	4	8.5
Unable to identify	“I am not sure.”	3	6.4

As seen in Table 15, the majority (n=19) of pre and post-test survey participants identified transformational leadership characteristics as effective leadership support in further developing their cultural awareness and action. After analysis of qualitative data using Hussein et al.'s (2022) leadership style framework, participants seemed to provide feedback on how the educational leaders can effectively articulate the vision for SEL at the school that fosters acceptance (n=11), is clear (n=4), incorporates differentiated support for educators based on their knowledge and skill set (n=2), and is data-driven (n=2). The focus group participants further elaborated on the transformational leadership behaviors that they perceived as favorable. Participant “Ellen,” appreciated that, “it was nice of them [leadership] to make that time available to us.” The two other participants, “Gladys,” and “Susan,” agreed, describing the leaders who prioritized peer coaches leading affinity groups as, “thoughtful,” and “supportive.”

With regards to the second most identified leadership style, transactional, the participants (n=16) found that leader-centered actions may further support their cultural awareness and action. Specifically, the participants expressed an interest in educational leaders being the primary sources of PL (n=11) and resources to staff (n=5), which may signal an increased

favorable perception of educational leaders as sources of support. During the focus interview, participant, “Susan,” explained that she appreciated how leaders designed, “each session to build on the previous one, which deepened and extended how much it challenged the participants.” Participant, “Ellen,” further supported “Susan’s” claim by complimenting the leadership’s cultivation of resources that were “popular culture references to stimulate conversation.” However, participant, “Gladys,” indicated the following:

“The conversation tended to wax and wane, there were times where people were like ‘Yeah, I have nothing to say about that.’ We just moved on. Our groups didn’t get particularly heated in the first one [module], this got a little more, um, there were more reactions in the second one [module] and on the third one [module] we just sped through.”

The participant, “Gladys’s” quote provided the scholarly practitioner with additional evidence that the educational leaders’ transactional leadership style of providing the PL experience without their active participation facilitated participant avoidance of conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture. “Ellen,” further corroborated “Gladys’s” anecdote, and noted the increased pressure on peer coaches to mitigate the conflict that arose within groups:

“The first day was a, was a very gentle and friendly conversation, but our group was also super small on that that. Um, the second day was where there’s started to be some contentiousness in how people perceived. It was, particularly the videos and, I was trying very hard to not, to facilitate and not to be an overly involved participant.”

The content that “Gladys” identified as evoking “reactions in participants, and that “Ellen” perceived as generating “contentiousness,” were videos depicting complex ethnic, cultural, and racial situations between individuals where participants had to engage in active conflict analysis.

Additionally, the “gentle” and “friendly” conversations that “Ellen” identified were those where participants were asked to engage in self-reflection of their own racial, ethnic, and cultural identities. As Chandler and Wiborg (2020) note, a critical analysis by white participants of lived realities where whiteness norms were explicitly identified and discussed generated feelings of anxiety and non-participation. Therefore, future iterations of the PL series may need to include educational leaders, interested in leading educational equity change efforts, actively identifying and addressing the whiteness norming behaviors within their leadership style (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020).

Finally, a minority of participants (n=9) identified leadership supports to further develop their cultural awareness and action, which characterize a charismatic leadership style. The participants expressed a need for the educational leaders in the building to not only lead by example and modeling expected behaviors (n=5), they also expressed a desire for their protection when encountering possible community backlash when discussing matters of race, ethnicity and culture with students (n=4). During the focus group interview, the participant “Susan,” indicated that “teachers need to hear from leadership that they are going to be checking in, following up on discussions with us, so that we feel more confident to do so with our students.” Furthermore, Cai and colleagues (2018) found that a charismatic leadership style may lead to a positive impact on employee self-efficacy and competence with regards to knowledge and skills. Further iterations of the PL series may benefit from trust building activities between educational leaders and the rest of the staff when discussing matters of race, ethnicity, and culture to empower educators to increase their commitment to the trauma-informed SEL approach in the building (Chang, 2018).

Summary of the Results

The scholarly practitioner presented the quantitative and qualitative findings in this chapter to respond the inquiry questions under consideration. According to the improvement science framework (Perry et al., 2020), researchers should determine a metric for improvement prior to implementing the SIAR cycle. The metric of 2% change was met in the categories of cultural awareness and action with an adult and student foci, educating all students and equity-focused PL outcome variables; however, not all results were statistically significant.

First, the scholarly practitioner noted that, in collaboration with the intervention team, they surpassed their aim in four out of the five outcome variables. Furthermore, the statistical trends demonstrated that participants' self-rated cultural awareness and action, with an adult and student foci, increased through their participation in a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention. The scholarly practitioner found a statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) in participant reported favorability for the cultural awareness and action (student focus) outcome variable, and a stronger statistical significance in favorability ($p < 0.05$), for cultural awareness and action (adult focus) outcome variable from pre-test to post test. As evidenced by the open-ended responses, the majority of participants identified and prioritized a parallel, transformational change-making types of leadership support and educator action that would further develop their cultural awareness and action. However, the scholarly practitioner did not identify enough evidence to understand the intervention's direct impact on the other outcome variables of belonging, educating all students, and PL about equity. The drop off in participant responses and engagement toward the conclusion of the PL series may indicate the propensity of a majority white educator group to participate and perform whiteness norms that may be guided by their implicit biases. Systemically racist and oppressive structural barriers such as whiteness norms

may deter trauma-informed SEL PL interventions, which may have further implication as to educational leaders' ability to mitigate educator implicit bias with a trauma-informed SEL approach which may positively impact social, emotional, and academic outcomes for minoritized students.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The scholarly practitioner theorized that by creating a trauma-informed SEL PL series that strengthened adult SEL self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies, the scholarly practitioner could increase educators' favorable responses on Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey by 2% by February 2022. The effort sought to advance the organization's ability in meeting its goal of staff engaging with research-based PL to further develop their knowledge and skills to foster equitable, culturally responsive learning contexts while advancing a trauma-informed SEL approach for all students (CASEL, 2022b). The potential for a trauma-informed SEL approach to change educator implicit bias, which can lead to improved academic and disciplinary outcomes for minority student groups, drove the organization's goal (Simmons et al., 2018). While the organization's educational leadership implemented various SEL initiatives such as Yale's (2021) RULER approach and they have documented incremental improvements, the district has not reached its goal. Therefore, the results of the scholarly practitioner's collected data via pre, post-test surveys, and a focus group interview, reveal valuable insights and findings for the inquiry. Below, the scholarly practitioner explains key findings, implications for educational practice, and next steps.

Key Findings

As Cherner and colleagues (2020) utilize aspects of Mathew's (2015) Contextualized Theory of Health Inequality in their research on mitigating educator implicit bias, the scholarly practitioner similarly adopted Mathew's (2015) framework to discuss the key findings that developed from the inquiry (see Appendix R). Specifically, the scholarly practitioner applied Mathew's (2015) input-output lens found within the framework to explore how the PL intervention may have impacted the cognitive process or "input" that generates implicit bias in

educators and the product or “output” that generates educators’ explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups.

With regards to the “input,” the scholarly practitioner observed an increase in educators’ cultural awareness and action with the trauma-informed PL SEL intervention. As indicated by Jagers and colleagues (2018b), when educators reflect on their own beliefs, biases, and engage in perspective-taking, they are activating self-awareness and social awareness SEL competencies. While Panorama Education (n.d.) does not explicitly associate the cultural awareness and action outcome variable with the self-awareness and social-awareness SEL competencies, it describes the variable as educators engaging in learning and conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture, which requires highly developed self-awareness and social-awareness competencies. The scholarly practitioner defined cultural awareness and action by participants’ self-rated perceptions of how well the organization supports educators and students in addressing and acting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture (Panorama Education, n.d.). Furthermore, the trauma-informed SEL PL series required educators to reevaluate their own and society’s perspectives about themselves and others to empower them to lead change to address inequities in their schooling context (Jagers et al., 2018b).

While the scholarly practitioner initially predicted a statistically significant increase in favorability across all outcome variables, only the scholarly practitioner’s prediction on the participants’ self-rated favorability increased from before to after the intervention for cultural awareness and action for the adult and student focus was correct. Participants’ sense of how well school leadership supports both them and their students in “learning about, discussing, and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture” increased from a pre-test median of 20.83 to 23.87 and 23.13 respectively for the adult and student foci (Panorama Education, n.d.). The

results further support the possible improvement resulting from a trauma-informed SEL PL series that focus on further developing educators' self-awareness and social-awareness competencies.

However, the scholarly practitioner did not note a statistically significant increase in favorability for the belonging, educating all students and PL about equity outcome variables; however, out of all the outcome variables, the cultural awareness and action adult and student focus variables were most closely associated with both the self and social awareness competencies. The scholarly practitioner suspects that the belonging, educating all students, and PL learning about equity were not impacted due to the PL series' primary intent to positively impact educators' self-awareness and social-awareness competencies through facilitation of discussions and application of skills with regards to topics of race, ethnicity, and culture within the schooling context. Further iterations of the trauma-informed SEL PL series should include a strong emphasis on educators' sense of belonging, capacity to educate all students, and perceptions of PL about equity.

Regarding the "output," educators identified transformational administrator and teacher behaviors in open-ended and interview responses as effective for increasing positive outcomes for minoritized student groups. The participants' identified actions aligned to Gorski (2020) and Simmons' (2021) trauma-informed framework, which is grounded in anti-racist and anti-oppression considerations and may ultimately lead to a decrease in the participants' explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups. Notwithstanding, whiteness norms continue to impact the input that generate participants' implicit biases and influence their output, or their explicitly biased behaviors, towards minoritized student groups (Cherner et al., 2020). Additionally, the scholarly practitioner noted a drop-off in participant responses from the pre-test

to the post-test. The scholarly practitioner suspects that the intervention team's ongoing, intentional challenge of whiteness norms within the trauma-informed SEL PL session may have generated avoidance behaviors in the majority white educator sample, as has been suggested in previous research (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). Specifically, in Chandler and Wiborg's (2020) review of the literature of whiteness norms in educational research, the authors indicated that a possible source of white participant avoidant behavior is their examination of the contradictions that exist between their stated beliefs and claims and their explicit behaviors. Therefore, educational leaders' future efforts towards short-term improvement of academic and disciplinary outcomes in minoritized student groups must also consider the implications of whiteness norms within the organization and explore mediators to effectively maintain educators' active participation and engagement in the organization's trauma-informed SEL approach (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020).

Key finding #1: Acknowledging That a Trauma-Informed SEL PL Intervention may Further Develop Educators' Self-Awareness and Social-Awareness Skills and Have Positive Implications for Promoting Educational Equity

The trauma-informed SEL PL intervention may have further developed high-school educators' self-awareness and social-awareness skills and competence as evidenced by the statistically significant increase in their self-reported cultural awareness and action (Panorama Education, n.d.). The educators' overall perceptions of how well educational leaders support them and their students in their ability to investigate, analyze, and openly discuss issues of race, ethnicity, and culture holds importance, as the scholarly practitioner is particularly interested in further developing self-awareness and social-awareness skills.

When educational leaders provide forums for educators to intentionally and meaningfully reflect on their existing beliefs, perspectives, and assumptions about the intersecting characteristics of identity, educators are utilizing aspects of the two key SEL competencies of self-awareness and social awareness (Jagers et al., 2018b). As demonstrated by Jacoby-Senghor and colleagues' (2016) and Peterson and colleagues' (2016) research on mitigating educator implicit bias, a lack of evidence exists that increasing educators' self-awareness of their implicit bias is associated with decreased explicitly biased beliefs and behaviors towards minoritized students in educational spaces. Instead, Cherner and colleagues (2020) recommend that educational leaders, who prioritize educational equity, utilize strategies to further develop educators' self-awareness and social-awareness to potentially change their explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized students.

Utilizing the input-output component from Mathew's (2015) framework, the scholarly practitioner tested a trauma-informed SEL PL intervention to change educator implicit bias through a virtual and in-person modular experience facilitated by peer coaches, which was the input. The scholarly practitioner tested an intervention that may have produced a statistically significant increase in educators' favorable responses of cultural awareness and action, which the scholarly practitioner viewed as an input. Therefore, as the intervention generated increased levels of educators' cultural awareness and action, it can potentially change and decrease educators' explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups, or the output (Mathew, 2015).

The organization's educational leadership and intervention team will need to collect more evidence in future iterations of the trauma-informed SEL approach to understand the significance in the educators' increase in favorable responses of cultural awareness and action, and further

identify and leverage the strategies and resources that are most impactful in their pursuit. As in Cherner and colleagues (2020) study on a PL strategy to increase educator awareness about their implicit bias proved successful with a portion of the participants reporting a change in their practices as a result of the PL strategy, this inquiry found parallel success in participants reporting increased support of them and their students when navigating issues of race, ethnicity, and culture in the school context as a result of the trauma-informed PL intervention. However, particularly due to participant drop off in responses and engagement, further implementation of the trauma-informed SEL PL intervention and ongoing technical support throughout the school day is required.

Key finding #2: Acknowledging That a Trauma-Informed SEL PL Intervention may Increase Transformational Educator Behaviors

The input from the trauma-informed SEL PL intervention may have increased the participants' propensity for engaging in transformational behaviors, or the output, which may lead to long-lasting changes to address educational inequities (Mathew, 2015). From the participant responses in the open-ended question items and the focus group interview, the scholarly practitioner surmised that the likelihood that educators within the organization would engage in transformational behaviors would increase. Specifically, the majority of participants identified transformational leadership behaviors as effective in further supporting their cultural awareness and action. Furthermore, educators increasing their capacities and understandings in matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion may have increased their affinity for a transformational leadership style (Gorski et al., 2022). Barreto and Hogg (2018) found that transformational leadership support is associated with collaboration between educator leaders and non-educator leaders within social justice contexts. Additionally, change ideas such as

educator-selected affinity groups led by peer coaches, may have led participants to identify transformational leadership types of supports due to the PL series' emphasis on peer relationships and mentorship (Hussein et al., 2022).

The transformational behaviors the participants identified included educational leaders articulating a vision for SEL at the school that fosters acceptance (n=11), is clear (n=4), incorporates differentiated support for educators based on their knowledge and skill set (n=2), and is data-driven (n=2) (Hussein et al., 2022). As evidenced by Gorski and colleagues' (2022) case study on transformational leadership, part of their work with a high school leadership team included empowering educational leaders to frame a vision that promotes equity as commitment to transformational action, instead of an initiative, which fostered greater acceptance from staff. Furthermore, part of the vision involved providing technical assistance for educators within their contexts, such as tasking curriculum specialists to engage in PL and adopt the Learning for Justice (2021) social justice standards across curricula (Gorski et al., 2022). Additionally, Gorski and colleagues (2022) identify an educational leader's responsibility to be clear as to how their vision will identify and eliminate organizational inequities to avoid perceived evasiveness from staff. Finally, as Anyon and colleagues (2018) found that collecting data with regards to the way educators apply policies and practices in their contexts may lead to a decrease in their explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized students. Therefore, the scholarly practitioner acknowledges that as a portion of the organization's educators identified transformational educational leader behaviors as effective, the educational leaderships' behaviors may shift upon reflection of staff feedback. Furthermore, Hussein and colleagues (2022) find that transformational leadership may lead to decreased management of conflict when attempting to generate employee commitment to an organization. Future iterations of the PL series may

advance the rate of change and educator commitment to a trauma-informed SEL approach with increased transformational leadership actions and supports (Hussein, 2022).

Regarding the transformational educator actions that the participants identified as effectively support minoritized student groups, the identified outputs align to Gorski (2020) and Simmons' (2021) trauma-informed framework. The scholarly practitioner surmises that these outputs may reduce participants' explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups. As documented by Carter and colleagues (2020) and Pemberton and Loeb's (2020) research on the traumatic effects of varying types of inequities such as racism and sexism, an increased likelihood exists for minoritized student groups to experience trauma in the school setting. Therefore, the scholarly practitioner acknowledges the promise in participants' recognition of removing their personal biases, beliefs, and assumptions from their daily practice to further support minoritized student groups (Leonardo, 2004). The scholarly practitioner noted that a majority of participants required the application of their self-awareness and social awareness competencies in their prioritization of the following educator actions: shifting hyper-punitive behaviors and beliefs, reevaluating institutional culture including practices and policies, and addressing student traumas of systemic oppression (Gorski, 2020; Simmons, 2021).

The actions reflect Jagers and colleagues (2018b) claim that when educators engage in actions that involve perspective-taking, a greater opportunity for action to address educational inequities for minoritized student groups exists. As Gorski (2020) claims, an indication that an educator is becoming increasingly trauma-informed is through the exploration of the root causes of student behavior prior to the application of disciplinary measures. The trauma-informed SEL PL experience may have increased the value for the participants of communicating with students to discover root causes of behavior and conflict (Gorski, 2020).

While the scholarly practitioner acknowledges the limitation of drop off in participant engagement towards the conclusion of the inquiry, these findings may have positive implications for the educational leadership's ability to reduce staff's explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups.

Key finding #3: Acknowledging that Whiteness Norms Continue to Generate Structural Barriers That Continue to Impact Educator's Implicit and Explicit Biases

Despite the aim of further development of educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills, and potential decrease in educators' explicitly biased behaviors towards minoritized student groups, whiteness norms in the organization appeared to continue to persist. Therefore, educational leaders may require a meaningful investigation and analysis of whiteness norms in their organization, if they are to adhere to the anti-racist and anti-oppression considerations their trauma-informed SEL approach (Gorski, 2020). The finding was evidenced most by a 34% of participants' (n=16 out of n=47) preference towards transactional leadership behaviors, 11% (n=16 out of n=47) of participants identifying disciplinary action as a way to mitigate injustices they witness towards students, and the participant drop off in their pre-test and post-test survey participation (n=50 to n=25).

Terrell and colleagues (2018) describe transactional educational leaders in managerial roles tend to emphasize process as opposed to dynamic, change-making actions that may be better able to mitigate educational inequities. Whiteness norms benefit white individuals by establishing hierarchies, systems of rewards and punishment, and maintaining the status quo, and this has been suggested to gravitate white educators towards transactional leadership style, as was noted in this study (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). With regards to participants' preference of exclusionary disciplinary action, the scholarly practitioner surmises that systemic oppression

itself, specifically whiteness norms present in the organization, may have also contributed to participant responses primarily focused on correcting negative student behavior with punitive action as well as also potentially contributing to participant drop off in survey responses (Battey et al., 2018). Moreover, the scholarly practitioner did not collect enough evidence that supports a claim that the PL series increased educator competence to identify injustices towards minoritized students effectively due to participant drop off. The scholarly practitioner noted some educators' non-participatory and adverse reactions as documented by the focus group participants' anecdotes. Specifically, when "Gladys" described some of her group members' "heated" reactions towards the second modules' content, and how then they "sped through" the contents of the third module. These explicitly biased behaviors seem to align to those from Chandler and Wiborg's (2020) reviewed studies where researchers documented participants' refusal to participate and other defensive behaviors when confronting topics related to race, ethnicity, and culture in educational settings.

Thus, despite the study's objective to change educators' implicit biases, the intervention may have been less effective in minimizing the impact of the organization's whiteness norms on the participants' implicit and explicit biases. These data reveal an urgency for educational leaders to further consider whiteness norms both in institutional decision-making processes regarding minoritized student group academic and disciplinary outcomes, while also exploring different approaches for confronting and navigating these realities with the majority white staff. As seen in Gorski and colleagues' (2022) case study, when educational leaders engage in intentionally anti-racist and anti-oppressive institutional actions which lead to increased equity in policy and practice, an organization can more effectively serve minoritized student groups and perhaps improve recruitment and retention of minoritized educators to the organization.

In educational leaders' educational equity efforts require an awareness, exploration, and examination of whiteness norms to identify when educators are complicit in enacting them, and to develop their skills to disrupt whiteness norms (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). While disrupting whiteness norms does not necessarily generate an increase in disagreement and maladaptive behaviors, the disruption process may generate emotional responses, which require educational leaders' emotional intelligence skills (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). Additionally, educational leaders' adherence to a transformational leadership style can consistently provide on-going support for educators to change their performance of whiteness norms (Hussein et al., 2022). In navigating whiteness norms with staff, educational leaders could default to transactional leadership styles, which may lead to an increase in mediating and managing conflicts and generate an adversarial, punitive school climate (Hussein et al., 2022). As a result, EHS' trauma-informed SEL approach will benefit from educational leaders' intentional whiteness norms exploration and analysis. Specifically, they could collaborate with staff to identify and discuss how whiteness norms impact the organizations' progress towards positively impacting disciplinary and academic outcomes for minoritized student groups (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). As educational leaders are already applying Gorski's (2020) trauma-informed framework to the current Yale (2021) RULER approach, perhaps their work may benefit from Chandler's (2017) whiteness norms framework.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

The key findings that the scholarly practitioner identified from the inquiry inform several implications for practice related to positively impacting the academic and disciplinary outcomes of minoritized student groups with a trauma-informed SEL approach. At EHS specifically, the on-going aim is to decrease suspension and expulsion rates from 4.2 to 0, and school

performance indices in the areas of ELA, mathematics, science, fitness, and college readiness to the state target of 75 (EdSight, 2022a). While these implications are most relevant for secondary public schools with similar PoPs, the scholarly practitioner suggests that educational leaders extend them to apply to all schooling contexts in the United States, and in particular to teacher preparation programs or graduate schools.

Consequently, the first implication for practice is that educational leaders' district and school improvement plan goals related to improving the academic and disciplinary outcomes of minoritized student groups with SEL inform and center them on the users that will be applying SEL approaches with students: administrators and teachers. Existent SEL approaches, programs, and initiatives exist to positively impact the academic, social, and emotional skills and competencies of all student groups. However, minimal evidence exists that educators are implementing SEL in a manner that seeks to minimize and eliminate the barriers that prevent minoritized student groups from optimally developing their social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies (Simmons et al., 2018).

Therefore, educators' integration of anti-racist and anti-oppression considerations, such as that of a trauma-informed SEL approach, require ongoing technical support to further develop educators' own SEL skills and competencies, which include cultural competencies (CASEL, 2022b) By failing to promote educators' SEL skills and competencies, the organizations' educational leaders risk failing to reach academic and disciplinary goals for minoritized student groups and compounding the barriers that prevent them from optimally developing their social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies (Simmons et al., 2018). Due to societal racist and oppressive systems that are perpetuated across U.S. schools, the problem is heightened by

educators' direct and indirect participation in the whiteness norms that continue to impact educational organizations (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020).

Conversely, the intervention team involved in delivering the trauma-informed PL intervention intended to incorporate high school educators' active participation in their learning, discussion, and confrontation of issues regarding race, ethnicity, and culture. The scholarly practitioner and intervention team examined the organizations' areas of strengths and development in achieving their goal to positively impact student outcomes with a trauma-informed SEL approach, the supporting literature, and centered the organization's educators as part of the improvement science approach (Perry et al., 2020). Accordingly, the inquiry may have further developed educators' self-awareness and social awareness skills and competencies as evidenced by the statistical significance in educators' self-rated favorability of their cultural awareness and action (Panorama Education, n.d.). The result may have positive implications on educators' ambitions, application, and overall affinity towards a trauma-informed SEL approach, which may advance the EHS' aim.

The second implication for practice is that educators interested in organizational change require an understanding that enacting change means managing conflict (O'Leary, 2021). Although the organizations' leaders prioritize a trauma-informed SEL approach, the organization continues to document negative disciplinary and academic outcomes for minoritized student groups. "Gladys," "Susan," and "Ellen" identified a possible conflict with the timing of the PL series due to the COVID pandemic, and the feelings of exhaustion and caution to avoid upsetting educators when confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture. However, as Gorski and colleagues (2022) recommended, it is imperative for educational leaders to prioritize the needs of the minoritized student, educator, family, and community member groups who are directly

impacted by systemic racism and oppression in lieu of decelerating progress to avoid conflict. Therefore, the scholarly practitioner suggests that the leadership engage in an increased investment of time, reflection, planning, revision, and funding to the ongoing technical support of educators in the trauma-informed SEL approach. The plan would include leaderships' own PL around implementing a trauma-informed SEL approach with an improvement science framework. Accordingly, the scholarly practitioners' inquiry shifted the organizations' practical approach for the PL of its educators, which the scholarly practitioner theorizes that a continuation of evidence-based PL practices may lead to an increase in educators' application of the trauma-informed SEL approach in their classrooms.

Following an improvement science framework, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team took care to outline an actionable, meaningful PoP with the aid of educator, end-user consultations (Perry et al., 2020). Then, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team reviewed the literature to further understand the organization's PoP, and identify the evidence-based strategies and change ideas that would make up the trauma-informed SEL intervention (Perry et al., 2020). Furthermore, the group formulated a working theory of improvement if educational leaders at EHS made an impact on the relation between educators' implicit bias and explicitly biased behaviors toward minoritized student groups, the work environment, and the instructional core with a trauma-informed SEL intervention, then staff's favorability on each outcome variable would increase by 2% on Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey by February 2022. The scholarly practitioner, in conjunction with the intervention team, surmised that change ideas in the form of a peer coach model, an educator-designed PLC experience with affinity groups, collection of participant feedback, synchronous and asynchronous experiences crafted by expert consultants, coordination meetings, and active

participant roles would aid in driving the organizational improvement (Perry et al., 2020).

Additionally, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team engaged in Perry and colleagues' (2020) SIAR cyclical model to effectively lead the 90-day trauma-informed SEL PL intervention, which further develops critical thinking and leadership skills required to manage change and conflict. As a result, the scholarly practitioner acknowledged a statistically significance in participants' self-reported favorability in the cultural awareness and action outcome variable, which could potentially lead to increased transformational educator actions to increase educational equity within the organization.

Lastly, the scholarly practitioners' findings reveal a third implication for practice, which include the EHS' overarching diversity, equity, and inclusion goals for the educational community. While the scholarly practitioners' inquiry revealed positive implications for promoting adult SEL skills and competencies to increase equitable actions and behaviors towards minoritized student groups, the inquiry also kindles further discussion and exploration into whether the school climate aligns to the organization's trauma-informed SEL approach and goals for its universal implementation. The third implication connects to the scholarly practitioner's first identified implication due to its focus on end-users, but considering minoritized student groups and their families. The scholarly practitioner identified a need for educational leaders at EHS to collect further quantitative and qualitative data with regards to the school climate perceptions and lived experiences of minoritized student groups and their families. Data collection through Panorama Education's (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey and Climate Survey for students and families, focus group interviews, and other means of attaining stakeholder feedback would provide educators with palpable evidence that will further aid them in their climate alignment and educational equity efforts.

Future research on trauma-informed SEL approaches requires increased data collection to develop further conclusions with regards to mitigating educator implicit bias within in the context of a PL experience. Furthermore, the research should consider Chandler's (2017) whiteness norms approach, and teacher preparation and graduate school contexts to identify institutional characteristics that may influence educators' ambitions, application, and affinity towards a trauma-informed SEL approach. For example, educational researchers require an understanding of the institutional conditions that both promote educators' participation in and interruptions of whiteness norms, as whiteness norms may have generated reduced participation and engagement in the scholarly practitioner's inquiry (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). Moreover, the scholarly practitioner surmises that it may be useful for educational leaders to understand the conditions that both encourage and discourage educator participation in whiteness norms to effectively facilitate the discomfort and conflict that may arise among educators, which may lead to meaningful change for minoritized student group outcomes (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). Of particular consideration is that trauma-informed SEL approaches hold substantial potential for the equitable, optimal social, emotional, and academic development of minoritized student groups (Pawlo et al., 2019).

Limitations

The scholarly practitioner identified various history threats. Regarding the EHS leadership team, the building principal who approved, supported, and aided the planning process for the PL experience was on leave, which threatened participant perceptions of efficacy and trust in the PL experience and thus participant performance (Martella et al., 2013). However, given that the participants seemed to perceive their colleague peer coaches as trustworthy due to their previous training in RULER and trauma-informed practices, the scholarly practitioner

sought to minimize this threat through peer coaches' active facilitation of the PL intervention. Additionally, the polarizing sociopolitical climate on the school site may have influenced participant responses when discussing matters related to race, ethnicity, and culture. In anticipation of community-based push back, the scholarly practitioner developed and presented a presentation to the district board of education to increase transparency around the trauma-informed SEL intervention and addressed any questions the members and public had. The presentation was publicly available on the district's YouTube channel on an on-going basis to increase transparency.

Limitations to generalizability to individuals outside EHS are noted. Potential for response bias due participation from only those who choose to voluntarily respond to the survey was also a limitation. The sampling was not probabilistic, however, to address this problem of practice utilizing an improvement science framework, the scholarly practitioner prioritized a non-probabilistic sampling to prioritize user-centered efforts and consult the educators that were most proximal to the PoP (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

As the intervention team comprised teachers and administrators, a likelihood existed for researcher bias which could influence the interpretation of the data (Martella et al., 2013). Additionally, the way that the scholarly practitioner presented the inquiry may have an impact on the replicability of the results across other contexts (Martella et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the inquiry may be of use for educators in public schools in suburban contexts addressing educational inequities for minoritized student groups with a culturally mismatched staff and student demographic. Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner disclosed to the participants the PL process and intent as part of the inquiry's consent procedures. While the disclosure posed the possible threat of the Hawthorne effect since the participants were aware of their role in the

study, the participant's consent was vital to the scholarly practitioner's IRB approval process for the study (Martella et al., 2013).

Finally, as the intervention occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the winter months, this posed the threat of extended staff absences due to quarantining protocols that may have an adverse impact on participant performance in the study. During the intervention experience, educational leaders alerted the scholarly practitioner of staff absences due to possible COVID-19 exposure. To counteract this threat, the intervention team developed both synchronous and asynchronous experiences, which they posted on a Google Site to accommodate absent staff.

Next Steps

Considering the salient findings and implications for practice, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team forwarded the following steps to the organization's educational leadership in an effort to further support the EHS' on-going aim. Specifically, the educational leadership seeks to implement a trauma-informed SEL approach to decrease suspension and expulsion rates from 4.2 to 0, and school performance indices in the areas of ELA, mathematics, science, fitness, and college readiness to the state target of 75 (EdSight, 2022a). The first step involves the educational leadership continued commitment to universally implement a trauma-informed SEL approach utilizing CASEL's (2021) Theory of Action. Specifically, due to the drop off in participant engagement and involvement, which included some of the peer coaches themselves, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team suggested that the educational leadership reorganize the building's trauma-informed SEL team (CASEL, 2022d). Ideally, the educational leaders will identify staff who are committed to promoting educational equity through a trauma-informed SEL approach both within the building and with central office representation. Their

effort would not only renew their commitment to a trauma-informed SEL approach, but additionally generate a vision that frames the trauma-informed SEL approach as a framework that informs every aspect of the organization's process and practices (Gorski et al., 2022). With a wide-reaching commitment, staff are less likely to perceive the trauma-informed SEL approach as another initiative or program, which may decrease feelings of overwhelmingness, burnout, and initiative fatigue (Gorski et al., 2022).

An additional step involves aligning PL practice to evidence-based standards, such as the context, process, and content standards from the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Standards for Staff Development (Wei and colleagues, 2009). While the EHS historically relied on the evidence-based "Train the Trainer Model," which requires identified school personnel be trained to then train their colleagues, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team identified possible barriers in its implementation with the trauma-informed PL intervention (Wojciak et al., 2022). As additionally substantiated by "Ellen," the scholarly practitioner and intervention team identified possible communication barriers in discussing and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture with a majority white staff in their recommendations to the EHS leadership team. Therefore, future trainers within PL experiences should include representation from students, families, consultants, and community-based members who can directly infuse their lived experiences with systemic racism and oppression (Wei et al., 2009). According to Yang and colleagues (2022) the "Train the Trainer Model" may aid in expanding DEI efforts in districts and schools with a wide representation of stakeholders. However, while Yang and colleagues' (2022) research involved a two-day intervention with less than 20 educators, the researchers did indicate the potential of the "Train the Trainer Model" when implemented systemically, involving multiple stakeholders, and ongoing reinforcement of DEI behaviors,

beliefs, and goals. Another potential barrier in utilization of the “Train the Trainer Model” in this study was the absence of leadership to ensure the evidence-based attributes emphasized by Yang and colleagues (2022). Due to the absence of the principal and the principal’s duties and responsibility being distributed across the remainder of the leadership team, there was minimal representation of administrators in the peer coach and participant groups and follow-through on the systemic implementation of the trauma-informed PL experience to further support DEI efforts at EHS.

In an effort to promote the active participation of EHS leadership, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team communicated to the EHS educational leaders that, given some staff members’ adverse reaction to the content and experiences as reported by “Gladys,” “Susan,” and “Ellen,” the leadership may benefit from increasing staff understanding of wider, historical, institutional picture of systemic racism and oppression in society and how it influences educational systems. Furthermore, when infusing and prioritizing the lived experiences of minoritized stakeholders into the PL experience, the educational leadership should ensure the systematic protection of minoritized stakeholders as they experience disproportionate opposition, and psychological and emotional labor for engaging in actions that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in education (Kohli, 2018). For example, the educational leadership may explore an incentivized reward system in the forms of stipends or decreased workloads (Gorski et al., 2022). Additionally, educational leaders may consider developing a communication plan to proactively address any resistance or opposition towards issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Gorski et al., 2022).

Lastly, to build upon the trauma-informed PL intervention latest module, the scholarly practitioner and the intervention team suggested that the educational leadership develop a plan to

continue curricular audits and revisions with evidence-based resources (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). In addition to continuing to develop staff understanding and skill set in utilizing The EJ-ROC (2022) Culturally Responsive Scorecards, the educational leadership may leverage its curriculum leadership specialists and current common learning time. For example, the building leadership may task the curriculum specialists to adopt the Learning for Justice (2021) social justice standards across curricula (Gorski et al., 2022). Additionally, the educational leadership may prioritize their own PL on how to effectively implement the Learning for Justice (2021) social justice standards within each content-area curriculum. Given the newly acquired learning, the educational leadership, which include the curriculum specialists, will possess increased perceptions of self-efficacy when collaborating with their content-area teams in the designated 80-minute common learning time, which occurs every four school days. Finally, the educational leadership may continue their exploration into transforming the school's library space into a curriculum hub where curriculum specialists' offices may be relocated to meet with teacher teams both in intra and interdisciplinary capacities. With a redesigned, transparent curricular setting, all educators across all content-areas will experience the organization's commitment to increasing educational equity with a trauma-informed SEL approach, which will positively impact the instructional core (City et al., 2009). A prioritization of culturally relevant curriculum will contribute to the organization's transparency towards equity efforts, and will lead to increased experiential changes for minoritized student groups disproportionately experiencing educational inequities (Gorski et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Recognizing that trauma-informed SEL intervention led to an EHS' improvement in its trauma-informed SEL implementation has positive implications for educators and minoritized

student groups. Pointedly, the scholarly practitioner identified a statistically significant increase in educators' self-reported favorability in their cultural awareness and action, which may lead to increased transformational, equitable behaviors towards minoritized student groups.

Additionally, the scholarly practitioner and intervention team reached surpassed their aim of increasing educator self-rated favorability in four out of the five outcome variables.

Notwithstanding the progress of the scholarly practitioner's study, systemic racism and oppression, particularly in the form of whiteness norms, require educators' consideration in their understanding and application of trauma-informed SEL approaches to optimally develop the social, emotional, and academic skills and competencies of minoritized student groups (Chandler & Wiborg, 2020). The scholarly practitioner's inquiry emphasized the importance of both centering and learning alongside the end-users (EHS educators) involved in the PoP, effectively addressing complex problems without resorting to a preponderance of ineffective solutions, and leading in an authentic, transformational manner, which are all essential components of an improvement science approach (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Additionally, as evidenced by the inquiry's outcomes, an improvement science approach can facilitate an organization's practice committed to utilizing SEL to generate long-lasting change in education for minoritized student groups and their families (Perry et al., 2020). Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner's inquiry may lead to future research on trauma-informed SEL PL interventions and their influences on educators and pre-educators' implicit and explicit biases. Next steps may involve the organization's adjustment of its systemic trauma-informed SEL implementation, further alignment of its PL practices and procedures with national and state standards, and ongoing curricular work to prioritize culturally responsive practices. These steps may assist in EHS' aim to positively impact the academic and disciplinary outcomes of minoritized student groups.

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Appendix A: End-user Consultation Questions/Researcher Goals

Questions:

- Do you believe Esquivel High School staff possesses lagging skills in discussing and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture?
- What evidence do you have of this issue?
- What is your experience with discussing and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture?
- What is the root cause for the lagging skills in discussing and confronting issues of race, ethnicity, and culture?

Goals: Gauge whether my perceptions coincide with end-user perceptions, perspective-taking, responding to guiding questions, determine validity/urgency of the problem

**Appendix B: Panorama Education (2021) Professional Learning About SEL- Question
Items**

- **In terms of social-emotional learning (SEL) in particular, how supportive has the school been of your growth as a teacher?**
 - ☐ Extremely supportive
 - ☐ Quite supportive
 - ☐ Somewhat supportive
 - ☐ Slightly supportive
 - ☐ Not at all supportive
- **At your school, how valuable are the social emotional learning (SEL) professional development opportunities?**
 - ☐ Extremely valuable
 - ☐ Quite valuable
 - ☐ Somewhat valuable
 - ☐ Slightly valuable
 - ☐ Not at all valuable
- **When it comes to social-emotional learning (SEL), how helpful are your colleagues' ideas for improving your teaching?**
 - ☐ Extremely helpful
 - ☐ Quite helpful
 - ☐ Somewhat helpful
 - ☐ Slightly helpful
 - ☐ Not at all helpful
- **How often do your social-emotional learning (SEL) professional development opportunities help you explore new ideas?**
 - ☐ Almost all the time
 - ☐ Frequently
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Once in a while
 - ☐ Almost never
- **How relevant have your social-emotional learning (SEL) professional development opportunities been to the content that you teach?**
 - ☐ Extremely relevant
 - ☐ Quite relevant
 - ☐ Somewhat relevant
 - ☐ Slightly relevant
 - ☐ Not at all relevant
- **Thinking of social-emotional learning (SEL) in particular, how much input do you have into individualizing your own professional development opportunities?**
 - ☐ A tremendous amount of input
 - ☐ Quite a bit of input
 - ☐ Some input

☐ A little bit of input

☐ Almost no input

- **Overall, how much do you learn about supporting your students' social-emotional learning (SEL) from the leaders at your school?**

☐ Learn a tremendous amount

☐ Learn quite a bit

☐ Learn some

☐ Learn a little bit

☐ Learn almost nothing

Open-ended question items:

- **What is your definition of social-emotional learning (SEL)?**
- **What professional development topics should your school focus on to better support students' social emotional growth?**

Appendix C: Data Collection- Timelines and Procedures [Proposed and Actual]

Dates of Project	Procedures		
	Proposed Activity	Actual Activity	Data Collected
December 1 st , 2021	Coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on module 1 Make adjustments Clarify the purpose of module Confirm coaching expectations. 	Completed coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on module 1 Clarified the purpose of module Confirmed coaching expectations. 	Field notes Research Log Zoom Recording
December 3 rd , 2021	Deliver Module 1: Cultural Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer pre-test Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey Staff sign up for affinity groups Teams of peer coaches facilitate module 1 to affinity groups 	Delivered Module 1: Cultural Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administered pre-test Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey Staff signed up for affinity groups Teams of peer coaches facilitated module 1 to affinity groups 	Field notes Research Log Consent forms Pre-survey (Survey Monkey) web-based
December 8 th , 2021	Conclude Module 1: Cultural Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitate module 1 to affinity groups Participants complete web-based survey exit slip 	Concluded Module 1: Cultural Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitated module 1 to affinity groups Participants completed web-based survey exit slip 	Field notes Research Log Exit slip (Google Forms) web-based
December 13 th , 2021	Coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on post module 1 Make adjustments for module 2 Clarify the purpose of module 2 	Completed coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained feedback on post module 1 Made adjustments for module 2 	Field notes Research Log Zoom Recording

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm coaching expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified the purpose of module 2 Confirmed coaching expectations. 	
January 4 th , 2022	Coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on pre module 2 Make adjustments for module 2 Clarify the purpose of module Confirm coaching expectations. 	Completed coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained feedback on pre module 2 Made adjustments for module 2 Clarified the purpose of module Confirmed coaching expectations. 	Field notes Research Log Zoom Recording
Week of January 11th, 2022	Coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on pre module 3 Make adjustments for module 3 Clarify the purpose of module Confirm coaching expectations. 	Coordination meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained feedback on pre module 3 (changed topic) Made adjustments for module 3 Clarified the purpose of module Confirmed coaching expectations. 	Field notes Research Log Zoom Recording
January 12, 2022	Deliver Module 2: Cultural Humility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitate module 2 to affinity groups 	Delivered Module 2: Cultural Humility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitate module 2 to affinity groups Administered exit slip for Module 2 	Field notes Research Log
January 14 th , 2022	Deliver Module 2 & 3: Cultural Humility and Microaggressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer exit slip for Module 2 	Delivered Module 3: Cultural Humility and Culturally Responsive and Sustainable Pedagogy (Topic shift)	Field notes Research Log Exit slip (Google

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitate module 3 to affinity groups Administer exit slip for Module 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams of peer coaches facilitated module 3 to affinity groups Participants met in content area collaborative learning groups to perform task and ended by reporting back to affinity groups Administered post-test Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey 	Forms) web-based
Week of January 17 th , 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups with scholarly practitioner (peer coach separate from participants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed focus group with 3 peer coaches 	Zoom recording Transcription
February 9 th , 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer post-test Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed administration of post-test Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey 	Consent forms Post-survey (Survey Monkey) web-based
Week of February 14 th , 2022	<p>Coordination meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on next steps Begin action planning Review results 	<p>Coordination meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained feedback on next steps Began action planning Reviewed results Completed “next steps” document and forwarded it to building leadership 	Field notes Research Log Zoom Recording

Appendix D: Study Invitation E-mail for Peer Coaches

Good morning, peer coaches:

I am Kemen Holley, a scholarly practitioner/student researcher and I am inviting you to participate in a pilot study that I am conducting to understand to what extent trauma-informed Social Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions designed for the Esquivel High School setting aid in the reduction of educator implicit biases and what impact this has on your perceptions of belongingness, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address issues of diversity, and professional learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). I am a student pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with a focus on Social-Emotional and Academic Learning through Sacred Heart University. Additionally, I have received both RULER training, and training on trauma-informed practices for the school setting. You are receiving this invitation because I have had professional experience working with you and based upon a review of extant data at the high school level, you may be interested in a participating in a study designed to address educator implicit biases. Additionally, as part of this school year's professional learning experience at EHS, you will be a peer coach.

As a peer coach, you will be attending four coordination meetings (first one starting this Wednesday, synchronously or asynchronously if you cannot attend where you will watch the recording) to design the trauma-informed SEL professional learning experience for EHS staff. These modules have been developed based upon research-based interventions and are rooted in best practice with the aid of the consultant group, Dr. Moorehead and Dr. Smalls. Each module will provide content, explicit instruction in skills, and practice in trauma-informed SEL that have been specifically designed for the school setting. During the coordination meetings, you will be reviewing participant data of the professional learning series, and you will be preparing to facilitate the three-module experience (1st cultural competence, 2nd cultural humility, 3rd microaggressions) with another peer coach to educator colleagues. As a scholarly practitioner, I have received permission from central office administration to examine the impact of the professional learning intervention on EHS staff.

What you will be asked to do if you participate:

If you choose to participate in this study, following each module, you will be asked to reflect on your understanding via a web-based survey link provided at the conclusion of each training module. This survey is designed to further my understanding of peer coaching effectiveness. The first web-based survey will be sent to you after our December 8th meeting when we conclude with Module 1. That survey will have an informed consent message.

To understand the impact of trauma-informed SEL on your perceptions of belongingness, readiness to address issues of diversity, quality and quantity of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) professional learning experiences, and EHS' racial and cultural climate, you will be asked to complete a pre- and post-intervention survey battery immediately before and following the intervention phase of the study. You will be provided with time to complete the first survey on

Friday, December 3rd, and the last survey will be administered on Wednesday, February 9th. All data collected from the survey will be deidentified and will not include any direct or indirect identifying information about you as a participant. All data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Based upon your participation and response to intervention, you may be asked to participate in a structured focus group at the end of the intervention phase. This will help me understand what aspects of the coaching and intervention were most effective, what could be adjusted, and if there were any unexpected outcomes. The focus group will be held via Zoom. The focus group will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete and will be in a small group format (10-15 participants). With your permission and informed consent, the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy and will include open-ended questions about your experiences as a study participant. Focus groups will be held after our 3rd module on microaggressions between January 18th and February 9th at a time that is convenient for you.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you prefer not to participate, that will have no effect on my relationship with you. As your building administrator and colleague, please understand that if you decline to participate that this will not impact your teaching and/or administrator position in any way. I understand that you are busy and this may not be a convenient time for you to participate in this study. You may withdraw from any phase of the study at any time. You may choose to skip any questions on the survey or during the focus group if you are selected and give consent to participate in that phase of the study. There would be no negative feelings if you choose to do so.

Eligibility Criteria

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are currently employed as a high school educator at Esquivel Public Schools.

Risk and Benefits

There are no risks to participating in this study.

What are the potential risks to me participating? Participation in this study is not expected to present any risk greater than slight discomfort if you feel discouraged when reflecting on your workplace stress and/or well-being. Furthermore, this study is strictly confidential and the findings reported only in aggregate form, there is no information that could be used to identify you.

What are the potential benefits to me participating? Each participant will respond differently to trauma-informed SEL, thus there is no guaranteed benefit to this study. However, I hope that this study may lead to better understanding and use of workplace trauma-informed SEL strategies that help support our school racial and cultural climate.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent of the law. The digital file with the recording of the focus group will be labeled only with your individual code and deleted after transcription. No names or other information that you could identify you or anyone else will be included in the transcribed responses from the focus group. The list of study participants' names and study code numbers will be kept on a password-protected computer in the researcher's locked office. When the study is completed, the list will be deleted. Your name will not be used in any report.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact me, Kemen Holley at zabalak@mail.sacredheart.edu or 2039803964.

If you are Interested in Participating

Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating so that I can invite you to a presentation that will include a review of the trauma-informed SEL content for each module, the research behind trauma-informed SEL, the calendar scope and sequence of this study, and to review all forms including consent to participate.

Sincerely,
Kemen Holley

Appendix E: Study Invitation E-mail: EHS Staff (non-coaches)

Good morning, colleagues:

I am Kemen Holley, a scholarly practitioner/student researcher and I am inviting you to participate in a pilot study that I am conducting to understand to what extent trauma-informed Social Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions designed for the Esquivel High School setting aid in the reduction of educator implicit biases and what impact this has on your perceptions of belongingness, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address issues of diversity, and professional learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). I am a student pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with a focus on Social-Emotional and Academic Learning through Sacred Heart University. Additionally, I have received both RULER training, and training on trauma-informed practices for the school setting. You are receiving this invitation because I have had professional experience working with you and based upon a review of extant data at the high school level, you may be interested in a participating in a study designed to address educator implicit biases. Additionally, as part of this school year's professional learning experience at EHS, you will be engaged in a 4-day professional learning experience commencing on Friday, December 3rd.

Specifically, you will be attending four workshops to engage in a trauma-informed SEL professional learning experience. We will be engaged in conversations regarding race, ethnicity, and culture to strengthen our adult SEL experience. A team of your peers along with Dr. Tanya Moorehead, Ph.D. and Dr. Samantha Smalls, Psy.D. will collaborate to support our staff as we reflect on our own social and emotional competencies, identities, and biases. The professional learning experience will also draw upon learning and exposure from our work with RULER online and the School Climate Consultants. As part of a trauma-informed SEL approach, staff will be allowed to self-select groups, and participate in low-risk, trusting environments to engage with practices that affirm, explore, and cultivate our own and our students' cultures, values and identities.

Each workshop will contain a module that has been developed based upon research-based interventions and are rooted in best practice with the aid of the consultant group, Dr. Moorehead and Dr. Smalls. Each module will provide content, explicit instruction in skills, and practice in trauma-informed SEL that have been specifically designed for the school setting to further guide us in our interactions with students, families and community members. The dates for the modular experience are as follows: Friday, December 3rd, Wednesday, December 8th, January 12th, and January 14th.

What you will be asked to do if you participate:

Following each module, you will be asked to reflect on your understanding via a web-based survey link provided at the conclusion of each training module. This survey is designed to further my understanding of the intervention module's effectiveness.

In order to understand the impact of trauma-informed SEL on your perceptions of belongingness, readiness to address issues of diversity, quality and quantity of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) professional learning experiences, and EHS' racial and cultural climate, you will be asked to complete a pre- and post-intervention survey battery immediately before and following the intervention phase of the study. All data collected from the survey will be deidentified and will not include any direct or indirect identifying information about you as a participant. All data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Based upon your participation and response to intervention, you may be asked to participate in a structured focus group at the end of the intervention phase in late January. This will help me understand what aspects of the intervention were most effective, what could be adjusted, and if there were any unexpected outcomes. The focus group will be held via Zoom. The focus group will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete and will be in a small group format (10-15 participants). With your permission, the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy and will include open-ended questions about your experiences as a study participant. I will arrange settings to audio only recording if all participants indicated agreement.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you prefer not to participate, that will have no effect on my relationship with you. As your building administrator and colleague, please understand that if you decline to participate that this will not impact your teaching position in any way. I understand that you are busy and this may not be a convenient time for you to participate in this study. You may withdraw from any phase of the study at any time. You may choose to skip any questions on the survey or during the focus group if you are selected and give consent to participate in that phase of the study. There would be no negative feelings if you choose to do so.

Eligibility Criteria

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are currently employed as a high school educator at Esquivel Public Schools.

Risk and Benefits

There are no risks to participating in this study.

What are the potential risks to me participating? Participation in this study is not expected to present any risk greater than slight discomfort if you feel discouraged when reflecting on your workplace stress and/or well-being. Furthermore, this study is strictly confidential and the findings reported only in aggregate form, there is no information that could be used to identify you.

What are the potential benefits to me participating? Each participant will respond differently to trauma-informed SEL, thus there is no guaranteed benefit to this study. However, I hope that

this study may lead to better understanding and use of workplace trauma-informed SEL strategies that help support our school racial and cultural climate.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be protected to the fullest extent of the law. The digital file with the recording of the focus group will be labeled only with your individual code and deleted after transcription. No names or other information that you could identify you or anyone else will be included in the transcribed responses from the focus group. The list of study participants' names and study code numbers will be kept on a password-protected computer in the researcher's locked office. When the study is completed, the list will be deleted. Your name will not be used in any report.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact me, Kemen Holley at zabalak@mail.sacredheart.edu or 2039803964.

If you are Interested in Participating

Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating so that I can invite you to a presentation that will include a review of the trauma-informed SEL content for each module, the research behind trauma-informed SEL, the calendar scope and sequence of this study, and to review all forms including consent to participate.

Sincerely,
Kemen Holley

Appendix F: Informed Consent

Date:

Please read the below form carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

You are invited to participate in a research study that I am conducting to understand to what extent trauma-informed Social Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions designed for the Esquivel High School setting aid in the reduction of educator implicit biases and what impact this has on your perceptions of belongingness, cultural awareness and action, readiness to address issues of diversity, and professional learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). I am a student pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership with a focus on Social-Emotional and Academic Learning through Sacred Heart University. Additionally, I have received both RULER training, and training on trauma-informed practices for the school setting. You are receiving this invitation because I have had professional experience working with you and based upon a review of extant data at the high school level, you may be interested in a participating in a study designed to address educator implicit biases.

Kemen Holley is your Building Administrator and colleague, and if you decline to participate, or withdraw from the study at any time, this will have no impact on your educator position. This pilot study has been designed to inform next-steps as the district seeks to explore interventions targeted towards educators' SEL competencies with DEI considerations. Each pre and post survey questionnaire that you complete will take approximately 30 minutes, the initial presentation of the professional learning experience will take approximately an hour, and each module experience will take one to two hours to complete.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. All data will be deidentified, stored in a password protected computer, and it will not be possible to link any of your survey responses to you. If you are selected to participate in the focus group, all data will be deidentified and your responses will not be linked to you. A separate consent form for the focus group will be provided once participants are identified, following the practice phase of the study. The IP address of your computer will not be included in the data and it will not be possible to link any answers to you.

There are no risks to participating in this study. You may experience minor distress if the questions raise issues related to the stressful aspects of your work. Most likely, the questions are about issues that you are very familiar with and have discussed with friends and colleagues.

If you do decide to participate you may elect to stop participating at any phase of the study and you may skip any of the questions on the survey battery if you do not want to answer. Your decision will have no impact on your educator position or on our relationship as colleagues.

.

Please refer to the study invitation email for the full details of the study.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact me, Kemen Holley at zabalak@mail.sacredheart.edu or 203-980-3964. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can contact the Sacred Heart University Institutional Review Board at alpfl@sacredheart.edu or 203-396-8241.

Please print, sign, scan, and email return this consent form to me if you agree to participate in this study.

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix G: Informed Consent for Audio-Recording

Date:

You are receiving this additional consent form as you have been identified as a potential participant for the final phase of the Trauma-informed SEL study, the structured focus group. This will help me understand what aspects of the training and intervention were most effective, what could be adjusted, and if there were any unexpected outcomes. These focus groups will be held via Zoom.

The focus group will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will be in a small group format (5-10 participants). With your permission, as documented on this consent form, the focus group will be audio recorded only to ensure accuracy and will include open-ended questions about your experiences as a study participant. All responses will be deidentified, stored in a password protected computer, and it will not be possible to link any of your survey responses to you. If you are selected to participate in the focus group, all data will be deidentified and your responses will not be linked to you. The recording will be destroyed after the responses are transcribed.

If you have any questions about this phase of the research study, you may contact me, Kemen Holley at zabalak@mail.sacredheart.edu or 203-980-3964. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can contact the Sacred Heart University Institutional Review Board at alpfl@sacredheart.edu or 203-396-8241.

Please print, sign, scan, and email return this consent form to me if you agree to participate in this phase of the study.

Consent

I have read the description of the study as outlined in the invitation email and consent form and I voluntarily consent to participate.

Signature of participant

Date

Audio-recording Consent:

I have read the procedure regarding audio-recording and storage described above. I consent to allow my focus group participation to be audio-recorded.

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix H: Interview Protocol for Peer Coach Focus Group

1. Reflecting back on the coordination meeting phase of this study:
 - a) How effective was the identified content for the Trauma-Informed SEL training modules?
 - b) What components of the content were most effective and why?
 - c) What components of the content were least effective and why?
 - d) Was anything about the coordination meetings that was unexpected?
2. Reflecting back on the intervention phase of this study:
 - a) To what extent did you participate in facilitating each module as intended?
 - b) What components of the coaching experience were most effective and why?
 - c) What components of the coaching experience were least effective and why?
 - e) What Trauma-informed SEL strategies did you use the most?
 - f) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your sense of belongingness at school?
 - g) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your perception of how well EHS supports staff in learning about, discussing, and confronting issues of race, diversity, and culture?
 - h) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your perception of how well EHS supports students in learning about, discussing, and confronting issues of race, diversity, and culture?
 - i) What was the impact of Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your ability to address issues of diversity in your classroom?

- j) What did you think about the quantity and quality of this diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-focused professional learning series?
 - k) Were there any components of participating in each module that surprised you?
 - l) Were there any components of participating in each module that were unexpected?
3. If we were to expand this program to other schools in the district:
- a) What components of the modules would you consider essential? (content, skills, practice opportunity)
 - b) What components of the professional learning community experience would you consider essential? (affinity groups, both in-person and virtual, timing allotted to be with your group, peer coaches, consultants)?
 - c) What suggestions would you offer for future DEI professional learning series?
 - d) What suggestions would you offer for future interventions at the classroom level?

Appendix I: Interview Protocol for Intervention Participant Focus Group

1. Reflecting back on the intervention phase of this study:
 - a) To what extent did you participate in facilitating each module as intended?
 - b) What components of the coaching experience were most effective and why?
 - c) What components of the coaching experience were least effective and why?
 - d) What Trauma-informed SEL strategies did you use the most?
 - e) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your sense of belongingness at school?
 - f) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your perception of how well EHS supports staff in learning about, discussing, and confronting issues of race, diversity, and culture?
 - g) What was the impact of the Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your perception of how well EHS supports students in learning about, discussing, and confronting issues of race, diversity, and culture?
 - h) What was the impact of Trauma-informed SEL strategies on your ability to address issues of diversity in your classroom?
 - i) What did you think about the quantity and quality of this diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-focused professional learning series?
 - j) Were there any components of participating in each module that surprised you?
 - k) Were there any components of participating in each module that were unexpected?
2. If we were to expand this program to other schools in the district:

- a) What components of the modules would you consider essential? (content, skills, practice opportunity)
- b) What components of the professional learning community experience would you consider essential? (affinity groups, both in-person and virtual, timing allotted to be with your group, peer coaches, consultants)?
- c) What suggestions would you offer for future DEI professional learning series?
- d) What suggestions would you offer for future interventions at the classroom level?

Appendix J: Exit Slip Survey for Modules

Thank you for your participation in today's module! To help support future training please take a moment to respond to each of the questions below. Thank you!

1. The content presented in today's module deepened my understanding of (this portion is subject to change according to module theme i.e., cultural competence, cultural humility, microaggressions, etc.)

1	2	3
Not at all	Somewhat	Very much so

2. As a result of my participation today, I feel confident about my ability to use these new skills as part of my daily teaching practice with colleagues and students:

1	2	3
Not at all	Somewhat	Very much so

3. I am likely to incorporate today's Trauma-informed SEL strategies into my teaching practice with colleagues and students:

1	2	3
I will not use this strategy	I likely will use this new strategy	I am very likely to use this new strategy

4. To help us understand what components of the training were helpful please rate the following:

- a) Content presented in video by consultants:

1	2	3
This did not support my learning	This somewhat supported my learning	This was very helpful for my learning

- b) Facilitated discussion by peer coaches:

1	2	3
This did not support my learning	This somewhat supported my learning	This was very helpful for my learning

- c) Independent skill practice opportunity (i.e., journaling, reflecting, suggestions for at-home activities):

1	2	3
This did not support my learning	This somewhat supported my learning	This was very helpful for my learning

5. I know where to find the resources from today so that I can access them as needed:

1	2	3
I am not aware of where these resources are	Somewhat aware	I know how to access the resources from our training

Please feel free to answer the last two open-ended questions and add any additional comments:

6. After today's training I am most excited about:

7. Please share any potential barriers you foresee with using these strategies/learning:

Appendix K: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey- Background Questions

Questions:

- For how many years have you taught?
- For how many years have you taught at your current school?
- For how many years have you worked at this school?
- If a friend or colleague were looking for a [teaching] job, to what extent, if at all, would you recommend this school?
- What is your gender?
- What is your race or ethnicity?
- Please indicate the primary language spoken in your childhood home.
- In which decade were you born?
- Please select the highest level of education completed by your mother. If you are not sure, please take your best guess.
- Please select the highest level of education completed by your father. If you are not sure, please take your best guess.

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

**Appendix L: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey- Belonging-
Teacher and Staff**

• How well do your colleagues at school understand you as a person?

- ☐ Do not understand at all
- ☐ Understand a little
- ☐ Understand somewhat
- ☐ Understand quite a bit
- ☐ Completely understand

• How connected do you feel to other adults at your school?

- ☐ Not at all connected
- ☐ Slightly connected
- ☐ Somewhat connected
- ☐ Quite connected
- ☐ Extremely connected

• How much respect do colleagues in your school show you?

- ☐ No respect at all
- ☐ A little bit of respect
- ☐ Some respect
- ☐ Quite a bit of respect
- ☐ A tremendous amount of respect

• How much do you matter to others at your school?

- ☐ Do not matter at all
- ☐ Matter a little
- ☐ Matter some
- ☐ Matter quite a bit
- ☐ Matter a tremendous amount

• Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?

- ☐ Do not belong at all
- ☐ Belong a little bit
- ☐ Belong somewhat
- ☐ Belong quite a bit
- ☐ Completely belong

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

**Appendix M: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey-Cultural
Awareness and Action-Adult Focus**

Questions:

• How often do school leaders encourage you to teach about people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures?

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• How often do you think about what colleagues of different races, ethnicities, or cultures experience?

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• How confident are you that adults at EHS can have honest conversations with each other about race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural topics?

- ☐ Not at all confident
- ☐ Slightly confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Quite confident
- ☐ Extremely confident

• At EHS, how often are you encouraged to think more deeply about race, ethnicity, and/or culture-related topics?

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• How comfortable are you discussing race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural-related topics with your colleagues?

- ☐ Not at all comfortable
- ☐ Slightly comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Quite comfortable
- ☐ Extremely comfortable

• How often do adults at EHS have important conversations about race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural topics even when they might be uncomfortable?

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes

☐ Frequently

☐ Almost Always

• **When there are major news events related to race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural how often do adults at EHS talk about them with each other?**

☐ Almost Never

☐ Once in a while

☐ Sometimes

☐ Frequently

☐ Almost Always

• **How well does EHS help staff speak out against racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, or any other type of discrimination?**

☐ Not at all well

☐ Slightly well

☐ Somewhat well

☐ Quite well

☐ Extremely well

Free-Response Question

How can school leaders help you better learn about, discuss, and confront issues of race, ethnicity, and culture?

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

Appendix N: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey-Cultural

Awareness and Action-Student Focus

Questions:

• **How often are students given opportunities to learn about people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures?**

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• **How often do you think about what students of different races, ethnicities, or cultures experience?**

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• **How confident are you that adults at EHS can have honest conversations with students about race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural topics?**

- ☐ Not at all confident
- ☐ Slightly confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Quite confident
- ☐ Extremely confident

• **At EHS, how often are students encouraged to think more deeply about race, ethnicity, and/or culture-related topics?**

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• **How comfortable are you discussing race, ethnicity, and/or other culture-related topics with your students?**

- ☐ Not at all comfortable
- ☐ Slightly comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Quite comfortable
- ☐ Extremely comfortable

• **How often do students at EHS have important conversations about race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural topics even when they might be uncomfortable?**

- ☐ Almost Never

- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• **When there are major news events related to race, ethnicity, and/or other cultural topics, how often do adults at EHS talk about them with students?**

- ☐ Almost Never
- ☐ Once in a while
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost Always

• **How well does EHS help students speak out against racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, or any other type of discrimination??**

- ☐ Not at all well
- ☐ Slightly well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Quite well
- ☐ Extremely well

Free-Response Question

What is the most important thing we can do to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures?

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

Appendix O: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey- Educating All

Students

- **How easy do you find interacting with students at your school who are from a different cultural background than your own?**
 - ☐ Not at all easy
 - ☐ Slightly easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Quite easy
 - ☐ Extremely easy
- **How comfortable would you be incorporating new material about people from different backgrounds into your curriculum?**
 - ☐ Not at all comfortable
 - ☐ Slightly comfortable
 - ☐ Somewhat comfortable
 - ☐ Quite comfortable
 - ☐ Extremely comfortable
- **How knowledgeable are you regarding where to find resources for working with students who have unique learning needs?**
 - ☐ Not knowledgeable at all
 - ☐ Slightly knowledgeable
 - ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
 - ☐ Quite knowledgeable
 - ☐ Extremely knowledgeable
- **If students from different backgrounds struggled to get along in your class, how comfortable would you be intervening?**
 - ☐ Not at all comfortable
 - ☐ Slightly comfortable
 - ☐ Somewhat comfortable
 - ☐ Quite comfortable
 - ☐ Extremely comfortable
- **How easy would it be for you to teach a class with groups of students from very different religions from each other?**
 - ☐ Not at all easy
 - ☐ Slightly easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Quite easy
 - ☐ Extremely easy
- **In response to events that might be occurring in the world, how comfortable would you be having conversations about race with your students?**
 - ☐ Not at all comfortable
 - ☐ Slightly comfortable

- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Quite comfortable
- ☐ Extremely comfortable

• **How easily do you think you could make a particularly overweight student feel like a part of class?**

- ☐ Not at all easily
- ☐ Slightly easily
- ☐ Somewhat easily
- ☐ Quite easily
- ☐ Extremely easily

• **How comfortable would you be having a student who could not communicate well with anyone in class because his/her home language was unique?**

- ☐ Not at all comfortable
- ☐ Slightly comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ Quite comfortable
- ☐ Extremely comfortable

• **When a sensitive issue of diversity arises in class, how easily can you think of strategies to address the situation??**

- ☐ Not at all easily
- ☐ Slightly easily
- ☐ Somewhat easily
- ☐ Quite easily
- ☐ Extremely easily

Free-Response Question What is the most important thing your school can do to support students of different races, ethnicities, and cultures?

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

Appendix P: Pre and Post Panorama (n.d.) Equity and Inclusion Survey- Professional

Learning About Equity

- **At your school, how valuable are the equity-focused professional development opportunities?**
 - ☐ Not at all valuable
 - ☐ Slightly valuable
 - ☐ Somewhat valuable
 - ☐ Quite valuable
 - ☐ Extremely valuable
- **When it comes to promoting culturally responsive practices, how helpful are your colleagues' ideas for improving your practice?**
 - ☐ Not at all helpful
 - ☐ Slightly helpful
 - ☐ Somewhat helpful
 - ☐ Quite helpful
 - ☐ Extremely helpful
- **How often do professional development opportunities help you explore new ways to promote equity in your practice?**
 - ☐ Almost Never
 - ☐ Once in a while
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Frequently
 - ☐ Almost Always
- **Overall, how effective has your school administration been in helping you advance student equity?**
 - ☐ Not at all effective
 - ☐ Slightly effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Quite effective
 - ☐ Extremely effective

From “Equity and Inclusion Survey” by Panorama, n.d.

(<https://go.panoramaed.com/hubfs/Panorama%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20User%20Guide.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2cfdd1d0-1eb4-4829-94b3-1da7a8bcd47%7C6b526b35-b3dc-4c4b-86e8-db3f55b3691b>). Copyright by Panorama Education.

Appendix Q: Institutional Review Board Approval Email Message

IRB#210930A

1 mensaje

Taber, Prof. Christopher B. <taberc@sacredheart.edu>
Para: "Marmo-Roman, Prof. Suzanne" <marmo-romans@sacredheart.edu>, "Holley, Kemen" <zabalak@mail.sacredheart.edu>
Cc: "Yolen, Nina" <yolenn@sacredheart.edu>, "Alp, Feride F. Funda" <alpfi@sacredheart.edu>

20 de octubre de 2021, 9:15

Thank you for your submission to the IRB requesting expedited review. Based on the application submitted and your revisions, the IRB is pleased to approve your application and we wish you great success in your research.

Sincerely,

Christopher Taber

Chair, IRB

Christopher B. Taber, PhD, CSCS, USAW2, EP-C, PES

Director, Exercise and Sport Science M.S. Program

Assistant Professor

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Appendix R: Mathew's (2015) Contextualized Theory of Health Inequality

