

SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLS FOR BLACK BOYS IN AMERICA:

A CASE STUDY

by

JORRIOD LA' VONE MOORE

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Supervising Committee:

Dr. Catherine Robert, Chair

Dr. Maria Trache

Dr. Steven Bourgeois

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late mother, Veronica Moore.

You always believed in my ability to reach new heights.

Your faith and wisdom served as cornerstones in my life.

You are gone, but your belief in me has made this journey possible.

Acknowledgments

To Jesus Christ, my Lord, and Savior: Your love for me is unfathomable. You are my Jehovah Jireh (Provider), Jehovah Nissi (Victory), and Jehovah Shalom (Peace). Thank you for providing every breath I take, every thought I think, and every word I write, and for seeing me through this arduous, educational journey. You are and will always be my source of strength.

To my wife and friend, Keneshia Moore: You are my "rib" and God-sent "helpmate." I appreciate your support during this pivotal period in my life. Our time together was interrupted at times while I worked tirelessly to achieve such an ambitious goal. But please know that your sacrifice was not in vain, and I intend to spend the rest of my life making up for the time I spent away from you.

To my children, Sean (son) and La’Nae (daughter): You are my heart and the reason I do what I do. I appreciate your willingness to give up some of your time while daddy took care of his "schoolwork." I hope that you will come to appreciate the value of education in your life by following the path I have laid out before you.

To my chair, Dr. Catherine Robert: Your heartwarming smile lifted me out of some of the darkest moments in this journey. You continuously pushed me to become a better writer and a profound thinker. You reminded me that I was more than capable and pushed me to keep going during times I felt like giving up. You were my teacher, and I consider myself fortunate to now call you a colleague and friend.

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Abstract

SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLS FOR BLACK BOYS IN AMERICA: A CASE STUDY

Jorriod La'Vone Moore

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2021

Supervising Professor: Dr. Catherine Robert

The underperformance of Black boys attending public schools in the United States of America is a concern among parents and communities who believe that coeducational schools (CE) are failing to meet the learning needs of Black boys. Despite coeducational schools' best efforts to employ and support teachers' professional growth, the achievement gap continues to widen for Black boys. As a result, they are more likely to drop out of school and are less likely to go to college than their female peers, limiting their chances of escaping poverty.

This case-study examines teachers' and principals' perceptions of an all-boys, single-sex schools and their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys on their campus. Fergus and Noguera's two theories for single-sex schools for boys of color (Black and Latino boys) frame this analysis: a) single-sex schools understand and know the social and emotional needs of Black and Latino boys; and b) single-sex schools understand how Black and Latino boys' academic needs have emerged and focus on strategies to address those needs. The research was conducted at an all-boys middle to high school in North Texas that primarily served Black and Latino boys.

The findings reveal that teachers and principals have positive attitudes toward the all-boys, single-sex school and believe they are successful at meeting the social-emotional and academic needs of Black boys on their campus. Teachers and principals consider the single-sex school to be a safe learning environment for Black boys, citing their ability to cultivate a shared mindset among the staff, foster a culture of competition and brotherhood among the boys, and establish a boy-centered instructional environment as critical aspects of their overall success. This case study concludes with a list of best practices, recommendations for future research, and policy implications for an all-boys, single-sex school.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The underperformance of Black boys attending public school in the United States of America is a concern among parents and communities who believe that *coeducational schools* (CE) are failing to meet the learning needs of Black boys (Terry, Flenbaugh, Blackmon, & Howard, 2014; Toldson, 2008). Despite coeducational schools' best efforts to employ and support the professional growth of teachers, the gap in achievement continues to widen for Black boys (Dwarte, 2014). In 2015, the Schott Foundation released a study entitled *Black Lives Matter: The 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males*. Over five years, researchers collected and analyzed the academic performance data of Black boys attending public schools in all 50 U.S. States and discovered that Black boys were ranked last on almost every academic achievement metric, were overrepresented in special education programs, were underrepresented in talented and gifted programs, and dropped out of school at a higher rate than their male and female peers. The Schott Foundation concluded that "a deliberate, intense focus is needed to disrupt and redirect the current educational trajectory of Black males" (p. 1).

An Alarming Dropout Rate

Engle and Black (2008) asserted that "poverty limits the chances of educational attainment, and at the same time educational attainment is one of the prime mechanisms for escaping poverty" (p. 243). Yet, Black boys living in impoverished communities often attend underperforming coeducational schools, are more likely to drop out of school, and are less likely to go to college than their female peers, limiting their chances of escaping poverty (Prager, 2011; Schott Foundation, 2015). In 2018, Black boys dropped out of school at an alarming rate of 8.2% compared to 4.9% of Black girls, 4.9% of White boys, and 3.6% of White girls (McFarland et al.,

2019). Black boys are, therefore, considered to be one of the most *at-risk* student groups attending public schools to date (Fergus, 2020; Milner, 2012).

The term "at-risk" describes students who are more likely to drop out of school because they are either homeless, have not passed a test or have not passed a course, have failed at least one grade level, are pregnant or parenting, attend alternative schools, have been expelled or on probation (TEA, 2010). The disproportionate dropout rates are concerning because as Black boys become men, they are more likely to face economic hardships such as earning lower wages, becoming unemployed, or even worse, becoming homeless (Campbell, 2015; Chetty, Hendron, Jones, & Porter, 2018, Hoover, Compton, & Giedeman, 2015). Given these well-studied circumstances, Black men are at a higher risk of being less healthy, dying much younger, and becoming incarcerated (Gadson, 2006; Mizel, Miles, Pedersen, Tucker, Ewing, & D'amico, 2016).

School to Prison Pipeline

In 2010, The PEW Charitable Trust published a study entitled, *Collateral Costs: The Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility* and asserted, "Black men without a high school diploma are more likely to be found in a cell than in the workplace" (p. 8) and found that one out of every three incarcerated Black men between ages 20 and 34 did not have a high school diploma. The disproportionate incarceration rates among Black men are alarming and are traced back to their introduction to the juvenile correctional system as young boys in school (Sawyer, 2019). Even though Black boys make up only 7% of the nation's youth population, Black boys account for 45% of juvenile arrests and 43% of the youth in juvenile detention centers (Sawyer, 2019). Racial disparities in juvenile incarceration among the youth population are attributed to an inconspicuous process known as the *school-to-prison pipeline*, whereby school officials enforce

zero-tolerance policies by disproportionately referring low-income Black boys to the juvenile justice system for violating school rules (Mizel et al., 2016).

Krezmien, Leone, and Wilson (2014) have noted two ways in which schools have introduced Black boys to the juvenile correctional system. First, the schools criminalize school rules and report violations that take place on school grounds to law enforcement officers. Secondly, school officials unreasonably suspend and expel Black boys for minor school infractions such as talking back to their teachers or writing on their desks. Unfortunately, early exposure to the juvenile justice system has led Black boys to withdraw from school, become unable to obtain employment, and engage in juvenile delinquent activities (Mizel et al., 2016). Sadly, many believe that teachers who are supposed to be responsible for educating Black boys are complicit in the school-to-prison pipeline (Losen & Wald, 2003). Instead of challenging their Black boys' academic potential, many have selected to hold negative stereotypes about their Black students and have grown accustomed to routinely writing disciplinary referrals on Black boys who failed to comply with *feminized* instructional practices found in coeducational schools, which further exacerbates the crisis (Barbarin, 2010).

Feminization of Coeducational Schools

In coeducational (CE) schools, boys are expected to remain seated, follow directions, and read for long periods, all things that girls do well (Sax, 2016; Tyre, 2008). Boy-centered instructional strategies such as hands-on activities, storyboards, and competitive learning are routinely missing in coeducational classrooms (Sax, 2016; Tyre, 2008). As a result, Black boys are more likely to become disengaged in the learning process and display active behaviors in which their teachers consider disruptive or abnormal (Dwarte, 2014). To this end, Black boys are more likely to be kicked out of their coeducational classrooms, referred to the principal's office,

suspended or expelled from school altogether, or misdiagnosed as having a behavior disorder (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). For these reasons, critics of coeducational schools believe that *single-sex schools* (SSS) can shield Black boys from the marginalized and feminized effects of coeducational schooling (Jones, 2014; Terry et al., 2014).

Single-Sex Schools as a Reform

In response to concerned parents and community members who believe Black boys are failing in coeducational schools, school district officials have explored a variety of alternative schooling options for Black boys (Noguera, 2012). One of these options is the establishment of single-sex schools (SSS), primarily in many urban communities across the country, with the goal of improving Black boys' learning outcomes (Dwarte, 2014). Single-sex schools are believed to provide a learning environment where Black boys feel like they can be themselves, where the school culture promotes a sense of brotherhood, and where learning is far more important than rigid discipline practices (Fergus & Noguera, 2010). However, the question of whether single-sex schools are any better than coeducational schools at meeting Black boys' learning needs continues to be hotly debated (Pahlke & Hyde, 2016)

Mixed Views on Single-Sex Schools

One of the many challenges that superintendents face when attempting to make informed decisions on whether to implement SSS in their district is the abundance of conflicting research and opinions regarding single-sex schools (USDOE, 2005). On the one hand, proponents of SSS believe that single-sex schools can better account for the gender differences in their instructional practices, are better suited to combat gender biases and stereotypical views, and can provide a safe learning environment free from sexual distraction (Else-Quest & Peterca; 2015; Goodkind, 2013). While on the other hand, opponents of SSS claim that single-sex schools fail to prepare

students for a heterogeneous society, are not equipped to manage boys' behavior and reinforce gender stereotypes (Halpern et al., 2011; Levy & Killen, 2008; Spielhagen, 2011).

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education published a study entitled, *Single-Sex Versus Coeducational Schooling: A Systematic Review*. Researchers conducted a systematic review of research on single-sex schools to “document the outcome evidence for or against the efficacy of single-sex education as an alternative form of school organization” (p. 9). After examining 88 quantitative studies and 26 qualitative studies of single-sex schools, the researchers found that 33% of the studies favored single-sex schools over coeducational schools, while the remaining studies resulted in mixed support for single-sex schools and coeducational schools. In determining the effect that single-sex schools had on academic achievement (i.e., math, science, English, social), the findings favored single-sex schools over coeducational schools. However, in determining the long-term effect of single-sex schools on post-secondary readiness, the researchers concluded that there were no studies that indicated that single-sex schools had a positive effect on postsecondary indicators (i.e., test scores, college completion, or attendance rates). Accordingly, the researchers concluded that there was not enough evidence to determine whether single-sex schools were any better than coeducational schools. In addition, the researchers explained that it is difficult to conduct research on single-sex schools because previous researchers have selected to study the differences between single-sex schools and coeducational schools, rather than focusing on what “certain aspects of SSS or CE schooling are beneficial” (p. 88).

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education published a comparative study entitled, *Early Implementation of Public Single-Sex Schools: Perceptions and Characteristics*. The researchers sought to understand the perceptions that principals and teachers employed at eight single-sex

school (SSS) and 11 coeducational (CE) schools. Data collected from survey responses revealed that 53% of participants did not favor either school model, 10% had mixed feelings about both school models, 35% favored SSS, and 2% favored CE schools. Essentially, most participants indicated mixed support for both school types — single-sex schools and coeducational schools.

Specifically, teachers and principals who were employed at the single-sex schools (SSS) reported that they had observed a decrease in student distractions in their classrooms, that they were able to teach to the learning styles and interests of their students, and that the SSS model improved academic outcomes for both boys and girls. Principals and teachers also felt that SSS was more beneficial for girls than boys in terms of peer interaction, academic accomplishment, class management, and safety. When compared to coeducational schools, high school single-sex teachers reported fewer behavioral problems and more instructional support than coeducational teachers. In comparison, middle school single-sex teachers reported having more behavioral problems and less instructional support than coeducational teachers. The researchers concluded that the findings did not suggest that single-sex schools improved students' academics or behavior but rather serves as a hypothesis for future researchers to conduct quasi-experimental studies of single-sex schools.

Given the abundance of mixed findings and support for single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys learning experience and outcomes, many believe that the push to establish all-boys, single-sex schools in communities of color in America have been based on unfounded assumptions or assertions rather than on theory or empirical evidence (Dwarte, 2014). To theoretically ground the need for single-sex schools for boys of color, Fergus and Noguera (2010) conducted a three-year study of seven single-sex schools and discovered two framing theories for the need for single-sex schools for boys of color (Black and Latino). First, single-sex

schools understand and know the social and emotional needs of Black and Latino boys. Secondly, single-sex schools understand how the academic needs of Black and Latino boys have surfaced and focus on strategies to address those needs. To this end, Fergus and Noguera (2010) concluded that "we must now understand how these theories are translated into educational practices"(p. 30).

Statement of the Problem

The underachievement of Black boys attending school in America remains a problem (Terry et al., 2014). Urban school districts have established all-boys, single-sex schools in many urban communities with the goal of improving educational outcomes for Black boys; however, little is known about single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' academic success, which suggest there is a disconnect between the school model as an intervention and student outcomes (Dwarte, 2014). Researchers have studied single-sex schools by examining the academic performance of Black boys (Else-Quest & Peterca, 2015; Hoffman, Badgett, & Parker, 2008; Pahlke, Hyde, Carlie, & Allison, 2014). Researchers have also studied single-sex schools to understand Black boys' lived experiences (Flenbaugh, 2017; Gross & Lo, 2018; Jackson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Watson, 2014; Nelson, 2016; Terry et al., 2014). However, researchers have stopped short of understanding how teachers and principals describe single-sex schools and their ability to improve Black boys' educational outcomes, which suggests that more research was needed on this issue (Fergus & Noguera, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this single-bounded case study (Yin, 2018) was to gain an in-depth understanding of the views (Creswell & Poth, 2018) held by principals and teachers at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB, a pseudonym). NTSB a single-sex middle through high school

(6th through 12th grade) located in North Texas, which educates boys primarily of color (Black and Latino boys). This study specifically examined the perceptions that two principals and four teachers at NTSB held about the all-boys, single-sex school and their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys on their campus (Fergus & Noguera, 2010). To account for the principals' and teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon and their students' overlapping identities, the researcher treated their students' gender and race as intersectionality in this case study. Using data obtained from semi-structured interviews and a focus group, the researcher examined and interpreted data based on Fergus and Noguera's (2010) framing theories of the need for single-sex schools for boys of color to inform the readers' contextual understanding of the phenomenon. To this end, the researcher offers the readers a thick and rich description of the phenomena based on the principals' and teachers' stories and beliefs (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study aimed to increase our understanding of the phenomenon:

RQ1. What are teachers' and principals' views towards an all-boys, single-sex school?

RQ2. How do teachers and principals of an all-boys single-sex school describe their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys attending their school?

RQ3. What internal barriers do teachers and principals in an all-boys, single-sex school perceive as hindering the learning experience of Black boys on their campus?

Positionality of the Researcher

As a Black boy that grew up in a poverty-stricken community, I, along with many of my male friends, was routinely disciplined and were erroneously diagnosed as having learning disabilities and/or behavioral disorders for failing to conform to feminized instructional practices

in coeducational classrooms. During my elementary years, I recall several of my elementary teachers forcing my friends and me to sit still throughout their entire class period. Some teachers would even go as far as to ridicule us in front of our female peers for even speaking to one another. I distinctly remember one of my English teachers telling me, “I guess your mother didn’t teach you how to sit still and shut up.” Shortly after that experience, I was called into a small office to meet with a special education teacher who informed me that I was classified as a special education student. While I was fortunate to have a mother with the foresight to recognize and fight against this injustice, many of my friends were not and remained labeled as special education learners and left hopeless. Now, as a school administrator, I believe it was my responsibility to advocate on behalf of Black boys. Therefore, I readily admit that I have an inherent bias against coeducational schools and that I am more inclined to support single-sex schools for opportunities that better serve Black boys. In this case study, however, I looked at the experiences of students rather than the perceptions of educators, which reduced my biases and motivated me to better understand how and/or whether other educators understood the problem.

Significance of the Study

Previous research has focused on the academic gains made by Black boys who attend single-sex schools, rather than understanding the how practitioners of single-sex schools from the lens of teachers and principals who are responsible for making those gains possible. This study will significantly add to the existing body of research surrounding single-sex schools serving Black boys. Separating Black boys from their peers may justify the need for more single-sex schools. Superintendents, who may be considering establishing SSS as an alternative schooling option to address the academic challenges of Black boys in their district, may benefit greatly from this study. To this end, this study provides school and district leaders a conceptual

understanding of the single-sex schools and their impact on the learning experience and educational outcomes of Black boys, as best represented single-sex school practitioners — teachers and principals.

Assumptions

From the outset of the study, the research was based on several assumptions. First, the researchers assumed that the North Texas School for Boys (NTSB) had met all state school accountability standards based on its Texas Education Agency's 2018-2019 school report card because not all schools located in impoverished communities within the district are performing at or above state standards. The second assumption formed was that all participants (i.e., principals and teachers) had experience educating Black boys within homogeneous learning environments and would speak candidly about their experiences and views of single-sex schools. However, due to COVID-19 (“coronavirus”), some faculty members who may have had experience educating Black boys in a single-sex school environment may have been temporarily reassigned to coeducational campuses or reassigned to other departments within the district to assume the responsibilities of faculty who either took FMLA or resigned from their position all together. In addition, the researcher presumed that all participants would be familiar with gender-responsive pedagogy and would employ them to enhance the learning experience of their Black boys. The last assumption made was that all participants would disclose that they annually participate in targeted professional development to keep their instruction and approach aligned with research-based, single-gender instructional practices.

Limitations

Due to COVID-19, all participants were interviewed virtually rather than in person, which was a limitation in this case study. We encountered connectivity issues and lagged audio

during the virtual one-on-one interviews, forcing the participants to repeat themselves and recall their previous statements. Connectivity issues were also present during the focus group. The participants were unable to hear each other's statements at times, forcing the researcher to pause the live video feed so that audio playback could be transmitted more clearly. Even though we had audio and video capabilities, the virtual, semi-structured interviews were not as personable. Specifically, we could not pick up on each other's nonverbal cues, which we would have been able to do in an in-person, sit-down interview, and focus group. Furthermore, the virtual interviews triggered a sense of nervousness amongst the participants, which would not have been the case during face-to-face interviews.

Definition of Key Terms

At-Risk- Students who are most at risk of dropping out of school (TEA, 2010).

Boys of Color - Boys who are not white (Nelson, 2016).

Coeducational Schools - Education institutions where boys and girls attend school together (Bigler & Signorella, 2011).

Feminization of Schools - The practice of teaching to girls' social, emotional, and academic needs over those of boys (Sax, 2016; Tyre, 2008).

School-To-Prison Pipeline - A process whereby schools push children of color out of the classrooms into the juvenile justice system by criminalizing school rules (Wald & Losen, 2003).

Single-Sex School - Education institutions where boys and girls attend school separately (Bigler & Signorella, 2011).

Summary

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of the academic challenges facing Black boys and introduced single-sex schools as a possible solution to address the challenges. I also emphasized

the need to understand single-sex schools from the viewpoint of teachers and principals. In addition, this chapter discussed the purpose of the study, its relevance to the field of single-sex schools, and the objectives of this research study. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature on single-sex schools and operationalizes a theoretical framework that will be used to frame our understanding of the phenomenon. Chapter 3 focuses on the research method, including data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a biographical introduction of the participants and thematic descriptions of the findings of the study. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the findings, implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

In an era in which many urban schools are struggling to meet the demands of state and local school accountability systems, which partially evaluates their ability to close achievement gaps, the academic state of Black boys attending school in America remains a significant concern (Schott Foundation, 2015). Urban schools and communities alike have been eager to explore initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes for Black boys (Toldson, 2008). Such exploration includes the establishment of single-sex schools as a possible remedy. Single-sex schools (SSS) are educational institutions where girls and boys attend school separately. SSS and are also associated with single-sex education (SSE), single-gender school (SGS), single-sex instruction (SSI), and single-sex classrooms (SSC) (Hoffman, Badgett, & Parker, 2008).

The following chapter provides a comprehensive literature review of single-sex schools (SSS) in America. First, I discuss the state of Black boys attending school in America. Second, I provide a brief historical overview of SSS. Next, I explain how single-sex schools have resurfaced within the last two decades as a remedy to address the academic challenges facing Black boys. Then, I explore claims made, suggesting that there are neurological differences between boys and girls, which require them to learn in different spaces. Finally, I draw attention to arguments for and against single-sex schools and consider claims made that single-sex schools are better able to meet the learning needs of Black boys.

Black Boys in Crisis

This section provides insights into the unique challenges that Black boys face as they pack their lunches, put their backpacks on, and board school buses to attend school in America. Black boys, like all students, are excited about the first day of school. They look forward to

meeting their new teachers and classmates and being exposed to new learning opportunities, but they become less enthusiastic about school as soon as they discover that there are obstacles that they will have to overcome because of their masculinity and the color of their skin.

Understanding the barriers that Black boys face early on in their schooling years will help explain why many urban school officials see single-sex schools as a much-needed alternative to coeducational schools.

Stereotype Threats

The racial gap between Black boys and their teachers has grown. According to the National Center for Education Statistics report: *The Condition of Education* (2019), 80% of America's public-school teachers are White, while Black students make up more than 15% of the student population. This means that the difference between Black boys' lived experiences and their White teachers are more noticeable (Delpit, 2012). For this reason, in part, it has become a challenge for some White teachers to establish and maintain positive relationships with their Black boys because they chose to embrace negative societal stereotypes about their students' families, culture, behavior, and academic capabilities (James 2012; Ladson Billings 2011). Black boys are viewed as unable to acquire knowledge, disorderly, and in need of correcting, which have resulted in teachers having lower expectations of them (Ferguson, 2003; Rowley, Ross, Lozada, Williams, Gale, & Kurtz-Costes, 2014). Sadly, research has shown that Black boys are well aware of the stereotypes threats they face in schools and intentionally misbehave and underperform when they perceive their teachers as uncaring and belittling and their culture and identity as invalidated and disregarded (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

In examining the racial stereotypes facing Black boys in schools, Kunesh and Nolteyer (2019) randomly selected a group of undergraduate pre-service teachers (N = 98) enrolled at a

public university to read two short vignettes (novels). The vignette was about a seventh-grade boy who was not engaged in his assigned task and refused to follow the directions of the teachers to get back to work. In order to account for the stereotype threat, the first vignette read by the pre-service teachers was about a stereotypical White boy named "Cody," and the subsequent vignettes read by the pre-service teachers were about a stereotypical Black boy; named "Darius." The findings from the questionnaire indicated that participants believed that the Black boy was more likely to misbehave again than the White boy, although both boys displayed very similar behaviors. The authors concluded that when teachers' biases and stereotypes are prevalent, they are more likely to write disciplinary referrals on Black boys than White boys, which widens the discipline gap.

In examining the relational stereotype facing Black boys in schools, Nelson (2016) discovered that, unlike other students, Black boys are taught by educators who view them as "non-relational" (p. 3). Black boys are viewed as unable to establish relationships in part, because of their broken family history and, in part, because of their poverty-stricken homelife. While misguided views of Black boys stem from society belief that Black boys are "either dangerous or at-risk" (p. 2), Black boys have expressed that they too want to perform well in school, desire to have a relationship with their teachers, and long for educators to have high expectations of them (Flennaugh, 2017; Jackson et al., 2014). Yet, far too often, Black boys' voices have been silent, not only because their teachers have chosen to hold stereotypical beliefs about them but also because of deep-rooted *feminized* practices found in coeducational schools (Dwarte, 2014; Rowley et al., 2014).

Feminization of Coeducational Schools

The gender gap between Black boys and their teachers has also widened over the years. According to the National Center for Education Statistics report: *The Condition of Education* (2019), 77% of all public-school teachers are female, while only 23% are males. The overrepresentation of female teachers in coeducational schools has led many scholars to believe that feminized practices in heterogeneous classrooms are among the factors that contribute to the academic and behavioral challenges facing boys in America (Gurian, 2011; Sax, 2016; Tyre, 2008). Some scholars have referred to the term feminization to describe the overrepresentation of women in the teaching profession or to mean that the school environment itself was viewed as feminine rather than masculine (Heyder & Kessels, 2013). However, for the purposes of this paper, the term feminization was also referred to as the practice of teaching to the social, emotional, and academic needs of girls over those of boys (Gurian, 2010; Sax, 2016).

Michael Gurian, an American philosopher, and family counselor described the declining status of boys attending school in America in his book *Boys and Girls Learn Differently: A Guide to Teachers and Parents* (2010). Boys account for 70% of all D's and F's in co-educational schools and are underrepresented in advanced courses such as advanced placement and dual credit courses. Boys also make up 66% of all learning disabilities, 90% of all emotionally disturbed students, account for 80% of all brain disorders, and are more likely to be involved in drugs and alcohol than girls. Dr. Gurian contends that there was a “gender advantage” (p. 57), meaning that coeducational schools are inherently designed to adjust to the development of girls rather than boys. In addition, Dr. Gurian believes that the challenges boys face in coeducational schools are largely due to the teaching profession overwhelmingly consisting of female teachers

who have not been trained to understand how boys socially, emotionally, and academically develop.

Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, two American psychologists, discussed how boys have come to dread school in their co-authored book entitled *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (2000). The authors suggest that schools have become largely feminized and assert, “as much as we would like the school...to present both girls and boys the same opportunity...the fact it is easier for girls to adapt...the expectation reflects girls’ abilities and sensibilities” (p.23). In general, boys have bounds of energy and are more active than girls, yet schools often discipline boys for their active behaviors. For example, a first-grade student at the end of his first day of the school expressed, "You can't do anything." The authors asserted, "the trouble wasn't really that he couldn't do anything but that everything he loved to do — run, throw, wrestle, climb — was outlawed in the classroom (p. 24). Unfortunately, by the time boys reach the third grade, they have “faced a steady diet of shame...feel bad about themselves and hate the place that makes them feel that way” (p. 25). The authors conclude that schools must allow boys the freedom to express their emotions, provide them a safe space to release their energy, teach them emotional courage, use discipline to build their character, and provide male role models who can teach them about manhood.

Leonard Sax, an American psychologist, and family physician discussed how boys have become withdrawn from school in his book entitled *Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men* (2016). Dr. Sax explained that boy-friendly learning strategies, such as competitive learning, hands-on learning, and moving while learning strategies are often missing in schools. Boys are therefore expected to

remain seated for an extended period of time while "reading and writing" (p. 24), which has resulted in them becoming unmotivated and disengaged from the learning process.

Additionally, Dr. Sax sheds light on how teachers often become impatient and frustrated with the active nature of boys early on in schooling, leading them to make recommendations to parents that their boys be evaluated by a school diagnostician for possible behavioral or mental disorders. Sadly, many teachers have come to believe that boys that move around in their chairs, make loud noises, and refuse to follow classroom rules are being defiant and that boys who are "looking at the ceiling or staring out of the window or tapping their pencil" (p. 137) are not paying attention. Unfortunately, these misguided beliefs have often led to many boys being misdiagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and in many cases resulting in boys being erroneously prescribed medication. However, not all parents accepted the misguided beliefs about their boys' behaviors and often rejected the notion that something was wrong with their boys. For instance, in a group meeting with Dr. Sax, one parent expressed incredible frustration with the feminization of schools stating, "The schools have become feminized. The only man at my son's elementary school is the janitor. The teachers all want students to sit down and be quiet. That's not easy for boys" (p. 7). Dr. Sax concludes that the teachers' beliefs about boys' cognitive and behavioral development are misinformed and that the focus should be aimed at a curriculum and rules that require boys to sit still, be quiet, and read for long periods of time.

History of Single-Sex Schools

This section provides a brief historical overview of single-sex schools. This section also explores the Feminist Movement, which nearly equated to the demise of single-sex schools in America. In addition, this section highlights the renewed interest in single-sex schools to

improve Black boys learning experience. Understanding the historical contexts of single-sex schools shapes our understanding of why some Americans support single-sex schools and while others oppose them.

Colonial Era

Single-sex schools date back to the 17th and 18th centuries, a time when White boys received a formal education and White girls received informal education (Spielhagen, 2013). During those times, the society sought to prepare boys and girls for the different roles and responsibilities they would assume as they entered society (Rury, 2005). For this reason, schools prepared girls for domestic occupations such as maids, seamstresses, laundresses, or household workers, while boys prepared for white or blue-collar jobs, such as soldiers, manufacturers, craftsmen, politicians, or businessmen. While, by and large, girls received more education than boys, the labor market valued and rewarded boys' education over girls (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). For this reason, more than 36% of girls who received some form of education during those times did not have access to the labor market and eventually returned home to live with their families (Rury, 2005).

The 19th Century

Coeducational schools emerged in the 19th century as it became cost-effective for society to educate both boys and girls in the same space (Hawtrey, 1896). The cost of paying for separate teachers, buildings, and technology became unbearable for taxpayers (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). In 1848, supporters of the first wave of the Feminist Movement championed the emergence of coeducational schools as women fought for equal rights because they had little or no access to equal education and often faced discrimination in the workforce (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). Feminists viewed coeducational schools as a social reform that would treat access to

education as a right rather than a privilege for women. In 1883, the establishment of coeducational schools also received support from former U.S. Education Commissioner William Harris, who believed that teaching boys and girls together improved education and discipline in schools (Harris, 1870).

The 20th Century

In the twentieth century, the existing single-sex schools were threatened by equal rights legislation stemming from the Civil Rights Movement, a time when Black Americans fought to end racial discrimination and segregation in schools. As in the landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Chief Justice Earl Warren declared that racially segregated schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. In conjunction with the Civil Rights Movement, the feminists won a legislative victory in the second wave of the Feminist Movement. In 1972, the US Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendment Act, which reads as follows:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (20 USC. § 1681(a))

Under Title IX, single-sex schools inherently became unconstitutional. By the latter part of the 20th century, the vast majority of American schools were coeducational (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). While Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in educational institutions, it did not prohibit schools from continuing to separate boys and girls in physical education, sexual autonomy, and choral classes (34 CFR 106.34 (B-F)).

The 21st Century

During the 21st century, single-sex schools regained national attention. Due to Title IX, the vast majority of single-sex schools left operating in America were private, religious schools (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). However, legal scholars in favor of single-sex schools continued to argue that Title IX was not a “categorical bar” and was open for legal interpretation (Caplice, 1994, p. 230). In 2001, Senators Hillary Clinton and Kay Bailey Hutchison introduced bipartisan legislation to Congress, which allowed for single-sex schools to exist without violating Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibited schools from discriminating against people based on their gender. Senator Clinton stated, “Our long-term goal has to be to make single-sex education available as an option for all children, not just for children of parents wealthy enough to afford private schools” (Cable & Spradlin, 2008, p. 3).

In 2002, the U.S. Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and it was signed into law by President George W. Bush. The NCLB encouraged schools to become innovative and allowed districts to federally fund single-sex schools and single-sex classrooms without violating Title IX. The NCLB required the U.S. Department of Education to issue guidelines to local education agencies (LEAs) regarding the application of the law (NCLB §5131(a) 23, 2001). The intent of the law was to support school districts in their efforts to improve educational outcomes for students and to provide parents the flexibility to decide which school type, coeducational or single-sex school, best met the needs of their children while simultaneously protecting people against discrimination practices (USDOE, 2006). Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights issued the following guidelines to local education agencies; public schools may:

Exclude any person from admission to a non-vocational elementary or secondary school on the basis of sex only if such recipient otherwise makes available to such person, pursuant to the same policies and criteria of admission, courses, services, and facilities comparable to each course, service, and facility offered in or through such schools. (34 CFR 106.35 (b))

In other words, school districts that decided to establish single-sex schools had to provide coeducational schools to students who chose not to attend SSS and also had to establish a comparable single-sex school for the opposite sex (USDOE, 2006). Shortly after receiving the federal guidelines, many school districts began opening single-sex schools or, in many instances restructuring existing coeducational schools to single-sex schools based on the belief that there were actual academic and social benefits to separating boys and girls (Gookind, 2013; Mansfield, 2013). Today, more than 1,000 single-sex schools operate in the United States (Goodkind, 2013; Mitchell & Stewart, 2011), with Texas and Florida leading the way with more than 29 single-sex schools operating within their state (USDOE, 2020).

Legal Challenges to Single Sex-Schools

Since the enactment of Title IX, the very establishment of single-sex schools for girls and boys alike have been threatened with legal opposition from civil rights organizations, such as The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which argues that single-sex schools, whether for boys or for girls are unconstitutional and violate Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendment Act and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Brown, 2013).

This section provides a brief overview of the legal challenges that single-sex institutions have faced over the past two decades in the U.S. Understanding the legal opposition to single-sex schools helps shape our understanding of why some single-sex schools have perished, while

others have withstood the test of times. Furthermore, understanding legal challenges helps us understand what proponents of single-sex schools think and what opponents of single-sex schools think. To this end, this section highlights landmark court cases surrounding the constitutionality of single-sex schools in America.

Mississippi University for Women vs. Hogan (1982)

Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan (1982) involved a sex discrimination lawsuit brought forth by Joe Hogan, a registered nurse in the United States District Court of Northern District of Mississippi. Mr. Hogan alleged that he was denied entry into Mississippi University for Women nursing school because of his sex, although he had met all other qualifications needed for acceptance. The university provided Mr. Hogan an opportunity to audit courses, which means that he was allowed to take courses, but would not receive credit for those courses. In the district court, Mr. Hogan alleged that the Mississippi University for Women violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment because he was denied access to a nursing school solely based on his sex, and therefore he was entitled to relief.

Counsel for Mr. Hogan argued that the nearest higher education institution offering a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing was over 115 miles away from Mr. Hogan's residence, yet the district court rejected Mr. Hogan's claims, ruling that the state had a legitimate interest in providing a wide range of educational opportunities for its female student populations. Mr. Hogan filed an appeal to the US District Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The state argued before the Fifth Circuit that Congress had made an exception for universities to continue their practices of single-sex schools under Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972. However, the Fifth Circuit rejected the state's position, holding that Congress did not have the power to exempt states from complying with Title IX.

The case eventually made its way to the Supreme Court. In a 5-4 ruling, the Supreme Court held that the MUW's single-sex education admission policy was indeed a violation of the equal protection clause under Title IX. Judge O'Connor, joined by Judge Brennan, White, Marshall, and Stevens, delivered an affirming opinion and contended that Mississippi had made no showing that women lacked opportunities to obtain training in the field of nursing or to attain a position of leadership in the field. The justice pointed out that the year before MUW opened its doors, 94 % of nursing degrees conferred were for women and that denying males from admission into the Mississippi University for Women School of Nursing perpetrated a stereotype view that the field of nursing was exclusively for women. In a dissenting opinion led by Justice Powell and joined by Justice Blackmun, Rehnquist, and Chief Justice Burger held that the ruling went too far. The justices held that the State of Mississippi offered Bachelor of Nursing programs for males, which was a requirement to be exempt from Title IX guidelines; however, the Court relied on historical data that women had dominated the nursing profession in its decision.

Garrett v. Board of Education (1991)

Garrett v. Board of Education (1991) was a sex discrimination class-action lawsuit brought forth by parents of females students in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, who alleged that the Detroit Public School system violated Title IX, the Elliot-Larsen Act, and Michigan School Code by preparing to open Malcolm X, an all-male academy. The plaintiffs sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the opening of Malcolm X.

In 1991, the Detroit public school system formed a Male Academy Task Force led by Dr. Clifford Watson to address high dropout, suspensions, and expulsion rates facing Black boys (Watson & Smitherman, 1996; Wilkerson, 1991). The task force recommended the opening of

Malcolm X Academy for Black boys. Malcolm X's curriculum would include "linguistics, social sciences, math, and technology...and focused on career development, test-taking skills, and social responsibility" (Barnes, 1997, p. 2377). Plaintiffs asserted that special curriculum perpetuated gender stereotypes roles and responsibilities and argued that the establishment of Malcolm X Academy would discriminate against girls and therefore would violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Equal Education Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974, which mandated:

No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by the assignment by an educational agency of a student to a school, other than the one closest to his or her place of residence if the assignment results in a greater degree of segregation of students on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin. (20 USC § 1703 (c))

In response, counsel for the Detroit Public School (DPS) presented empirical evidence illustrating the academic and social decline of Black boys in the City of Detroit and argued, "there exists a strong correlation to remedial aspects of past discrimination and if the effect of the classification would not be likely to further outdated stereotypes and generalizations regarding women and men" (Barnes, 1997, p. 2375). Nevertheless, despite U.S. District Court Judge George Woods agreeing with DPS analysis that Black boys were at-risk and an "endangered species," he ruled that the opening of Malcolm X would discriminate against girls and granted ACLU's application for a preliminary injunction to stop the opening of Malcolm X Academy citing:

Although coeducational programs have failed, there is no showing that it is the coeducational factor that results in failure. Even more dangerous is the prospect that

should the Male Academy proceed and succeed, success would be equated with the absence of girls rather than any of the educational factors that more probably caused the outcome. (*Garrett v. Board of Education of Detroit*, 1991, p.3)

Subsequently, the City of Detroit public school board reached a settlement agreement with ACLU and opened Malcolm X on the condition that both girls and boys be admitted into the academy (Barnes, 1997). In the Fall of 1992, Malcolm X academy opened its doors to 449 kindergartens through sixth-grade boys and girls (Holewa, 1992).

United States v. Virginia (1996)

United States v. Virginia (1996) was a landmark supreme court case which threatened the admissions policies of one of Virginia's oldest single-sex school — The Virginia Military Institute (VMI). VMI prepared young men for careers and ways of life in America's military, dating back to its founding in the 1800s. In 1990, the United States government sued VMI in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, alleging that VMI's single-sex school admission policies violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Virginia argued that VMI provided educational benefits that could not otherwise be offered under coeducational circumstances and asserted that women's admissions would require unreasonable constraints on VMI programs such as accommodated housing and training.

The District Court ruled in favor of VMI, holding that education "a single-gender environment, be it male or female, yielded educational benefits" (766 F. Supp., at 1415) and ruled that VMI did not violate Title IX. On appeal, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the District Court ruling, contending that "The Commonwealth of Virginia has not . . . advanced any state policy by which it can justify its determination and ordered Virginia to submit a proposal that would satisfy the exemption requirements of Title IX" (976 F.2d 890, 892).

Accordingly, Virginia submitted a proposal that offered women the same opportunities they would have received by attending VMI by establishing the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership (VWIL), which was acceptable to both the District Court and Fourth Circuit.

However, on appeal, the Supreme Court rejected Virginia's proposal to establish VWIL for women in a 7-1 ruling, held that VMI violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and ordered VMI's full gender integration. In an opinion conveyed by Justice Ginsburg, joined by Justices Stevens, Kennedy, Souter, Breyer, O'Connor, and Rehnquist, held that women were just as capable of performing the task of men and Virginia had failed to show how VMI's single-gender admissions criteria led to educational diversity which was a criterion for the existing of single-sex schools under Title IX. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Scalia expressed that the court's ruling had disrupted a long pride in Virginia's most prestigious military institution and held that Virginia's willingness to establish VWIL for women did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the Fall of 1997, VMI opened as a coeducational school and admitted 30 female cadets but did not modify standards for them (Freehling, 1997).

Jane Doe v Vermilion Parish School Board (2010)

Jane Doe v. Vermilion Parish School Board (2010) involves a sex discrimination lawsuit brought forth by Jane Doe, the mother of two daughters attending Rene. A. Roast Middle School. During the 2008 - 2009 school year, Mr. David Dupuis, Principal of Roast Middle School, received approval from the Vermillion Parish School Board to implement single-sex classrooms and to conduct research as part of his dissertation. In 2009-2010, Mr. Dupuis implemented single-sex schools in all grade levels, except for fifth grade at his elementary school.

By doing so, counsel for Mrs. Doe argued before the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana that the school board violated Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment for requiring Mrs. Doe's daughter to enroll in single-sex classes. Counsel for Mrs. Doe contended that the establishment of single-sex schools at Roast Middle School was illegal because enrollment into the single-gender classes was not voluntary.

In response, counsel for the school board testified that they were not aware of the law on single-sex schools, admitted that they were in violation of the law, and took steps to correct their wrongs by making student enrollment into the single-gender classes voluntary. However, Counsel for Mrs. Doe argued that the Board was still in violation of Title IX because voluntary enrollment in single-gender classrooms resulted in the overrepresentation of boys in coeducational classes and the overrepresentation of girls in single-sex classes, which had negative impacts on the special education population.

The court noted that there were serious flaws in the implementation of single-sex schools at Roast Middle School, explaining there was "an extreme lack of oversight over this program at the fault of both the Vermilion Parish School Board and Principal David Dupuis." Even though the court believed that there were serious flaws in the implementation of single-sex classrooms at Roast Middle School, the court ruled in favor of the Vermillion Parish School Board. In the dissenting opinion, the district court held that any perceptions of gender discrimination were unintentional and noted that the Board took steps to correct their wrong by offering voluntary enrollment into single-sex classes, which were acceptable under Title IX. However, on appeal, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals held that the District Court had misapplied the law and that the

Vermilion Parish School Board was in violation of Title IX. In 2011, Vermilion Parish School Board abolished their single-sex program because they could not get enough students to enroll.

2002 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) allowed local education agencies to create single-sex schools so long as they were voluntary, offered equal coeducational opportunities for and equity in further education (Brown, 2013). However, many school districts that attempt to establish single-sex schools continue to face legal opposition. For this reason, some school districts have been successful in their quest to establish single-sex schools, while others have not. Despite expensive court challenges that would inevitably follow any school district that seeks to establish a single-sex school, many school districts continue to establish single-sex schools based on the presumption that boys and girls learn differently and should be taught in separate schools.

Boys Learn Differently than Girls

According to Leonard Sax (2006), an American psychologist, “there are no differences in what girls and boys can learn, but there are big differences in the way we teach them” (p. 10). Thus, the primary argument to support the implementation of single-sex schools was that there are neurobiological learning differences between boys and girls that require them to study in different spaces (Sax, 2016). This belief is championed by supporters of SSS, who contend that teachers can tailor their instructional practices to meet the unique learning differences between boys and girls (Datnow et al., 2001; Gray & Wilson, 2006; Pahlke et al., 2014). However, claims that there was an actual learning difference continue to be rejected by other scholars who argue that boys and girls must learn the same way and in the same schools (Campbell & Sanders, 2002). Nevertheless, examining brain differences that exist between boys and girls may improve our understanding of why some boys and girls flourish in separate learning environments.

Accordingly, this section encompasses a comprehensive literature review surrounding cognitive differences between boys and girls and highlights gender-specific instructional strategies.

Brain Differences

According to Kimura (1992), girls' brains develop at a faster rate than boys, which explains why boys and girls process and respond to information differently. Brain studies of the cerebral cortex — part of the brain responsible for processing sensory information — support claims made that girls and boys may benefit from learning in separate environments (Kimura, 1985). McGlone (1980) notes, the cerebral cortex was separated into two hemispheres — the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere — each with its own function. While both boys and girls use the left and right hemispheres, research has shown that boys' and girls' hemispheres develop differently (Gur et al., 2000).

Girls' brain development. For girls, the left hemisphere, which was part of the brain responsible for cognitive functions, was more developed than boys, making it easier for girls to respond to and process classroom information faster (Schmithorst, & Holland, 2006). Several researchers have acknowledged that the growth of the left hemisphere of girls allows them to multi-task, read and write at an early age, and comprehend knowledge using conventional teaching strategies. (Sax, 2006). Therefore, girls benefit from perceptual, symbolic, and independent learning (Gurian & Stevens, 2004; Sax, 2006).

Boys' brain development. For boys, the right hemisphere, which was part of the brain that was responsible for sensory, coordination, and motor, was more developed than girls, which enables boys to use their bodies and controlled impulses to process information (Witelson, 1976). Researchers, therefore, believe that boys tend to categorize their learning, process information using movement and visual-spatial skills, and focus on singular tasks using

non-traditional teaching strategies (Sax, 2001). Boys, therefore, benefit from instructional strategies such as group learning, project-based learning, and hands-on and experiential learning (Gurian, 2010; Gurian & Ballew, 2003; Gurian & Stevens, 2004; Sax, 2006).

Gender-Specific Instructional Strategies

In 2010, Hanlon et al. released a study entitled, *Gender Differences in the Development of EEG Coherence in Normal Children*, which sought to understand the differences and similarities between girls' and boys' brain rhythm by examining their EEG coherence, which describes how the frontal, parietal, temporal and parts of their brain activities develop. The researchers found that there were significant differences in brain rhythms in the part of the brain regions paired with frontal and temporal cortices. Girls showed EEG coherence peaks in the cortical regions (left hemisphere), which were responsible for concurrent discrimination, language processing, fine motor skills, and social cognition. In contrast, boys displayed EEG coherence peaks in the cortical region (right hemisphere), which was responsible for the spatial perceptions, processing of visual shapes and patterns, and executive planning related to gross motor movement, visual targeting, and accessing stored information.

Upon analyzing the Hamlon et al.'s (2010) study, Virginia Bonomo, professor of teaching and learning at Bloomsburg University, published an article entitled *Gender Matters in Elementary Education* (2010) which provided teachers with gender-specific instructional strategies they can use to address the learning differences between boys and girls in their classroom.

For boys:

- Be brief and involve them actively in the lesson. Encourage them with quick praise, cut down on written tasks, and use models and rubrics they can follow. Challenge them – boys thrive on competition.
- Keep a close eye on boys but let them play. Without a physical outlet, their aggressiveness will show up elsewhere inappropriately. Thus, provide large spaces for boys when possible.
- Lessons should be kinesthetic and experiential. Use a variety of manipulatives. Be aware of ambient temperature. Try to keep the boys from warmer areas in the classroom. Males do not hear as well as girls, so move them closer to the instruction (p. 263).

For girls:

- Girls work well in groups when they are facing one another or the teacher. Find activities that allow them to help the teacher. Don't protect girls from activities that may cause them to get dirty or skin their knees a bit, which could promote "learned helplessness." Safe-risk activities provide opportunities for girls to take calculated risks.
- Girls do not respond well to loud, sharp, short tones. They prefer softer voices. Girls enjoy tying lessons into emotions. They respond to descriptive phrases. Loud, repetitive noise can be distracting and disturbing to girls.
- Make it bold: girls prefer a lot of colors. Use puzzles to promote perceptual and symbolic learning. Girls' attention will focus on overheads or writing on the chalkboard (p. 263).

Dr. Bonomo emphasized the importance of teachers recognizing that there are cognitive and physical development differences between boys and girls and concluded that “understanding those differences will help educators provide a positive and encouraging environment for their students and promote teaching with respect to gender differences” (p. 263-264). However, there was still a debate among academics on whether there are fundamental learning differences between boys and girls or whether single-sex schools are better equipped to address those differences (Spielhagen, 2013).

Mixed Views of Single-Sex Schools

While many researchers have tried to understand the benefits of single-sex schools (SSS) by both qualitative and quantitative means, the debate on whether SSS was better, worse, or the same as coeducational schools continue in America. Differences have mainly been attributed to conflicting empirical and conceptual evidence concerning single-sex schools (Spielhagen, 2011). The US Department of Education study: *Single-Sex Versus Coeducational Schooling: A Systematic Review* (2005), conducted a review of both quantitative and qualitative literature on the single-sex school to “document the outcome evidence for or against the efficacy of single-sex education” (p. 9). The report concluded there was not enough evidence available to determine whether single-sex schools are better or worse than coeducational schools, which suggests more research was needed to better understand the issue. This section highlights mixed views and research on the efficacy of single-sex schools. Examining these studies from multiple viewpoints deepens our understanding and knowledge base concerning single-sex schools.

Opponents of Single-Sex Schools

Opponents of single-sex schools (SSS) disagree that there are academic, social, and emotional benefits associated with teaching boys and girls in separate schools and often associate

single-sex schools with detrimental effects on boys and girls alike (Jackson, 2009). The effects range from the reinforcement of gender stereotypes to an increase in harassment to the inability of single-sex schools to manage boys' behaviors to the inability of single-sex schools to prepare boys for a heterogeneous society.

Reinforce gender-stereotype and harassment. Opponents of single-sex schools argue that separating boys and girls reinforces gender-stereotypes and increases harassment within single-sex classrooms (Goodkind, 2005, 2009; Halpern et al., 2011). Woody (2010) examined the assumptions of heterosexism and the role that homophobia plays in single-sex academies in California. Based on data collected from student interviews and focus groups, Woody found that boys who were seen as less masculine and girls who were seen to be displaying less feminine characteristics were regularly ridiculed, teased, and called out of their name by their peers. Woody concluded that "girls and boys attending single-gender academies were no longer merely students but were systematically defined by gender and sexuality" (p. 149). The homogenous nature of the single-sex academies reinforced a world view that heterosexuality was the normal sexual orientation, thereby alienating any students who failed to conform.

Likewise, in order to determine the association between gender role conformity and victimization, Drury and colleagues (2013) surveyed fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade girls attending single-sex schools and coeducational schools. Drury et al. found that girls attending single-sex schools reported lower levels of peer victimization (harassment) but felt pressured to conform to gender norms. In contrast, girls attending coeducational schools reported higher levels of peer victimization (harassment) but did not feel a need to conform to gender norms. Drury et al. concluded that the "differences in levels of girl's gender-typed behaviors are associated with the gender composition of the school context" (p. 450). In other words, on the one hand, the more

girls were exposed to other girls, the more likely they were to conform to typical girl behaviors, and the less likely they would be victimized by their peers. While on the other hand, the more girls were exposed to boys' behavior, the less likely they would conform to typical girl behaviors, and the more likely they would be victimized (harassed) by their peers. These findings are consistent with Drury et al.'s (2013) findings that girls reported a lower level of victimizations in single-sex schools.

Not equipped to manage boys' behavior. Opponents of single-sex schools also contend that teachers are unprepared to manage boys' behaviors. Using a mixed-method approach, Spielhagen (2011) set out to examine the effectiveness of single-sex schools from the lens of newly hired teachers of single-sex schools. Both pre- and post-surveys were administered to measure the change in teachers' perceptions of single-sex schools over time. Spielhagen found that teachers' viewpoints towards single-sex schools were less favorable in the second semester. Teachers reported that girls became noisier and moody and that boys became more aggressive and immature in their single-sex classes. Teachers became less inclined to believe that boys behaved better in single-sex classes than coeducational classes. One teacher pointed out, "all my efforts were self-initiated and carried out by me" (p. 10), indicating that her inability to manage boys' behavior was due to a lack of training and a lack of administrative support.

Similarly, Gray and Wilson (2006) set out to explore the experiences of teachers in a coeducational school that began implementing single-sex classrooms. Based on data collected from a questionnaire and a teacher focus group, Gray and Wilson found that teachers believed that single-sex classes increased competition and that boys who were smaller in size or displayed feminist characteristics were subject to bullying from their peers, which was consistent with Drury et al.'s (2013) finding that boys were more likely to experience harassment in an all-male

school. In addition, 77 % of teachers felt that single-sex classes had no positive impact on boys' behaviors. One female teacher expressed her experience in an all-boys single-sex school:

I really dread boys-only classes; some of their comments are abusive; there must be a way to handle them. I would feel more confident if I were trained in strategies and methods to counter their behavior (Gray & Wilson, 2006, p. 296).

This finding implies that teachers in single-sex schools critically need professional development and administrative support in order to effectively manage boys' behaviors. In addition, the findings suggest that school leaders who fail to support their teachers by providing targeted professional development will encounter frustrated teachers, which will ultimately hinder their ability to successfully implement a single-gender program.

Unprepared for a heterogeneous society. One of the most persuasive arguments put forward by single-sex school opponents (SSS) was that children do not have the opportunity to learn and work with opposite-sex peers, resulting in children being unprepared to function in a heterogeneous society (Levy & Killen, 2008). In order to determine whether young children's play-partner choices influenced their behaviors over time, Martin and Fabes (2001) observed sixty-one girls and boys playing-partners and behaviors over six months. The findings indicate that the more girls and boys played with same-sex peers, the more their behaviors associated with that sex. Boys who spent their time playing with other boys became more active, learned to play more roughly, and were less likely to interact with the opposite sex. Likewise, girls who spent time interacting with other girls were more willing to engage in a quiet, respectful, yet less aggressive play experience and less likely to communicate with the opposite sex. Moreover, the more girls and boys played in different rooms, the more often they would engage in gender-based behaviors, resulting in less contact between the two sexes. Under these conditions, many

believe that SSS inherently impede the ability of children to enter a mixed-sex society requiring them to interact with the opposite sex, whether in the workplace or family household (Halpern, 2011).

Sullivan et al. (2011) investigated whether there were differences in social outcomes for girls and boys who attended single-sex or coeducational schools. Results from a large-scale longitudinal data set from a sample of respondents born in 1958 suggest that men who attended single-sex schools were more likely to be divorced or separated from their spouse by the age of 42, but that women who attended single-sex schools were more likely to remain married. The disproportionate divorce rate among men may have contributed to their attitudes about gender roles, as 86 % of men reported that they did not cook, wash, clean, or shop for their household. Sullivan et al. concluded that the findings supported concerns raised by opponents that single-gender schools negatively impact later relationships between the two sexes and asserted that the "social impacts on children need to be considered alongside the academic and economic outcomes" (2011, p. 155). The results of the study reinforce the view held by opponents of SSS that dividing boys and girls learning environments leads to an increase in gender issues in society.

Proponents of Single-Sex Schools

While opponents of SSS have presented studies supporting their stance against the very existence of single-sex schools, proponents of single-sex schools continue to believe that there are positive benefits associated with single-sex schools. These benefits range from the ability of SSS to shield children from stereotype threats, reduce distractions and harassment in the classrooms, and improve academic achievement for both girls and boys alike.

Combat gender stereotype threats. Supporters of single-sex schools assert that by merely separating boys' and girls' learning environments, students will be able to learn in an environment without the worry of gender stereotype threats (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005; Pahlke & Hyde, 2016). Using a mixed-method research approach, Bowe et al. (2015) examined the beliefs, stereotypes, and culture of a single-gender and coeducational elementary mathematics class. The researchers administered a pre-test questionnaire (girls = 20; boys = 9) and post-test questionnaire (girls = 19; boys = 12), conducted observations in the classroom, and interviewed a total of 32 students. The findings indicated that African American girls excelled more in single-sex math classrooms than in the coeducational math classroom and that the SSS was able to combat the math stereotype that girls are not good at math. The researchers accredited the gains to the teachers' ability to foster positive academic identities, noting: Teachers at the single-sex site intentionally promoted mathematical identities for girls and maintained positive ones for boys, whereas those at the coed site inadvertently opposed math identities for girls but fostered them for boys (p. 22).

The results of the study are encouraging for proponents of SSS but also rather disturbing since it was reasonable to conclude that girls in coeducational schools learn from teachers who do not take into account the gender stereotype threat they face. The researchers conclude that their findings are consistent with other literature that has found that single-sex schools are more beneficial for girls than boys in terms of math achievement.

While supporters of single-sex schools reference studies that show how teachers are able to combat negative stereotypes in the SSS environment, they also point to studies confirming their beliefs that teachers in coeducational schools exacerbate gender stereotypes. Retelsdorf et al. (2014) investigated whether teachers' beliefs that girls outperform boys in reading had a

negative effect on boys' reading self-concept — boys' beliefs about their ability to read.

Retelsodorf et al. examined student reading self-concepts, reading achievement, and the gender stereotypes of their teacher using longitudinal data collected from 54 teachers and 1,358 students. The findings indicated that boys' reading self-concept was lower for teachers who believed that girls could read better than boys. Retelsodorf et al. concluded, “that teachers' reading stereotypes favor girls” (p. 191). The findings of the study further reinforce the belief held by many that single-sex schools may help battle gender stereotype threats, especially when teachers believe that boys cannot learn to read.

Free from sexual distraction & harassment. Supporters of single-sex schools (SSS) claim that students are provided an environment free from sexual distraction and sexual harassment. Streitmatter (2002) examined the perceptions of high school boys and girls in two single-sex math classes. In doing so, Streitmatter observed boys' and girls' behaviors in their single-gender math classrooms and interviewed the teachers and students. The findings suggest that girls were appreciative of the single-sex class and reported that they were free to get work done without the presence of boys dominating the class, being assertive and aggressive, making sexual jokes, and embarrassing them. On the other hand, the boys appreciated their single-sex classroom for a different reason, reporting that they could focus on their work because girls were not in the classroom, and they talked about how they often looked at girls in their mixed classrooms and became sexually distracted from their studies. Moreover, girls felt a sense of ownership and empowerment in their classrooms, while boys felt it was just another class free from girls' sexual distractions. Streitmatter (2002) concluded that “the passion with which these girls spoke about their class seemed to suggest that a very important need was being addressed; creating a space for that is not male-dominated” (p. 225). Such findings ultimately lead us to

perceive that boys rule coeducational classrooms and girls consider single-sex schooling as an acceptable remedy, which was consistent with Hubbard and Datnow's (2005) study in which girls reported that they were no longer subject to boys' harassment in their single-gender class.

Not only do single-sex schools reduce sexual distractions from the opposite sex, but parents choose to send their daughters to SSS out of safety concerns and their own schooling experience. Heather (2002) conducted a case study at one private and one public junior high school for girls to understand why parents chose to send their daughters to single-sex schools. In their interviews, parents reported how their daughters were routinely ranked by their peers based on their appearance, discriminated against in school sports by their school coaches, and sometimes physically abused by the boys in their class for refusing to do their homework. Parents also reported fearing that their girls would become pregnant due to the increased sexuality among adolescents. Both fathers and mothers reported that their school experiences played a role in why they chose to send their daughters to an SSS. Fathers admitted to being concerned with popularity in their own childhoods rather than their academics, which hindered their life prospects. For mothers, they admitted to competing for boys' attention when they were in school and to marrying too soon, which hindered their abilities to continue their education. These results further suggest that parents want their daughters to be safe, concentrate on their studies, continue their education beyond high school, get married, and only then engage in sexual activities with their partner, making parental support for single-sex schools even stronger.

Same-sex role models. Another benefit that supporters of single-sex schools claim was that boys and girls are able to interact with same-sex peer and adult role models in an SSS. The term role model refers to “a person whose behavior in a particular role is imitated by others” (Role Model, n.d. para 1). For girls, they are able to see their female teachers and peers assume

leadership roles and participate in sports, which would typically be prioritized for boys, which in turn increased their confidence and self-worth as girls (Williams, 2007). Watson et al. (2002) queried the career aspirations of high achieving girls attending a single-sex school compared to girls and boys at a coeducational school. Based on a 14 self-reporting, true or false, multiple choice career aspiration questionnaire, Watson et al. found that high achieving girls' aspirations were comparable to high achieving boys' aspirations, but that girls in single-sex schools had higher career aspirations than boys and girls in coeducational schools. Watson et al. concluded that "parental choice, proximity to female role models, teacher's involvement, peer synergy — all of these factors led us to predict higher career aspirations from the all-girls school participants" (p. 333). Indeed, these findings suggest that girls benefit from female role-models, which invalidate a worldly view that girls are inferior to boys, whether in the classroom, workplace, or homelife.

While there was a need for girls to learn in an environment that encompasses female role-models, there was equally a need for boys to learn in an environment that encompasses male role-models. Brooms (2017) interviewed 20 college-aged Black males who had attended a single-sex high school regarding their experiences with Black male teachers at an SSS. The findings indicated that the Black male students viewed their Black male teachers as father figures that cared about their social, emotional, and academic development. Black male students reported being taught about manhood and masculinity and believed that it was essential for them to be taught these attributes by Black male teachers. Brooms concluded that "Black male teachers can play a role in supporting the needs of Black male youth...being exposed to a variety of Black male identities provides fertile ground for Black male youth to explore their own identity possibilities" (p. 33). These findings further underpin the belief shared by many that

Black boys, who often come from fatherless homes, benefit from Black male teachers in their schools that can relate to them and show them what it means to be a Black man.

A Reform for Black Boys

According to Crawford-Ferre and Wiest (2013), single-sex schools (SSS) regained national attention during the 1980s as an education reform initiative that could address the steady decline in the educational attainment for Black boys. Black boys are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers, be classified as special education, and be removed from their classes because of disciplinary reasons (Fergus & Noguera, 2010). According to Noguera (2012), SSS provides Black boys a safe learning environment in which they are free to "be themselves, where the peer culture reinforces the value of learning, and where character, ethics, and moral development are far more important than rigid discipline policies" (para.12). This section examines studies evaluating the impact that single-sex schools have on Black boys' learning experiences and educational outcomes. Examining these studies will shape our understanding of the impact that single-sex schools have on Black boys, not just academically but socially and emotionally as well.

Improve Academic Achievement

Some claim that single-sex schools (SSS) are capable of enhancing Black boys' academic achievement (Meyer, 2008), while others suggest that there was insufficient evidence to support that statement (Fergus et al., 2009). In an attempt to determine to what extent restructuring a coeducational school to a SSS had on the reading achievement of African American students, Dwarte (2014) compared Black students reading scores from year one to year five of the coeducational school restructure to a single-sex school. Using scores on the Pennsylvania System of Schools Assessment (PSSA), Dwarte found significant differences in Black boy's reading

scores. Although Black boys' reading scores reached were lower in year one of the single-sex school 2004 - 2005 (M = 1070) than their previous reading scores in coeducational school 2003-2004 (M = 1188), their reading scores rose year-after-year, reaching an all-time high in year five of the single-sex school 2008-2009 (M = 1236) resulting in a 13% increase in boys reading scores. On the other hand, girls reading scores in year one of the single-sex school 2004-2005 (M=1226) was higher than their previous reading scores in coeducational school 2003-2004 (M=1197) and reached an all-time high in year five of single-sex school 2008-2009 (M = 1352) resulting in an overall 11% increase in girls reading scores. Dwarte concluded that "as the implementation of the restructuring initiative stabilized, reading achievement steadily increased" (p. 169). The findings in this study suggest that restructuring coeducational schools to single-sex schools may be effective at improving reading scores, an area in which Black boys have historically underperformed.

In contrast, Else-Quest and Peterca (2015) conducted a quasi-experimental study measuring the attitude and achievement of Black students attending two single-sex schools (SSS) and eight coeducational schools. They administered a three-scale survey to measure Black students' attitudes (self-concept, value, and expectation) about math, science, and reading and writing, and their math, science, readings, and writing scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) were also assessed. Else-Quest and Peterca found no evidence that gender separation was related to academic attitudes but found that Black girls attending the SSS outperformed Black girls attending the MSS in math, science, reading, and writing. In contrast, Black boys attending the SSS performed lower than Black boys attending the MSS in math and writing. Else-Quest and Peterca concluded that "some students may be helped by the gender-segregated program, some may show detriments, and some may not be affected at all" (p. 174).

The findings of this study indicate support for claims that Black girls are more likely to academically benefit from a single-sex school setting than Black boys (Whitmore, 2005).

Caring Black Male Mentors

While research has yielded mixed findings as it relates to achievement, there are other benefits single-sex schools offer Black boys, such as the opportunity to learn from Black male mentors (Mitchell & Stewart, 2011). The term mentor refers to “a trusted counselor or guide” (Mentor, n.d., para 1). Terry et al. (2014) conducted a two-year study at two SSS to explore whether educators should consider SSS as a suitable option for Black boys. In 18 months, the researchers observed classrooms, conducted semi-structured interviews with students, and held student focus groups. Black boys reported feeling encouraged, a sense that their identities were legitimized, and encouraged to speak about prejudice and other racialized issues within their societies. Black boys attributed their success largely to their Black male teacher mentors, whom they likened to father figures and described as "careful, concerned, compassionate and dedicated" (p. 685). Black male teachers reported that they "actively worked to exercise the authority of the teaching relationship through behaviors that the students would understand and interpret as care, rather than simply through the power of the school-based hierarchy" (p. 686). Terry et al. concluded that single-sex schools, "effectively shield Black males from the marginalizing effects of urban schooling" (p. 666) and offered the following principles on how to design effective single-sex schools for Black boys:

- Effective interventions begin with recognizing the need for separate spaces.
- Build effective intervention on a clear theory of change.
- Stakeholders must ethically navigate the politics and policy of black male spaces.

- Effective single-sex educational settings require informed pedagogy and practices.
- Single-sex educational settings must be researched and evaluated (p. 688-692).

Similarly, Gordon et al. (2009) set out to examine the impact that the Benjamin E. Mays Institute (BEMI), an Afro-centric mentoring program, had on Black boys' achievement. The aim of BEMI was to meet the needs of Black boys by providing them with one-on-one positive male mentors. Gordon et al. administered a Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS) and Identification with Academic Scale (IAS) questionnaire to fourth through eighth-grade Black boys and analyzed their GPA and test scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test. The result indicated that Black boys enrolled in BEMI scored higher in math and had higher GPAs than Black boys who were not enrolled in the mentoring program. In addition, Black boys enrolled in the mentoring program had higher racial identities and attitudes about their academics. Gordon et al. concluded that mentoring programs such as BEMI could improve the racial identities of Black boys and have a positive impact on their academic achievement and was consistent with other previous studies showing a need for Black male mentors (Bristol & Mentor, 2018; Watson, Sealey-Ruiz, & Jackson, 2014). The findings of the Gordon et al. (2009) study showing improvement in Black boys' math performance are in direct conflict with the Else-Quest and Peterca (2015) study, which showed that Black boys enrolled in single-sex classrooms performed academically lower in math than Black boys enrolled in mixed-sex classrooms. However, male mentors from the BEMI program in the Gordon et al. (2009) study may have contributed to the positive impact on Black boys' math achievement scores, which could explain the differences in math scores.

A Culture of Brotherhood

Many believe that single-sex schools cultivate a culture of brotherhood for Black boys, which in turn produces unbreakable bonds between Black boys and their teachers (Laing, 2017). Nelson (2016) set out to understand how a set of relational teaching strategies supported Black boys' engagement and learning and to dispel negative racial and gender stereotypes. Thus, Nelson conducted an ethnographic study and followed the lived experiences of 27 Black boys attending Bright Boys Academy (BBA). Nelson analyzed the observational data collected using Relational Teaching Framework (RTF) — a framework that was used by teachers to employ gender-specific teaching strategies and establish a relationship with their low-income Black male students. Black boys reported that their schoolteachers were successful at conveying course content and establishing positive relationships. BBA students also reported feeling a sense of brotherhood and routinely recited, "my brother with him is strong" (p. 20). BBA teachers were successful at establishing positive student-teacher relationships with Black boys using the following core values:

- Brotherhood — Encourage boys to assume the role of caretaker of fellow brothers and community and in their own personal growth.
- Care — Encourage boys to place the needs of their peers before themselves and accept their peers for who they are.
- Support — Challenges boys to let no physical or emotional harm come to peers and demand personal best from peers in all facets of life.
- Respect — Ask boys to show truth, kindness, and love in their interactions (p.8).

Nelson concluded that "relationally effective teachers are of the utmost importance...teachers must maintain productive relationships...and help boys become resilient against oppressive

stereotypes and other debilitating social forces" (p. 27). The findings in the study are consistent with other studies that have debunked the misguided beliefs that Black boys are *non-relational* (Flennaugh, 2017; Way, 2013).

Similarly, Jackson et al. (2014) examined how 14 Black and Latino boys who attended Umoja Network for Young Men (UMOJA), an all-male mentoring program, described their experiences through the lens of Culturally Responsive Caring (CRC) — a framework that helps teachers foster a caring relationship with all students from all cultures and encourage students to develop confidence, pride, a sense of responsibility, and critical consciousness (p.400). Jackson et al. found that *the ethos of care*, which includes unity, safety, and care, was present and that both mentors and mentees displayed a sense of trust, love, and care in a supportive learning environment. The boys reported a sense of Brotherhood, where they “loved and cared” for one another and that their mentors were intentional at referring to them as “little brothers” (p. 404). One male participant conveyed, “to be a brother in UMOJA is like to be one...we came together and were taught what a brother should be” (p. 405). Jackson et al. concluded that “Black and Latino are often stereotyped because of their race and gender, encountering reciprocal love in a caring environment can be a restorative, hearing, and educative experience” (p. 411). These findings are consistent with other studies that emphasize the importance of brotherhood on Black boys’ learning experience (Oeur, 2017; Nelson, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This case study is guided by the theoretical framework of Fergus and Noguera (2010), who identified two framing theories for how single-sex schools served as an intervention for Boys of Color (Black and Latino Boys). Over a three-year period, Fergus and Noguera (2010) conducted a longitudinal study of seven single-sex schools to examine the basis for why school

officials transformed coeducational schools into single-sex schools for Black and Latino boys. To this end, researchers interviewed and held focus groups with teachers, administrators, counselors, and social workers from seven single-sex schools across the U.S. who taught colored boys between the ages of 9 and 18.

Fergus and Noguera’s (2010) proposed two framing theories for characterizing single-sex schools as an intervention for Black and Latino boys. The researchers first found that single-sex school practitioners “understand and have knowledge of the social and emotional needs of Black and Latino Boys” (p. 6). With respect to framing theory one, the researchers explicitly contended that single-sex schools’ practitioners were successful at addressing Black and Latino boys' social and emotional needs by (a) changing boys' ideas of what is a man and Black or Latino male, (b) incorporating academic identity, and (c) developing future leaders. Figure 1 illustrates how single-sex school practitioners defined Black and Latino Boys’ social and emotional needs (Fergus & Noguera, 2010, p. 6).

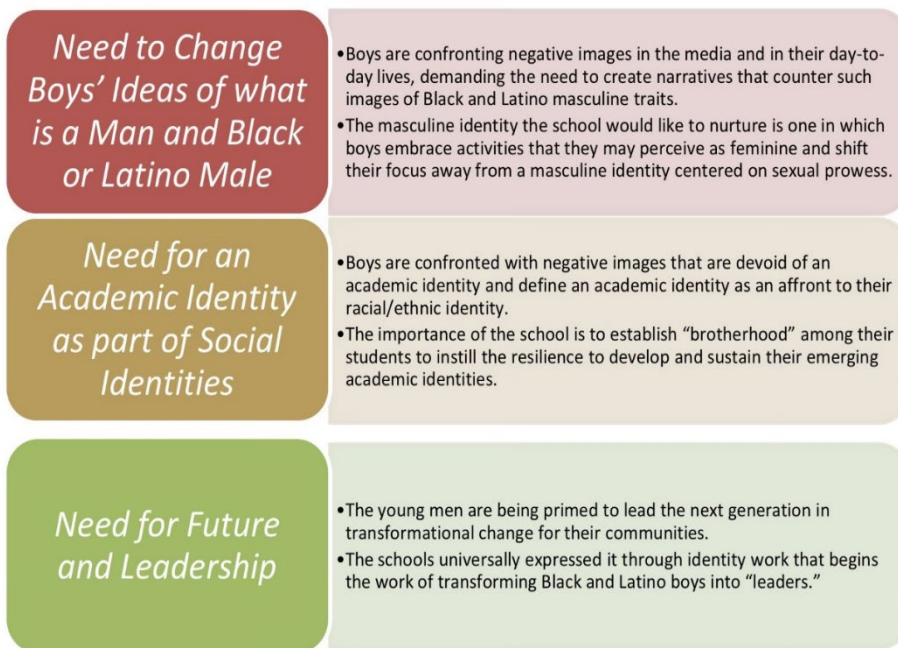


Figure 1. Understanding and Knowing the Social/Emotional Needs of Black and Latino Boys.

In addition to understanding and knowing the social and emotional needs of Black boys, Fergus and Noguera (2010) concluded that single-sex school practitioners understood how the academic needs of Black and Latino boys had surfaced and implemented targeted strategies towards addressing those needs. In respect to theory two, the researchers specifically contended that single-sex schools’ practitioners were able to address Black and Latino boys’ academic needs by (a) addressing the gaps in academic skills, (b) preparing them for college, (c) having high academic expectations, and (d) making curriculum and instruction relevant. Figure 2 displays how single-sex school practitioners defined Black and Latino Boys’ academic learning needs (Fergus & Noguera, 2010, p. 7).

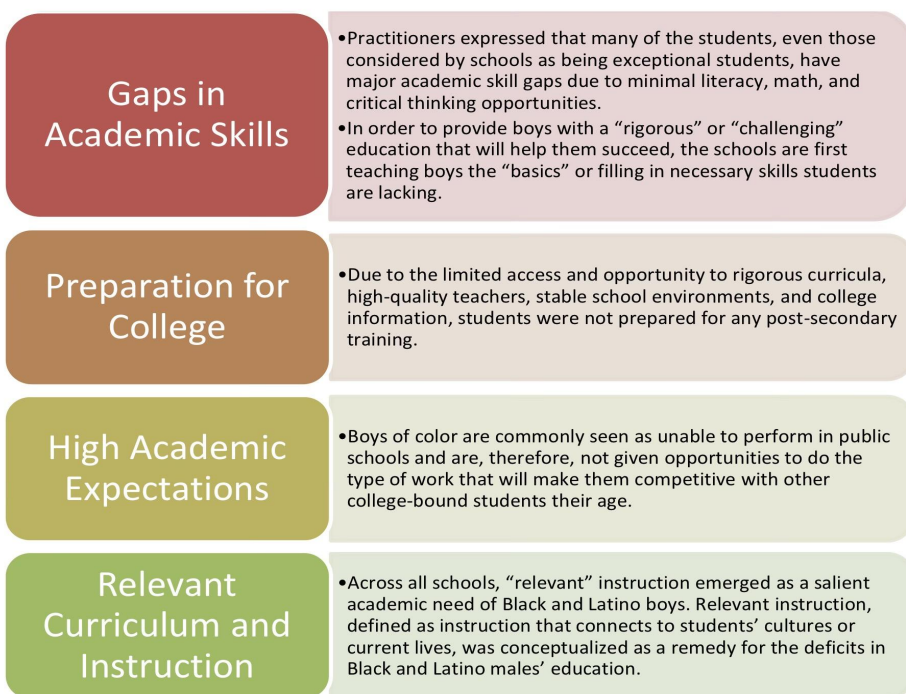


Figure 2. Understanding and addressing the academic needs of Black and Latino boys.

Fergus and Noguera (2010) two framing theories of single-sex schools as an intervention for boys of color is a good fit for this case study as the focus of this case study was to understand how teachers and principals perceive an all-boy, single-sex school and their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys on their campus. To this end, I utilize seven of the aforementioned

strategies identified in both framing theories in my analysis and interpretation of qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups with single-sex school practitioners in order to connect the dots between theory and practice (Yin, 2018). In other words, I prioritize linking Fergus and Noguera's framing theories discussed in this section to the study's empirical findings, which are presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

Summary

In Chapter 2, I discussed the current academic state of Black boys attending school in the United States of America and provided a brief historical overview of SSS. I also highlighted past court case cases, which provided insight into why opponents believed single-sex schools to be unconstitutional and how proponents defended their legality. Next, I explored research validating that there are real neurological differences that exist between boys and girls, which requires them to learn in different spaces. Then, I drew attention to arguments for and against the establishment of single-sex schools and explained how single-sex schools have resurfaced over the past two decades as an intervention to address the academic challenges facing Black boys. Finally, I unveiled the theoretical framework by which this case study is framed. In Chapter 3, I present the research method, which includes the approval process, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This dissertation examines the perceptions held by principals and teachers at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB, a pseudonym), a single-sex middle through high school located in North Texas. This dissertation specifically explores the perceptions that principals and teachers had about NTSB and their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys on their campus. Due to the homogenous nature of the student population and the heterogeneous nature of the study's participants, the researcher deployed a case study approach to better understand the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Unlike a narrative study, which seeks to understand the experience and perceptions of an individual, this case study sought to gather a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon based on the collective experience and perceptions of a group of single-sex school practitioners (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In the following section, I present a case study research design. First, I reintroduce the research questions that guide this study and explain the research project's approval process. Next, I introduced the site location and explained my rationale for selecting the case study's site location. Then I reveal the research target population and criteria and the process for recruiting and selecting participants. Finally, I describe the process by which data was collected and analyzed and strategies deployed to ensure both trustworthiness and validity of the data.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study to develop an understanding of the phenomenon in this single-bounded case study:

- RQ1. What are teachers' and principals' views towards an all-boys, single-sex school?
- RQ2. How do teachers and principals of an all-boys single-sex school describe their

abilities to meet the learning needs of Black boys attending their school?

- RQ3. What internal barriers do teachers and principals in an all-boys, single-sex school perceives as hindering the learning experience of Black boys on their campus?

Site Selection

This case study took place at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB), a single-sex middle and high school for boys located in a large school district in North Texas. The researcher chose NTSB for this case study to “collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue and problem under study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 100). In 2011, NTSB opened its doors to its first cohort of sixth-grade boys and added a grade level each subsequent year until it reached twelfth grade. NTSB is essentially a single-sex continuum school, meaning it provided boys' educational services in sixth through twelfth grade. NTSB student population has a higher percentage of boys of color (i.e., Hispanics and Black Boys) who come from impoverished local neighborhoods but managed to outperform their peers academically and demonstrated that they could close racial and gender achievement gaps. Furthermore, NTSB’s faculty is racially diverse, has years of experience working to improve Black boys' learning outcomes in co-educational schools, and can provide insight into how Black boys benefited from a single-sex school learning environment.

Participant Recruitment

The researcher used purposeful sampling to target “a group of people that can inform the researcher about the problem under examination” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 276). Specifically, in this case, the researcher targeted two campus principals and four teachers employed at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB), an all-boys single-sex school, to participate in this study. Each

of the chosen teachers had at least two years of teaching experience, and each chosen principal had at least two years of leadership experience at NTSB. Each of the selected participants was exposed to various aspects of the problem and willingly presented their unique perspectives on the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Given the relatively small number of teaching staff at the NTSB (Teacher = 24), all teachers taught multiple content areas and grade levels. Furthermore, both principals were responsible for the supervision of functional areas in both middle and high schools. Prior to any recruitment efforts, the researcher met virtually with the gatekeeper, the single-sex school's Executive Director (ED), to explain the purpose, scope, criteria, and time commitment of the case study, as “local permission to gather data from individuals needed to be obtained early on in the research” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 119). After receiving approval from the ED, the researcher began efforts to recruit two principals and four teachers at the single-sex school.

The researcher first sent out three rounds of recruitment emails to principals and teachers, detailing the study's purpose, criteria, and selection processes and formally inviting them to participate in the research project (see Appendix A). Next, the researcher emailed all interested participants who responded to the email outlining interview protocols and requesting from each participant demographic information about their careers (see Appendix B and C). The researcher then examined which participants met the criteria based on their career demographics and sent an email notifying all selected participants (see Appendix B and C). Finally, the researcher sent an informed adult consent form to each selected participant to review and endorse, acknowledging their agreement to participate in the study (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

Over two days, the researcher collected data primarily from semi-structured individual interviews with two campus principals and four teachers, plus a teacher focus group consisting of the same teachers from the individual interviews. The one-on-one interviews with the campus principals took place before the teacher's one-on-one interviews and teacher focus groups so that the researcher could examine if principals' perceptions of single-sex schools aligned with or differed from the teachers' point of view of single-sex schools. The purpose of the teacher focus group was to observe the teacher interactions and examine if teachers' perceptions are the same, differ, or were influenced by their colleagues. The researcher ensured the participants' anonymity; all data was masked, and all participants were assigned pseudonyms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Also, the researcher captured data in real-time by utilizing "high-quality recording devices" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 324). Specifically, the researcher used an Apple laptop as the primary device, an iPad as the secondary device, and an iPhone as the third device to audio and video record one-hour, in-depth interviews with each participant and an hour and a half teacher focus group.

Due to pandemic-related health protocols, all research events occurred over Zoom, a web-based online audio and video conferencing platform (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher accounted for transmission issues experienced with a device using multiple electronic devices to audio and video record the Zoom interview sessions. The Zoom platform allowed the researcher to save and store data files in a password-protected, web-based storage cloud, which furthered "protected the anonymity of the participants" (p. 280). The Zoom platform also included an electronic notepad, allowing the researcher to simultaneously observe and document individual characteristics and behaviors during the interviews. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Furthermore, the Zoom platform allowed the researcher to repeatedly analyze both audio and video data collected during the focus group and observe how each group member interacted with one another and influenced one another's perceptions of the phenomenon without unintentionally disclosing their identities during data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher began analyzing the data by “searching for promising patterns, insights, or concepts” (Yin, 2018, p. 164). Although case study analytical procedures are not well established or defined, the researcher generally relied on a combination of the theoretical framework and findings from empirical studies presented in Chapter 2 as the groundwork for crafting interview questions aligned to research questions (Yin, 2018). Then the researcher employed specific strategies to analyze and interpret data collected from the interview sessions, such as a) interview transcriptions, b) pattern matching, c) explanation building, and d) selective coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

First, the researcher imported audio recordings into Otter.ai, an online, automatic transcription tool, after each interview session (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Otter.ai processed raw, unedited versions of each transcript using artificial intelligence; however, the researcher went back over each transcript to ensure each participants’ account was as accurate as possible, cleaning up stutters, filler words, false starts, and repetitions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher then named each transcript by each of the participant pseudonyms and stored them in an encrypted, password-protected cloud (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Given the real-world context of this case study, the researcher treated the transcripts, audio, and video files with “special care and sensitivity” to “avoid disclosing information that would harm participants” (Yin, 2018, p. 88-337).

After the researcher concluded that each transcript portrayed an accurate depiction of the participants' statements during the interviews, he conducted a coding process known as *pattern matching* to get a general understanding of the phenomenon in this case (Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), using a pattern matching approach to data analytics allows the researcher to examine "how and why an organization operates the way it does and how and why the operations have led to certain results" (p. 175). In the context of this case, the researcher specifically went through each transcript line by line, looking for recurring statements that matched empirical findings from the literature and then categorized them into sets of codes (Yin, 2018).

Following pattern matching, the researcher used explanation building, a more advanced type of analysis, to expand our understanding of the phenomenon, transforming a set of codes into categories (Yin, 2018). Since researchers present case studies in narrative form, it is difficult to quantify the essence of a phenomenon, but an explanation-building approach allows the researcher to "stipulate a predetermined set of casual sequences" (p. 179). This case study is partly deductive because the codes are based on predetermined theoretical propositions and empirical findings of the phenomenon discussed in Chapter 2, but it is also partly inductive because the researcher refined emerging codes and categories as he examined the case study's findings.

To finish the analysis, the researcher conducted *selective coding*, converting categories into themes as they emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), selective coding allows the researcher to "write a storyline that connects the categories" (p. 363). Once it became apparent that the categories reached "saturation" (p. 172) and reflected the participants' general perception of the phenomenon, the researcher integrated the categories into meaningful thematic themes and began writing a narrative description. Thus, the narrative

encompasses significant statements, stories, and quotes made by school practitioners regarding their perception of single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' learning experiences and educational outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, the researcher ensured that all data obtained in this case study was from first-hand accounts of all interviews and focus groups. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), researchers should seek to “build rapport with participants and gatekeepers, learn the culture and context, and check for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by themselves and informants” (p. 452). To this end, the researcher collaborated with all participants to include the gatekeeper, from the very beginning of the research project to the completion of the research project. To ensure the validity of the conclusion reached, the researcher engaged in member checking with all participants during and after each research event to ensure that an accurate depiction of the participants' stories was conveyed (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Institutional Review Boards (IRB) | Research Review Board (RRB)

The researcher gained permission from the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school district's Research Review Board (RBB) after submitting a detailed research proposal that demonstrated a clear and direct educational value to the school district and the field of education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In keeping with the fundamental elements of informed consent, the researcher fully disclosed the nature of the research's problem and purpose to the gatekeeper and prospective participants. Before collecting data, the researcher gained consent from each participant by having them read an easy-to-understand adult participant consent form and verbally agree to participate in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The adult consent form

included the following design criteria: a) study purpose, b) study explanation, c) potential risk, d) potential benefits, e) voluntary participation, f) statement of confidentiality, and g) right to withdraw from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Summary

Chapter 3 included the presentation of a research design that first outlined the steps I will take to obtain approval for the study. Then, Chapter 3 provided a rationale for selecting the study site and the steps that I will take to recruit study participants. Finally, Chapter 3 explained the research procedures that I will use to collect the data, analyze the data, and ensure that the data was reliable. Previously, Chapter 1 discussed the purpose of the study and its relevance to the field of single-sex schools, and Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive review of relevant single-sex and school literature. Next, Chapter 4 will introduce the study participants and provide a thematic description of the findings. Chapter 4 will be followed by Chapter 5, which will include a discussion of the findings, limitations of the research projects, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

This case study examined the perceptions that teachers and principals at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB, a pseudonym) hold regarding single-sex schools and their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys. In light of the limited research on single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' educational experience (Fergus & Noguera, 2010), research into this phenomenon was appropriate and therefore contributed to the field. This chapter includes a presentation of qualitative data collected from six in-depth interviews and one teacher focus group — a narrative of principals' and teachers' perceptions of the complex issue in its real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The findings from one-on-one interviews and focus groups are presented in a combined manner to succinctly narrate a storyline, as explained in Chapter 3. The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1. What are teachers' and principals' views towards an all-boys, single-sex school?
- RQ2. How do teachers and principals of an all-boys single-sex school describe their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys attending their school?
- RQ3. What internal barriers do teachers and principals of an all-boys, single-sex school see as hindering the learning experience of Black boys on their campus?

This chapter is divided into five sections. First, this chapter describes the recruitment and selection of participants according to predefined criteria for the case study. Next is a presentation of each participant's demographics (i.e., role, age, gender), followed by a brief, narrative introduction of each participant and their unique NTSB experience. This chapter then provides a brief, historical overview of the NTSB and discusses why the researcher selected NTSB as the case study site. Finally, there is a presentation of the themes that emerged from an in-depth

analysis of qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews and a focus group (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The Participants

Prior to any recruitment efforts, a meeting was held with the gatekeeper, in this case, the Executive Director (ED) of the single-sex school, who learned about the purpose, scope, criteria, and timing of the case study. With the approval of the ED, the researcher began recruiting principals and teachers at the single-sex school. First, the researcher sent a recruitment e-mail to the principal and asst. principal of the single-sex school, inviting both of them to take part in the case study. Next, three rounds of recruitment e-mails were sent to all teachers at the single-sex school explaining the purpose of the case study, the criteria for participating in the case study, and the case study selection process. In response to the recruitment emails, six participants replied back, agreeing to take part in the case study: (1) Principal, (1) Assistant Principal, and (4) Teachers.

All six participants were selected to take part in this study based on their current role (i.e., teacher or principal), their current school assignment (i.e., all-boy, single-sex school), and their years of experience in educating Black boys in single-sex schools and co-educational schools learning environment (i.e., minimum of two years). In addition to the respective roles, assignments, and years of experience of the participants, the researcher also considered the following demographics of the participants before finalizing their selection in order to seek a wide variety of perspectives: (a) gender, (b) race, and (c) content area, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Participants	Role	Sex	Content	Race	Years in CE	Years in SSS
Austin	Principal	M	Leadership	Black	8	2
Brooklyn	Principal	F	Leadership	Black	11	3
Phoenix	Teacher	F	Science	Black	9	2
Dallas	Teacher	M	Music	Black	17	2
Jordan	Teacher	M	Social Studies/ Latin	White	3	10
Raleigh	Teacher	M	Business / Art	White	10	7

Note: CE = Coeducational School | SSS = Single-Sex Schools | $N = 6$

To achieve a balanced representation of core and non-core disciplines, one science teacher, one music teacher, one business and visual arts teacher, and one Spanish and government teacher were selected for a one-on-one interview and focus group. Equally important, I selected one principal and one vice-principal to participate in a one-on-one interview to ensure a balanced school administration role representation. All six selected participants had at least two years of experience teaching Black boys (“boys of color”) in both co-educational and single-sex schools to provide a broad, in-depth perspective on the phenomenon.

Out of the six participants selected, two were females, and four were males to minimize any perceived perceptions of gender bias. Equally important, out of the six participants selected, four were Black, and two were White to eliminate any perceived perception of racial alienation. All participants were assigned gender-neutral city pseudonyms and were asked not to disclose their participation or to disclose the involvement of any other staff members in this study for the

sole purpose of protecting the identities of all participants and maintaining the confidentiality of their workplaces.

Austin

Austin served as the third principal of NTSB. Before Austin's appointment to the principalship, he served as NTSB's vice-principal. Austin had over 10 years of experience working with Black boys in coeducational schools and single-sex schools. Austin offered a unique perspective on single-sex schools as he also attended an all-boys school as a youth. Austin felt "very fortunate to be the principal." He believed his responsibility was to be a "resource and advocate" for all the boys on his campus. He reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding the "creed, mission, and vision" and cultivating a culture of leadership on his campus. Austin expressed with great passion, "our theme was levels of leadership, making an impact...we are not just developing young men into leaders, we are also developing all of the staff so that they can also be impactful leaders — it starts at the top".

Brooklyn

Brooklyn served as NTSB's vice-principal for the past three years. Prior to Brooklyn's appointment to vice-principal at NTSB, she served 10 years as a technology teacher, technology coordinator, and technology instructional coach. Before joining NTSB, Brooklyn admitted, "I was very hesitant and curious about the model...I just felt there wasn't much of a difference...but this was my third school year...I am definitely a believer now after working here and seeing the successes". Now, as a school leader, Brooklyn explained, "We focus on the original mission and vision of the campus...our theme was level of leadership making an impact exclamation point...we encourage the staff and students to take part in leadership roles."

Jordan

Jordan was a founding teacher of NTSB and has taught AP Human Geography and Latin at NTSB for the past 10 years. Before joining NTSB, Jordan taught at a coeducational high school located in an impoverished community south of the city for three years. However, Jordan felt that “innovation wasn’t happening the way it needed to happen for the students that needed it the most,” which was why he decided to work at NTSB. To Jordan, “single-sex schools are not the solution, but a part of the solution” to addressing the challenges facing “boys of color.” Jordan had two teaching philosophies: first, “stick to the lesson cycle,” and secondly, “care less about what the students know and more about what they are able to do.”

Phoenix

Phoenix was a Biology teacher who has taught at NTSB for the past two years. Prior to joining NTSB, Phoenix taught in coeducational schools for nine years and admitted that she “was a little nervous about teaching in a single-sex environment because [she] was used to working in coeducational schools with at-risk students.” Now, Phoenix felt that her “teaching experience [at NTSB] turned out to be something amazing!” Phoenix proudly described her boys as “awesome and respectful” and “their work-ethics as amazing.” With pure delight, Phoenix expressed, “honestly, this has been one of the best teaching experiences I have had in my career.” Phoenix has two teaching philosophies: “connect with each student” and “teach to the whole student.”

Raleigh

Raleigh taught Visual Arts and Global Business at NTSB for seven years. Before NTSB, Raleigh taught “children of color” at a nearby coeducational high school located in the southern sector of the city for 10 years and was “later recruited to join NTSB.” Raleigh accepted NTSB’s

job offer after “spending a few days visiting the single-sex school” and learning about its many benefits for “boys of color.” Seven years later, Raleigh was steadfast in his belief that “single-gender schools are the best option they have...this environment helps them to make it over those hurdles.” Raleigh’s teaching philosophy was that “[he] firmly believes that the creative process and the learning process are one and the same, and so [he] tries to engage students by getting them involved.”

Denver

Denver taught instrumental music at NTSB for the past two years. Denver previously served as an instrumental music teacher at a coeducational high school in the city’s southern sector for 17 years. Denver decided to work at NTSB because “[he] saw it as an opportunity for career progression.” Denver readily admits that he “didn’t know much about the school culture before [he] chose to work at NTSB.” Denver explains, “had [he] known about the school’s culture...that definitely would have had a bearing on [him] wanting to work [at NTSB].” After teaching at NTSB, Denver “considers it a wonderful opportunity to teach young men.” Denver’s teaching philosophy was to “treat every student like a one-on-one situation...find out what was hindering that student from learning and address that need.”

Site Description

This case study took place at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB), a single-sex middle and high school for boys located in a large inner-city public school district in North Texas. In 2011, NTSB opened its doors to its first cohort of sixth-grade boys and added a grade level each subsequent year until it reached 12th grade. Thus, NTSB was considered a single-sex continuum school, meaning it services boys from sixth through graduation. The researcher selected NTSB as the site to conduct this case study because its student enrollment reflects a large population of

Boys of Color (i.e., Hispanics and Black Boys) who reside in urban communities, who are academically outperforming their White male and female peers, and who have demonstrated the ability to close racial and gender achievement gaps. In addition, the faculty at NTSB have years of experience working to improve Black boys' learning outcomes in co-educational schools, and now that they work in an all-boys single-sex school, they are able to provide insight into how Black boys benefit from learning in an all-boys single-sex school.

Findings

As a group, the participants shared a common experience as teachers and principals working at a single-sex school, which primarily served “Boys of Color.” The participants had an in-depth understanding of the complex phenomenon within their real-life contexts. They provided a thick and rich description (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of their views about single-sex schools and their impact on the learning experience of Black boys. There was unanimous consensus on all themes that emerged, with the exception of one, which will be discussed in-depth in chapter five in the discussion and conclusion section. In this section, I provide a narrative description of the following six themes, which are organized by research questions: (a) shared mindset, (b) free from sexual distraction, (c) a culture of brotherhood, (d) a boy-centered instructional environment, (e) lack of relevant professional development and (f) COVID-19! All themes and sub-themes are presented in the ordering of research questions and are named in a manner that gives the readers “a clear indication of the content within the themes” (Willig & Rogers, 2017, p. 31).

RQ #1. What are teachers' and principals' views towards an all-boys, single-sex school?

In response to this research question, four themes emerged. The participants believed that an all-boys, single-sex school allowed staff members to share a common mindset, provided a safe learning environment free of sexual distractions, and fostered a culture of brotherhood.

Shared mindset. Participants overwhelmingly believed that one of the primary benefits of the single-sex school model was that it allowed them to “have a shared mindset” and a “sense of purpose throughout the school.” The participants held that Black boys benefited from a learning environment in which teachers were aware of the Brothers' social and academic challenges and worked together to help the Brothers overcome those challenges. In this section, I will describe the participants' views on how they described their shared mindset.

Social and academics. There was a consensus among the participants that every staff member had to have a shared “mindset” to work at NTSB. Above all, the participants held that staff members were expected to contribute to the social and academic development of students. Austin explained that “the staff played an important role...we are not just teaching them math and science and reading, we want [the Brothers] to be well-rounded young men.” Austin went on to explain:

We tell them that we want them to be leaders for whatever they choose to do post-graduation. We want them to be good fathers, to be good sons, and good brothers to their families. So that is part of the social development that we also teach. – Austin

Denver echoed this same sentiment, asserting, “Our principles are building these young men to be leaders for the Global Society...If you walk throughout our building, you will see that our young men are in blazers, ties, and slacks on a daily basis.” Raleigh chimed in, emphasizing that

“[NTSB] is more than just an all-boys school. It is about this world. It is not just education; it is also coming together to overcome the social challenges — racism and poverty.” Brooklyn agreed and explained that many of the Brothers were from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds and shared some misconceptions about NTSB:

I think there is a misconception about our students being rich, or from great homes, or houses of educators, but that is not the case. A lot of our Black boys come from low-poverty homes right from this neighborhood or other neighborhoods that are impoverished. It is important that people know that the [Brothers] really overcame a lot of obstacles. – Brooklyn

Brooklyn went on to emphasize the importance of hiring a diverse group of staff members that had a vested interest in teaching Black boys, stating:

You cannot just hire any staff with any mindset and put them in a situation where they are working with Black boys. The hiring was very intentional in these past three years. We have between 12 to 14 different countries [represented] at [NTSB]. Our staff is multiracial, multi-ethnic, and that was very intentional. So, it starts with finding and hiring emotionally stable people that have various ethnic or cultural backgrounds themselves. When you do that, you will have adults that have a lot of positive intentions towards the [Brothers]. We do not believe in tearing them down. Everything we do is intentional, and it builds them up! – Brooklyn

Austin agreed and asserted that he made sure that “every adult in the building [were] walking the same walk and are on the same page because any disunity that is perceived, or heard, or felt by the Brothers” would hinder what they were trying to do. In addition, Austin explained that NTSB was a magnet school, and he believed that the academic admission criteria contributed to the

Brothers' academic achievement. However, the participants held that the majority of the Brothers were accepted into the magnet school with academic challenges that needed to be addressed.

Raleigh best summarized the view of the group:

I know we are considered a magnet school, but we do not have the same academic prerequisites that say [another magnet school] does, and so we are taking some boys that definitely have some academic challenges that a school like [another magnet school] would not. But we all have a sense of purpose here at [NTSB], and we work together to accomplish those goals. We keep a pretty close eye on when there is a student that is struggling. We work together to focus on high-need boys, I think to a greater extent than what I had seen happening in my previous experience in [coed schools]. – Raleigh

Jordan agreed that the Brothers had academic challenges that needed to be addressed and made known that many of the staff members, including him, decided to work at the NTSB out of frustration of failing to close the racial achievement gap in coeducational schools:

The biggest problem that concerns me is the racial achievement gap. It is something that eats at my soul every time I look at the numbers, and it is the reason why I dedicated my professional career working here in [southside of the city]. So, I do think single-sex schools can be a part of the solution to closing that gap completely, which I think we will do, eventually! – Jordan

When asked if the participants felt they were successful at closing the racial achievement gap, Austin enthusiastically asserted, “we are outperforming state data, and we are outperforming district data. There is no achievement gap between our campus, which is 99% Hispanic and African American. We are outperforming the White achievement for the state!” Austin went on to explain, “If you compare our data to magnet schools, then we have some room to grow. We

are not at the bottom, but I would like us to be at the top!” Jordan shared the same sentiment and summarized the view of the group:

I have averaged about 50% Black and 50% Latino [Brothers]. If we compare my students to the rest of the district, and particularly Boys of Color, they do very well, very well! If we compare my students to schools that are primarily White in suburban-type schools, they are about slightly above or equal, so I do believe that we have erased the achievement gap, at least, in the classes that I have been teaching and in most of the classes here at the school. That is one of the reasons I believe so strongly in the school and what we have been able to accomplish. – Jordan

Jordan's sentiment was common throughout all the interviews. The participants strongly believed that they were focused on closing the achievement gap. The Brothers benefited from learning from teachers who were aware of their social and academic challenges and worked together to help the Brothers overcome those challenges. Although a magnet school, the participants insisted that most of their Brothers had learning gaps that could only be addressed by teachers who had a desire to close the racial achievement gaps. None of the participants remarked on any legal issues related to the establishment of NTSB as they lacked first-hand knowledge regarding NTSB establishment because they were not a part of the original team.

Safe learning environment. The participants overwhelmingly believed that NTSB was a safe learning environment. Specifically, the participants held that the Brothers benefited from learning in an environment free from sexual distractions. The participants also claimed that the single-sex school model allowed them to teach Brother's social lessons that they could not do in a co-educational school. Nevertheless, the participants held that the social lessons were beneficial to the brothers' overall development as they began to transition from boyhood to

manhood. In this section, I will discuss how the participants described the safe-learning environment.

Free from sexual distraction. All participants except one agreed that the single-sex school model eliminated sexual distractions by not having girls present. Austin explained that there is a lot of pressure being a teenage boy, “[they] do not want to say the wrong thing; [they] do not want to look the wrong way. But single-sex schools decrease that amount of pressure and anxiety for boys when girls are not around.” Austin went on to add that at NTSB, “[the Brothers] do not have to worry about that extra level of “she is looking at me, I like her, she likes me.” Phoenix asserted that, “the boys, to [her], are more about business and more about their grades, so [they] can honestly focus on their academics...it may be the difference between them not having distractions.” Raleigh agreed, adding that “in coeducational schools, the boys were trying to impress the girls and the girls were trying to impress the guys.” Austin agreed, emphasizing that in coeducational schools, “[Boys] are joking for a position; they are joking for attention; they are trying to find themselves.” Jordan echoed the same sentiment and explained that the Brothers were more willing to “take risks” in single-sex schools than in coeducational schools and best summarized the view of the group:

In my class, I am having them do things that are risk-taking. They have to speak in Spanish sentences as they give their speech, and it is embarrassing because they are going to make mistakes. But around boys, they don't really care, they might make fun of each other a little bit, but it is just like "ah whatever." But around girls, that is a higher risk. It is one thing to have your friends laugh at you that are boys. It is another thing to have girls laugh at you, especially one that you have a crush on. So, if I want them to do

certain things that are a bit riskier, you take away some of their hesitancy to do it in a single-sex classroom. – Jordan

While Jordan held that boys were more willing to take more of a risk without the presence of girls in the class, Brooklyn had a different opinion and thought there were benefits for having boys and girls in the same learning environment, explaining:

I noticed a lack of intrinsic motivation that was going on with the young man here. I noticed the difference [of] not having girls present in this learning environment. A lot of people say girls are a distraction, they can't focus, but there are also some positives to having girls with the boys. I realized that a lot of our instructional problems were because we did not have the girls here to play their roles. When boys are in school, if they notice a girl that they can impress, they will tend to verbalize more because they want to communicate with girls, because girls are very verbal and have an overall stronger command of the language, whereas boys don't. So, when you take all the girls away, you are losing the language, so you have to have a lot of competitions, to encourage the boys to have a voice and to talk. – Brooklyn

While Brooklyn held that there were educational benefits for having girls in the same learning environment. However, Denver's sentiment was reflective of the majority of the group as he explained, "I think the lack of distraction that they have without having females in school is a plus. They [are] able to focus because they do not have the presence of females distracting them." Denver went on to explain that single-sex school not only provided a safe environment for the Brothers to learn but also provided a certain level of safety and protection for him as a male teacher to work one-on-one, explaining in his words:

I feel that the environment is less threatening when they are same-sex because of the rules that go into coeducational systems. For example, when it [comes] to [working] one-on-one with a student of the opposite sex and me, I tend to feel a little bit more apprehensive. I am a little more hesitant about putting myself in a one-on-one situation [with girls] just because of what I have seen in the last 19 years. So, I really like where I am. I like the fact that you can have a one-on-one with these young men and get them to the place where they need to be. – Denver

Denver went on to explain how when he worked in coeducational schools that he had to constantly worry about what girls wore, where to sit the girls, and whom to sit girls next to in his classroom, explaining:

There [were] sometimes [I] would have to worry about where a young lady sits in the band room because of what [I] might see or something that looks inappropriate from a distance. For example, you have young ladies that sit on your front row, and right in front of you, their shirt, their skirts are too short, or [what they have one] is provocative. Sometimes I took the liberty if I thought it was too inappropriate to ask the young ladies to cover up or to throw my suit jacket over their legs or something like that. But, being in an all-boys school, we do not have those distractions, we do have to worry about placement — I need to sit her here because [she] has on this [provocative attire] or I need to sit this her here because [she] is doing this with this person — we do not have those problems here! – Denver

Five out of six participants felt that girls were a sexual distraction for the boys and that removing girls from the school created a safe learning environment in which Brothers could focus on their studies and were free to take more of a risk in their classroom. Equally important,

one male participant felt that the NTSB provided him the safety needed to provide one-on-one instruction for his students. While the environment created a learning environment free from sexual distraction, the participants also believed the NTSB provided a safe haven for teachers to teach the Brothers social skills.

Free to teach social skills. There was unanimous agreement among the participants that the NTSB provided them an opportunity to teach the Brothers social skills, which were essential for preparing them for manhood. Raleigh explained, “When I first started teaching, one of the first things that I learned is that my job as an educator goes well beyond my content area...We are teaching these young men how to become men!” Austin agreed and presented a best practice of NTSB, explaining that the Brothers attended Lyceum — a daily social gathering — where they would have opportunities to teach the Brothers social skills. Austin went on to explain in his view what Lyceum was:

[Lyceum] is a session where [the staff and the Brothers] come in and have a discussion and learn. Philosophers in the past would have Lyceum, and they would discuss topics, have debates, and have an opportunity to share and interact. [Lyceum] is embedded in our daily expectations. In the morning, we will start with Lyceum; at a minimum, we are going over our mission, our vision, and our creed, and we sing our school song. – Austin

Phoenix agreed that Lyceum is a big part of NTBs culture, explaining the Brothers attended Lyceum sessions “every morning” and would chant the words, “Believe, Achieve, Succeed that is their motto!” Raleigh also agreed that Lyceum was a big part of the culture at NTSB and went on to lay out the many benefits of having the Brothers attend Lyceum daily:

It is a safe environment where everybody can speak their mind, no matter what their opinions are, and we seek out the tough subjects. I know that when I was at the

[coeducational school], a lot of times, the administration would say, "Oh, do not talk about that...that is going to get us in trouble... if a parent finds out, we are talking about something like that, and we have not said what they wanted to hear, we can get in trouble." But that is one of the things that I love about this campus. First of all, they trust [us] to know [our] students, and if there is a topic that [we] feel is a difficult topic, they will support [us] in [discussing] it. – Raleigh

Brooklyn agreed that the Brothers were taught more than academics and that they were also taught professional grooming and appearance standards, explaining:

The staff stays on the boys, especially African American boys. [The staff would say], you are young teens, you are young males, this is how you dress, this is how you look, this is how you wash your clothes, this is the way you wear your uniform! Where is your tie!? Where are your proper shoes!?! – Brooklyn

Denver agreed and went on to explain that the staff held the Brothers accountable for their appearance and grooming standards because of the social and emotional benefits, explaining:

When they put on their shirt and tie, it gives them a sense of responsibility and pride that comes along with dressing up every day. It sets the atmosphere for a positive environment initially. So, it is kind of like the cliché of saying that "you only feel as good as you look." If they look good every day, if they are well-groomed, I think their outlook on life will be better. When they look in the mirror, it is going to start with them, and I think it would make just their outlook and their perceptions of what they get ready to do a little bit more along the lines of professionalism. We come in with the mind frame of taking care of business and professionalism. – Denver

While the participants agreed that they benefited from learning about professional grooming skills, they also held that the Brothers benefited from learning about how to interact with girls and would often have *chivalry discussions*. Raleigh explained the view of the group:

We have social interactions with girls from the all-girls school. We will coordinate dances with them a few times a year. Before the dance, we will have the boys go up on the stage and talk about “hey, this is how you ask a girl to dance,” and we would actually do a little skit, and then everybody would be laughing. Sometimes female teachers would play the role of a girl being asked out, and the boys were comfortable doing that. In Lyceum, the discussions can get very interesting and sometimes touch on very difficult subjects. We would talk about sexual issues, sexual orientation, and all the things that are appropriate subjects for our young men to learn how to engage with young girls properly. – Raleigh

Austin agreed and noted the many benefits of having female as well as male staff on campus, explaining that “having the women here helps them know how to respond to and help women. [the Brothers] should know how to talk to and interact with women as a young man.” Raleigh agreed, explaining, “There have been times when our women faculty have said, “we need to talk to the boys.” In fact, all of us men have been asked to leave the room while just the women are talking to our young man.” Likewise, Raleigh explained that “There have been times during the chivalry meetings, when we get into some of the tougher discussions with the young man, [and] we will ask all the women to leave while we have those discussions with the young man.”

Brooklyn agreed the Brothers benefited from both males and female staff on campus and went on to summarize the view of the group:

I think they enjoy having female teachers, and they enjoy their different perspectives. They enjoy being nurtured...They like to hear songs, and they like to be able to get special treats and all those things that come with a woman who's more in touch with her feminine side. Having our staff balanced really helps because they can receive the best of both worlds, they get the top female administrators and teachers, and they also get the top male ways of doing things. It also helps facilitate additional social learning when [the Brothers] go to dances, it is the female staff that teaches them manners and behavior, how to treat the girls, and so we are the ones that are teaching them how to be young men as it relates to how [the Brothers] relate with women. – Brooklyn

While the participants believed that they were able to teach Brothers professional grooming standards and how to engage and interact with girls, they also held that they were able to engage the Brothers in social discussions, which they insisted was just as important to the Brothers' overall development. Raleigh explained that in Lyceum, they discussed the "Me Too" movement and how women are sexually harassed and assaulted in society, explaining, "We teach them to respect women, to open the door for them, not because they cannot open the door, but, as a way of showing respect, not superiority." Austin agreed with this viewpoint and explained that in Lyceum, they also discussed the implications of political elections:

Today, in Lyceum, we gave an overview of the four highest-profile presidential candidates. So, there is a Republican, the Democrat, the Libertarian, and the Green Party candidate, and we just gave a little bit of background about each of the candidates. Tomorrow, we are going to focus on Republicans and Democrats, and that will be another opportunity for them to talk and ask questions. – Austin

As a whole, the participants held that the single-sex school was a safe environment free from sexual distractions and, as a result, allowed the Brothers to focus on their education and become risk-taker. Moreover, the participants expressed that they were free to teach the Brothers social issues ranging from professional appearance discussions to chivalry discussion to political talks, which they had were just as important as teaching the Brothers' academics. The participants also indicated that every adult in the building acknowledged and supported the Brotherhood.

A culture of brotherhood. Participants overwhelmingly agreed that NTSB provided boys with a brotherhood culture where friendships were formed, mentorships were developed, and a sense of belonging was created. Brooklyn explained that NTSB was a “very safe environment for African American boys...they have a very safe environment to express themselves, to be creative, to learn, to grow, to lead, and to form Brotherhood with each other.” Austin agreed and explained that “once a student comes in as a new student, [he is] a Brother, and [he is] assigned to a house, and we are a family.” Brooklyn shared this same sentiment, explaining, “they are Brothers to each other...and we call them Brothers.” Brooklyn went on to passionately explain why Black boys are referred to as Brothers at NTSB:

I think that in our African American community, there has been so much disrespect in the way that people speak to each other and words that are used to describe a Black man or a young Black man. [At NTSB], they come into an environment where they are respected by adults and students alike. [They] not only have [their] formal name, but [they] have been given an additional gift of Brotherhood. So, when I speak with students, when teachers speak with [students], they are Brother Robert Johnson, they are not just Rob or Robert, and I think for Black boys this is very, very monumental! – Brooklyn

Denver shared the same sentiment, explaining, “I still address our students as Brother Bryson, even when I am talking to their parents, it is not just Bryson, it adds another level of respect when you say Brother, and I think that is huge!” Phoenix agreed and explained that she also calls the students’ Brothers. In her words, “I call the students Brothers, all the time, I’m like, “Brother...whatever the students’ name is, and they do the same.” Not only did faculty call the students Brothers, but the participants held that the students called themselves Brothers when they took on ambassadors' roles.

Ambassador. The participants overwhelmingly believed that when a visitor entered the classroom or school, the Brothers took on Ambassadors’ role, which was an expectation. The Ambassadors were responsible for welcoming visitors and explaining to the visitors what was taking place at the school or in the classroom. Raleigh explained that “whenever anyone enters [his] classroom, one of the brothers assumes the role of an Ambassador, and they will greet you at the door, and they will say, "Welcome to Mr. Jenkins's classroom, my name is Brother Jones.” Raleigh went on to explain that he told the Ambassadors to say, "Welcome to Mr. Jenkins's classroom, my name is Brother Jones, we are learning to use the elements and principles of art as a visual language to find our own voice." Brooklyn explained that the Ambassadors played a major role on campus and best summarized the view of the group:

The Ambassador will come up and will shake your hand and tell you, “I am Brother's first and last name.” Then, he will explain to you the Lesson Objective, everything you want to know about what is happening in the class. He would tell you what the different rooms are doing with the teachers. He would know everything that was happening in that class, almost on the level of he was the teacher, and it is quite impressive! – Brooklyn

Brooklyn's viewpoint on the Ambassadors was shared by all participants in one form or another. Overall, the participants believed that Ambassadors were student-leadership positions on campus and that the Brothers who served as Ambassadors had to be knowledgeable about what was taking place in the school and classroom and be able to uplift other Brothers, which all the participants called “Brother’s Keeper.”

Brother’s Keeper. The participants overwhelmingly believed that the Brothers looked out for one another, which they insisted was a Brotherhood pillar. When the participants were asked what they meant by Brother's Keeper, Denver explained that Brother’s Keeper was part of the school creed and was essentially a “question of loyalty to the Brothers...you owe it to your Brother to look out for him...when that is included in our rituals and daily chants, I think that’s huge!” Raleigh explained that Brother’s Keeper was originally from the Bible:

When Cain kills Abel, and then God comes to him and says, where’s your brother Abel? And Cain says, am I my Brother's keeper? We have turned the [intentions of the Biblical story] on its head...yes, you are responsible for your Brother! – Ralieg

Austin explained that he felt that the Brother's Keeper was more about accountability and went on to explain his view of Brother’s Keeper:

It is an accountability piece. If I am looking at you and you are off task, I am looking at you, and you are doing something that you are not supposed to be doing, that does not line up with our mission and vision, then I should say something, even if it is a sixth grade [Brother] saying something to an eighth-grade [Brother], they should say something! – Austin

Phoenix agreed with these viewpoints and went on to explain how she had herself witnessed the Brothers hold each other accountable for their actions:

The whole my Brother's Keeper, they really take that seriously! If they see [a Brother] that is not pulling [his] weight in class, they are like, "Hey, man, you got to do this!" If there is [a Brother] who is not wearing [his] tie one day or [a Brother] who is running down the hallway, they will say, "Hey, Brother, you are not supposed to do that, or hey, Brother, do not run in the hallway!" – Phoenix

Phoenix's point of view was prevalent throughout all interviews with the participants. Simply put, the participants expected the Brothers to be accountable to one another, which they believed was a cornerstone of Brotherhood. Moreover, the participants held that the Brothers were provided leadership opportunities to be "Big Brothers," which they believe was also a pillar of the Brotherhood.

Big Brothers. The participants overwhelmingly believed that older Brothers had an opportunity to be Big Brothers both inside and outside of the school to leaders to younger brothers. Phoenix explained, "I think it is really interesting. We have an upper school, and then we also have our lower school. Our upper school [Brothers], take the younger [Brothers] under their wings and show them the way!" Phoenix went on to add:

I know for a sixth-grader, this is all kind of new, being at a school with a blazer and all that stuff on. But [the Big Brothers] really make sure that those younger [Brothers] are following the rules and adhering to the things that are important on campus. – Phoenix

Brooklyn agreed and explained that the big Brothers also had leadership opportunities to mentor younger Brothers, explaining:

The Brothers have a lot more leadership opportunities this year. Our mentoring program is specifically designed for the neighborhood. So, the brothers are the ones who will go out and mentor young men in elementary schools. They are the ones that host the events

when the young men come in when young men come in for tours, whether it be virtual or face to face. The brothers lead that activity. In clubs, they lead their own clubs, form their own hierarchy or officer chain in those different clubs, and make rules. – Brooklyn

Brooklyn's sentiment reflected the view of the group. As a whole, the participants believed that the Brothers in high school demonstrated leadership by providing mentorship to the Brothers in middle school and by providing mentorship to elementary boys in their community.

In summary, the participants felt that NTSB was a safe and welcoming environment for all students who received the gift of being called a Brother. More importantly, the participants believed that all Brothers were expected to show an unwavering commitment to all Brothers within the Brotherhood. The participants felt that at NTSB, every Brother had an opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills within the Brotherhood, whether as a Big Brother or Ambassador.

RQ #2. How do teachers and principals of an all-boys single-sex school describe their ability to meet the learning needs of Black boys attending their school?

Two themes emerged in response to the research question. Participants believed that they fostered a competitive culture that improved Black boys' social, emotional, and academic learning competence and tailored their instructional practices to meet the gender-specific learning needs of Black boys on their campus.

A culture of competition. Participants were united in their belief that single-sex schools provided a structured environment for boys where their gender identity was respected and where boys were free to be boys. There was consistent agreement among the participants that their boys benefited from a "competitive" learning environment. To this end, participants held that the single-sex school environment was "intentionally structured" to ignite their boys'

competitiveness instincts. This section presents the participants' views on their abilities to cultivate a competitive learning environment.

Brotherly rivalry. There was unanimous consensus among the six participants that the single-sex school model helped foster a culture of rivalry among the "Brothers." Denver explained that he felt that the competitions created a culture of "camaraderie," which further strengthened the culture of "brotherhood" on the campus. Raleigh agreed, adding that "one of the aspects of brotherhood is beating your brother as badly as you can, boys love beating each other...young men find a certain amount of intimacy in this competitive culture of beating down one another." The participants felt that their "house and point system" allowed them to cultivate a "competitive learning environment." Denver leaned in closer to explain the group's interpretation of the house and point system:

So, we have a house system in our school, and each student in our building belongs to a house. We have the House of Alliance, Decree, Expedition, and Justice. So our school is split into four houses. We use the house system to reward points to [boys and their house] for great behavior and great efforts in our school, and we have a point system that we also take points from [boys and their house] for negative behaviors just to promote a sense of competition in our school. – Denver

There was a general consensus amongst the participants that the creation of a house and point system in a coeducational or all-girls setting may not have been as effective. Phoenix explained that in coed schools, "boys were in competition with each other in a different kind of way," insinuating that the boys were competing for the wrong reasons to gain the attention of girls. Raleigh offered a unique but interesting perspective on why he felt that competition would not be as effective in an all-girls school, "I think with the concept of sisterhood, the idea of beating

them down in a competitive way like that is not seen as a way of becoming more intimately engaged.” Jordan provided a clearer interpretation of Raleigh’s view by offering up the following scenario:

If you try a house system at a girls school, what would happen is if you put Jane in the House of Alpha and Jill in the House of Beta, and they are both best friends, and you say “okay, compete against each other,” [Jane] would be like, “why would I want to beat [Jill] she is my friend.” Whereas, if we did that with boys, Joe and John, they would be like, okay, you are going down, so it motivates them to have friends in other houses to really beat him. – Jordan

Although the participants believed that the competitive environment would not be as effective in coed or all-girl settings, they believed it managed boys’ “impulsive behaviors” and taught them to “think first before they act.” Austin believed that most of his boys displayed good behavior and that he would encourage his boys by saying, “great job, let me give you 200 house points” for their good behavior. Phoenix agreed, adding, “So far, since I have been here, I have not had to write a referral. I don't even think that is something that even exists here...the boys take their points and house system seriously”. Brooklyn offered an explanation on how the point and house system help them managed boys’ behavior and reduced the need for disciplinary referrals:

We hold everybody responsible for everyone's behavior. If [a Brother] is in the House of Justice, and [that Brother] is acting up, I will take 500 points...and [he] can't hide...the entire House of Justice will hear about [his] infraction...I am going to take a lot of joy in making sure [his] Brothers knows what [he] did...[his] name goes up on display...it is very detailed about what [he] did and whom he did it with...[he] will go before a tribunal... [he] will have to answer to [his Brothers] and explain how [he] is going to get

their house points back...I will let [him] pick [his] project...and sometimes [the Brothers] will be so fired about getting the points back, they will help their brother, they will support their brother, they will encourage their Brother. They are going to get those house points back! – Brooklyn

Jordan echoed this view explaining that the point system turned “prosocial behaviors into popular behavior and antisocial behaviors into unpopular behaviors.” He went on to describe how he used the point system to manage the boy’s behavior as a House Coordinator:

We had a student that was a big bully...I would tell his brothers that [their house] lost 400 points because [he] shoved someone, and [his Brothers] would tell him to stop pushing people and stop bullying people. An 11th-grader in the House of Justice will go up to a seventh-grader who just lost 500 points for his house and say, “Hey, no, not in the House of Justice; you don’t do that!” Then, the [seventh-grader] would say, “Oh, okay.” It is turning peer pressure on its head. It is positive peer pressure that just doesn’t happen without a house system. – Jordan

Beyond the positive impact that a reduction in house points had on boys’ behavior, participants also contended that the rewarding of house points encouraged “students to participate in things that they may otherwise have not,” which led to some enjoyable social experiences. According to the participants, teachers would often take part in *social competitions* with their boys to help to win house points. Phoenix excitedly recounted a time when she won a “cracker eating contest” for her house. She felt that social competitions were a “good feeling for teachers and a good feeling for students as well.” Jordan expressed the same excitement and bragged about the types of social competitions he would create as a House Coordinator:

Every two weeks we would have some type of competition in front of the whole school on stage. We would have a tug of war, arm wrestling competitions, push-up competitions. We would have competitions on who could eat the most crackers in two minutes...boys stuffing their face with crackers, people cheering...the boys would go ballistic, they loved it, and they would cheer for their house, big time. – Jordan

Beyond the behavioral and social benefits of cultivating a competitive environment, the participants were sure to highlight the benefits of having students participate in academic competitions, such as, "Which house has the most A's... the most A Honor Roll students, the highest AP scores or STAAR scores." Phoenix explained that her boys were academically motivated to compete with each other insisting that, "they want to reach a higher standard." Denver echoed the same sentiment asserting, "I see a high level of competition in my classroom with each other...they won't say it, but they don't want to be less than the [Brother] next to them." Jordan summed up the views of the group by sharing a success story:

We had a student that I taught back in sixth grade...he was the shyest kid you ever met and a huge nerd, great at math, and the type of kid that would have absolutely bullied at any other campus. He was ignored when he first came to this campus because he is a big and adorable person. He ended up getting second in the district-wide math competition for sixth grade, and we gave him 3000 house points. It was the most points I had ever seen anybody get for anything. When they called his name in front of the school, and his house earned 3000 points because [he] was good at mental math, [his Brother] lost their minds. I mean, he was a hero. So, this kid would have been totally ignored or worse, bullied at other schools, was not like the center of attention, and he got his attention by doing something nerdy. How great is that! – Jordan

Overall, all participants agreed that there were social, academic, and behavioral benefits for cultivating a competitive environment and that the point and house system enabled them to do so with ease. Without question, the participants felt that the Brothers were both internally and externally motivated by the rewarding and reduction of house points, took great pride in engaging in positive competition with one another, which resulted in closer bonds, desired behaviors, and memorable moments.

Boy-Centered instruction & environment. The participants overwhelmingly believed that the single-sex school environment enabled them to tailor their instructional practices and systems to support the gender-specific learning need of the Brothers. The participants also held that the Brothers benefited from a hierarchical, accountable, spacious, and play-oriented learning environment that acknowledged and embraced the Brother's masculinity. In this section, I provide insight into how participants described their ability to foster a body-centered learning environment.

Be the alpha. The six participants unanimously agreed that the Brothers benefited from a hierarchical learning environment in which they were held accountable by teachers and principals who first established themselves as the Alpha — The Authoritarian Figure. The participants were less interested in getting to know the Brothers on a “personal level” and were more interested in ensuring that the Brothers knew who was the “Adult In Charge.” Jordan explained, “[the Brothers] readily accepted hierarchy and were not bothered by a hierarchical structure.” Brooklyn agreed and asserted that in order for teachers and principals to gain and maintain the Brothers' respect, they must make “establishing [themselves] as the Alpha [their] number one priority, at all times!” Brooklyn went on to describe her view of the Alpha's role:

Boys are a pack, and sometimes we compare them to the likening of a Wolf Pack. So, you have to establish yourself as the Alpha [Wolf], whether you are a female or male from day one with a room full of boys! There are certain things you just do not do until you have established yourself as the [Alpha]. In a [coed setting], you would be looking at ten boys in a room, but now you have them [all] in one classroom. You never turn your back on the [pack]...you do not write on the board with your back to 30 boys because you gave [away] your power as the pack leader. When you first work with them, you do not smile a lot, you do not share a lot of personal things, and you do not go on an intimate level with them. You keep it very concise and direct! – Brooklyn

Phoenix agreed and explained that she did not share personal information nor become too friendly with the Brothers because she felt that by doing so, “could be seen as a weakness...and [the Brothers] would feel like they can get away with anything.” Phoenix went on to reveal that she felt somewhat obliged to share certain aspects of her personal life with students in coeducational schools because “girls [were] normally the ones that wanted to know about [her] personal life...how many kids did [she] have...are if [she] was married?” Phoenix felt somewhat relieved that she did not have to share her personal life in the all-boys school. Jordan agreed, replying, “I have a personality, but that is secondary.” Then, Jordan paraphrased an excerpt from a passage he read in a single-gender book which epitomized the view of the group:

Boys these days are on games all the time and are entertainment addicts, and just want to have fun. They laugh and are a bunch of goofballs! If you establish yourself like, “Hey guys, how is it going? Look at this meme I saw the other day...I think it is funny...you think it is funny too?” Trying to get in good with them, they are going to view you as like,

“he is one of us, she is one of us” ...They will then constantly make jokes, and you will participate because you are funny, too, right!? – Jordan

For the participants, establishing a personal relationship with the Brothers was secondary to their primary obligation to maintain the school's hierarchical structure. The participants agreed that any educators connected with the Brothers on a personal level entered the role of the Brother's peer and risked losing their inherent teaching powers, control of their classroom, and ultimately the respect of the Brothers. That is why the participants felt that faculty members should always be regarded and viewed as authoritative figures because, if they were not, it would make it much harder for them to hold the Brothers accountable.

Hold him accountable. The participants overwhelmingly agreed once they had established themselves as the Alpha, they were able to hold the “the Brothers accountable for everything they [did].” When asked how the Brothers viewed them, Austin replied that “[the Brothers] saw [him] as someone that they can learn from, someone that is fair, and that is going to hold them accountable.” Denver echoed the same sentiment replying, “the bar is set pretty high for our young man...they know I am hard but fair...when they do not rise to the level of what I know they are capable of...I still have to hold them accountable”. Phoenix related the same viewpoint, adding, “If [the Brothers] are not doing [academically] well in [my] class. I am going to pull them to the side, and I am going to see some progress.” Raleigh expressed the same sentiment as he shared the tone he set for passing exams in his class:

[The Brothers] know they are going to pass [my exam]. They know they are going to pass [my exam]. And oh, by the way, they know they are going to pass [my exam]! They know that I am not going to get off their back until they show me they got this content down.

This makes me the tough guy, but I have had a 100% passing rate on my [exam] since I have been at the [NTSB], and I intend to keep it that way! – Raleigh

Jordan shared the same sentiment asserting, “I am the King in my classroom...they are going to do what I say....and they are going to meet my expectations.” Shortly after, Jordan shared a turning point in his career which forced him to reflect on his approach and adopt a new strategy to hold the Brothers more accountable:

When I first started teaching at the [NTSB], my [exam] scores were no better than when I was at a [coeducational] school. The [founding principal] was so mad about my performance, and I am glad he was. He told me, “We brought you over here to be excellent.” So, I really did a lot of research the summer after [my] first year and even more after [my] second year. I said, “I cannot do what I was doing at the [coeducational] school. I got to try something different.” That is when I adopted the hierarchy approach to teaching...it really started paying dividends. By year four, I went from a 55% passing rate on my Spanish exams to a 100% passing rate every year and every semester afterward! – Jordan

The essence of Jordan’s view was a recurring sentiment that was prevalent in all interviews. The Brothers responded well to direct and assertive accountability. For this reason, the participants held the Brothers to a higher standard and even more accountable because they knew that their academic and behavioral capabilities were limitless. Thus, it was clear to the participants that the Brothers performed really well when they were held accountable for their academic capabilities as well as their behavioral capabilities. At the same time, the participants believed that in order to get the Brothers to reach their full academic potential, they had to align their instructional practices with the Brothers' learning style.

Teach to his mind. There was a universal consensus among the participants that they were able to customize their instructional practices to the Brothers' gender-specific learning needs. Brooklyn insisted that one of the main reasons why “[the Brothers] performed well [was] because the instructional environment [was] tailored to the majority of their learning style.” Jordan agreed, adding, “there are certain traits that boys share that lead to different learning styles, and those traits need to be addressed.” Raleigh also shared this view explaining, “A young man and a young woman think and learn differently as a group...[NTSB] allows us to really focus and take advantage of those differences.

The participants believed that the Brothers had a natural instinct to be active, be a leader, be competitive, and be hands-on and therefore took advantage of those instincts. Raleigh explained that in his lessons, the “activities were a little more active” than they were when he taught in coeducational schools, making the case that the Brothers were *active learners*. Denver explained that in his classroom, “there is a lot of peer-mentoring going on...[he] gives each [Brother] the opportunity to learn how to be a leader,” emphasizing that the Brothers were *learning to lead*. Brooklyn agreed, explaining that “leading is a big part... [the Brothers] lead classroom discussions, they lead breakout rooms.” Raleigh’s explained that in his classroom, “[he] let [the Brothers] work collaboratively on a project and [he] does not tell [the Brothers] what materials to use...they can draw, they can paint, or they can sculpt something out of clay,” making the argument that the Brothers were *cooperative learners*. Phoenix referred to herself as the “facilitator” and went on to explain that in her classroom, she could say, “Hey, you guys have to create a lab, come up with your own hypotheses and try to figure out all the information that you need to gather for the experimentation and they will do that,” presenting a compelling claim that the Brothers were *hands-on learners*.

While the participants revealed a variety of teaching methods, all participants agreed that their most valuable teaching strategy to get the Brothers to excel in their classroom academically was *competitive learning*, which they believed would not be the case in coeducational schools. Based on past experience, Phoenix explained why competition did not work in coed classrooms: “Sometimes the girls [were] a little bit shy to actually compete with the boys in the class...I did not get that same [level of] discussion and participation.” On the contrary, the participants felt that they were very successful at tapping into the Brothers’ competitive instincts in single-sex schools. Raleigh went on to summarize the view of the group:

Look at their competitive nature as a motivational tool for learning...I think it is a motivation for them to embrace the content. If they can engage themselves in the content in a way that is going to give them a competitive advantage over the Brother next to them and do a little celebration and rub their nose afterward, then they will [embrace the content]. – Raleigh

Raleigh’s viewpoint was echoed in one way or another by all participants throughout the interviews. As a whole, the participants maintained that they considered the Brothers’ learning style when planning their lessons and activities. This is why the participants believed that the Brother’s participated more, were more actively engaged in the content and demonstrated continuous improvement in academic achievement. By the same token, the participants held that teachers gave the boys space to be competitive and to collaborate.

Give him space to move. The participants agreed that the Brothers benefited from a learning environment that allowed them “space to move” and “recognized that wriggling and squirming and needing to stand up and walk [around was] okay.” Brooklyn stated, “one thing I can say about boys, you must give them the opportunity to move around...do not try to cram

them in...do not try to box them in.” Austin revealed that teachers used *flexible seating* and that “having flexibility in the space [was] very important...having [the Brothers] in rows [was] not always going to be the best option... have them in areas where they can move around.” Brooklyn revealed that teachers used *alternative seating* and that teachers “do a lot of alternative seating like big yoga balls [the Brothers] sit on.” She later added that in “one teacher’s class, she [used] chess pieces as chairs.” Jordan explained that the teachers provided the Brothers the opportunity to *learn while moving* and went on to summarize the view of the group:

Boys need to move! I am a big advocate for moving your body. Even in Spanish and Latin classes, I actually build movement into the curriculum. I always give them the freedom to move and sometimes even plan for that movement itself. There should never be a rule in a boy’s class that [they] have to stay in [their] seat. In my class, [the Brothers] will stand up and take notes while standing up, as long as they want. They can pace in the back if they want, as long as they are not stomping. I let them lie on the floor and take notes as long as they can see the screen when we are talking. When they are working with partners, I let them sit, stand, or lie down wherever they want — it is fine! I do not want them to get too antsy! I do not want a buildup of energy to be the reason why they cannot focus on me! – Jordan

For these participants, when thinking of the optimal classroom environment for boys, the first thing that came to mind was allowing their Brothers the freedom and space to move throughout the classroom. Above all, the participants recognized that the Brothers could not physically and mentally sit for long periods in the classroom without moving. Therefore, they embraced their boys’ physical nature by accounting for it in their seating arrangements,

classroom furniture and layout, and instructional practices. Simultaneously, the participants believed the Brothers also benefited from a learning environment that encompassed playtime.

Give him time to play. There was unanimous consensus among all six participants that the Brother's benefited from a learning environment that gave them opportunities to play. From the participants' viewpoint, boys typically had more energy than girls; therefore, they gave the Brothers time to play and "get some of their energy out." When asked how active the Brothers were, Brooklyn responded, "[the Brothers] are very, very active...they like to rumble, they [like to] tumble, they love to play, they enjoy life, and that is why I love them." Austin agreed, asserting, "They are all boys. They want to be close. They will be pushing. They will be jumping and being boys." Participants stated that since NTSB was considered a single-sex magnet school, the Brothers were not allowed to participate in sports because the State of Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules required students attending magnet schools to participate in UIL activities — music, sports, plays, dance — at their locally zoned home campus (UIL, 2021). Therefore, the Brothers were permitted and encouraged to play and have fun with their friends during recess, which was held after lunch. When asked what type of activities the Brothers liked to participate in during recess, Austin explained that "when they go outside...they will be running, playing football [and] tackling, doing whatever they can to get some of that energy out." Brooklyn agreed, asserting, "They love to wrestle. They love football. When you let them out of the bat, they are going to have a good time." Jordan agreed that boys are instinctively active and went on to summarize the view of the group on the importance of recess:

Boys have a lot of energy. I believe that all boys schools up to high school need to have recess. I am very big on that. In fact, we still have recess at our school. They keep trying to say, let's have them do tutoring or an extra lesson. I was very adamant, absolutely not!

In fact, I have been advocating for 45-minute lunch as opposed to a 30-minute lunch, not because I want a longer lunch, but because boys need [more] playtime. I have also been advocating for a longer than three-minute passing period because boys need longer time to walk around the school halls, just [to] get some [of their] energy out! – Jordan

Although the participants believed that recess was physically and emotionally beneficial for the Brothers, they also admitted that there were times in which boys were not permitted to go out for recess, such as when there was inclement weather. Jordan explained that on days when the boys did not get an opportunity to go outside for recess, the brothers “would get antsier.”

Jordan went on to explain, “they got a lot of energy...and not all energy is created equal... sometimes there is very unproductive energy...we want productive energy and [there is] something about working out, something about getting your blood flowing.” Brooklyn agreed that when boys did not get to go outside for recess that she noticed a change in their mood but went on to explain the Brothers often lost recess privileges:

They lose recess privileges quite often. This time, they were roughhousing too much out there, and they tore up their clothes. So, if recess gets too rough, we have to take it away, and then when we give it back, we give it back with parameters, but they generally will do well [once] you take it away. But when they don't have [recess], there is definitely a lot of unhappiness in the building. – Brooklyn

As a whole, the participants believed that the single-sex school model enabled them to create a boy-friendly learning environment. Notably, the participants believed that boys benefited from a hierarchical, accountable, spacious, and play-oriented learning environment, in which they were free to be boys. While the participants stood firm in their belief that the Brother benefited from a boy-friendly learning environment, they also discussed some of the difficulties they encountered.

RQ #3. What internal barriers do teachers and principals of an all-boys, single-sex school sees as hindering the learning experience of Black boys on their campus?

Two themes emerged in response to this question. The participants believed that a lack of relevant professional development and the rise of COVID-19 (“coronavirus”) negatively affected the systems that were put in place, which hindered the boys’ overall learning experience.

Lack of relevant professional development. During interviews with participants, a lack of relevant, gender-based professional development for new teachers and principals emerged as an internal barrier that prevented Black boys from excelling. Specifically, new staff members were not trained on boys' learning styles and needs and therefore were unprepared to teach boys and respond appropriately to behaviors in which they deemed inappropriate. Consequently, many of the participants felt that some of the boys were punished by new staff members unfairly and in reported instances in which boys were expelled for minor infractions. To the participants, gender-specific professional development was critical to the overall success and sustainability of NTSB. In this section, I share the participants' views on the lack of relevant professional development.

Great frustration. There was a general consensus among the participants that there was a lack of gender-specific professional development at NTSB, especially for new teachers. Austin explained that teachers would attend gender-based professional development in the summer prior to arriving at NTSB. Raleigh confirmed and explained that NTSB used to bring in guest speakers to give gender-specific professional developments when he started teaching at NTSB. However, participants claimed that they had not attended relevant professional development in years, which negatively impacted the “original mission, vision, and creed of [NTSB].” Jordan was the strongest critic on this matter, explaining:

There has not been explicit training in the last three or four years as far as like, let me go to this conference for single-gender. We have teachers here that don't really understand why we do the house system! I think [Austin] is a great Principal, but I do not think he went to that training either. So, he does not necessarily know how to give that series of training on how to teach boys and how to establish structure in a boy-friendly way. We have had students that have been kicked out, and I remember at least one or two of those students that I thought, "Why? This kid will respond, he will do what you asked him to do, you just have to mean it, you can't just yell it, you have to mean it!" There will be a student I have never had an issue with, not even a single peep, just hard work, and I would be called into a meeting with a parent, and four or five of the teachers are like, "he won't shut up" and they just describing a totally different student than whom I know. It is usually the newer teachers, teachers that were not trained...that do not have the same background in boys' education. – Jordan

Denver agreed and shared his experience as one of the newer teachers:

No, I do not think I was trained to be here. I think I can create a training now having experience. I know [Jordan] can too. I have experienced it now, and I think we should create training for incoming teachers because there was nothing to get me ready for the first day at this school. If so, then I am sure they would have given it to me if there was something to give because I did not understand this system until maybe a semester in. – Denver

Jordan interjected with great frustration:

I am very big on this, and this is incredibly important for anybody who is studying single-gender schools. There is no improvement from coed to single-gender if there isn't proper

training! There are so many boy schools around the country that have opened, and they just kind of like winged it without proper training and end up closing or saying, "oh, this doesn't work, they are nuts in there, they don't have the girls to tamper them down." Well, that is not true, it may be their experience, but if you have proper training on these things, then I think it is better! – Jordan

Jordan went on to discuss his frustration with district-mandated training:

I have had such a pet peeve these last four or five years at this school, where we have all district-mandated training. Then we almost never discuss the boys' aspect of it unless a teacher brings it up, and I have seen a decline in the quality of what NTSB was, and I think that is the biggest reason. It is still a great school, and I believe in what we do, and I believe that we are still fantastic. But, let us have a starting point for every single adult in this building because we have some teachers here that have never really been properly trained, as far as I am concerned, and it shows sometimes. – Jordan

Brooklyn agreed that proper training is paramount to any school type, but especially in single-sex schools, adding:

You really have to have the personnel in place that is being educated and trained to be able to support this model. I will add that! So, there are certain things we just do not do here that might be done somewhere else, like all that "yelling and yelling." We just don't do that here! It is a cultural thing, and it is just the way that you build your campus culture, regardless of if it is single-sex or coed, or magnet or choice, comprehensive. For boys, we do not do that yelling. You are losing a lot of power! – Brooklyn

Overall, participants felt that they needed more relevant professional development opportunities for continued growth. Specifically, many of the participants thought that many of the newer

teachers did not have the appropriate preparation required to serve an all-boys school and felt that it was necessary for every staff member to receive training in order to better serve the Brothers. While the participants expressed concerns about the lack of professional opportunities at NTSB, they also discussed the detrimental effect of COVID-19 ('coronavirus') on the Brother's learning experience.

COVID-19! The detrimental impact that the rise of COVID-19 had on NTSB was a recurring theme over the two days in both the focus group and one-on-one interviews. The participants felt that they had to adjust their internal educational systems to be able to provide adequate education to the Brothers in a virtual space. Moreover, the participants believed that they had to shift their mindset to be sympathetic to the social-emotional wellbeing of the Brothers while at the same time holding the Brothers accountable. In this section, I share the participants' views on the rise of COVID-19.

Forced change. The participants overwhelmingly felt that COVID-19 forced them to have to change their instructional practices and internal systems, which had a negative impact on Brother's overall learning experience. At NTSB, some students were attending school face-to-face, while the great majority of the students were attending school using the Zoom video conferencing. Jordan explained that he tried to keep the boys focused on their education, stating, "I tell them all of us are struggling with the pandemic...but when you enter the door, I am only focused on making you successful in the future." Phoenix explained that she held the brothers accountable but checked on the Brothers' emotional well-being, stating:

Back in March, when [the Brothers] were at home working virtually, I did not want the [the Brothers] to be overwhelmed with the online environment. On Mondays, I would tell

the [Brothers], “okay, we got a discussion, but the discussion post would be something that is not related to our content, just to see how they are doing.” – Phoenix

Phoenix went on to express great frustration with not having the Brothers in her class:

Now, it is a little different. When the boys were coming to class, I could give them a fist bump, or touch elbows, or say good morning or good afternoon. I could check temperatures at the door and see if that something is going on with a student. I was able to pull them to the side and say, “Hey, it looks like you are not having a good day today. Is there something I can do? I noticed you didn't perform like you normally would on [the] test. What happened?” – Phoenix

Austin agreed that having the Brothers in an online learning environment was different and explained how he had to adjust Lyceum sessions to accommodate online learning:

Before the pandemic, everyone would meet in the auditorium, sixth through 12th grade. Now, because our Zoom capacity is 300, we have to split the middle school Brothers with the assistant principal, and I have the high school Brothers. We have a PowerPoint that is the same PowerPoint, and we share it as a Google Doc. It is live and updated so that we can coordinate the announcements and make sure we are given a unified message. It is kind of good [because] the sixth grade Brothers have a different personality than the high school Brothers, so it ends up working out pretty well. – Austin

However, Austin also expressed frustration as he disclosed that the middle school Brothers were attending their virtual Lyceum sessions, but not all of the high school Brothers were, explaining:

It is like 250 in [middle school Lyceum]. There is certainly more attendance there. As you get to high school, they are dealing with a lot of different things, and [we have] lower attendance. I have talked to them about it, [stating], “I am going to give you all a chance

to correct this, but if it comes down to it, I can always just say, I am going to make Lyceum, which is technically advisory, I am going to make you report advisory first, at 8:20 am, then come on over to Lyceum at 8:30 am.” I have given them a deadline, which is the end of this grading period, and if our numbers are still low, sorry! – Austin

Jordan expressed great frustration with the district grading policy, which was changed as a result of COVID-19, expanding:

[Grading] actually has been a big issue recently because of the grading policy right now! How do we deal with students who are struggling to log in? Can we fail the students, or what kind of grades can we give them if they do not turn in their work? For me, there has been a little bit of a push in the district to sort of lower standards, and I think high standards are a part of what boys really need that are non-negotiable! It doesn't matter how you feel about it. This is what you have to be able to do if you want to get the grade that you want in this class. I will step up and say, “this policy is not in line with what we know about boys and single-gender education.” – Jordan

Brooklyn expressed sadness with the Brothers were unable to play with one another, at least for the Brothers that were attending school face-to-face as she explained:

With COVID, I am kind of sad because they can't have their balls anymore; they can't touch each other. Recess is kind of scary for us right now. I think [the Brothers] are more frustrated [when] they cannot [go outside]. They love to go outside. They love to make us babysit their basketballs. When they don't have [recess], you can tell their happiness level is down. They love recess! They come in with the blazers inside out, their ties out, their shirts are a mess! – Brooklyn

Overall, Brooklyn's feeling of sadness and frustration was a mutual sentiment among many of the participants. The participants acknowledge that COVID-19 presented many challenges but firmly believed that they must continue to hold the Brothers accountable. There was a general feeling among the participants that they generally missed being with the Brothers on campus and seeing them interacting with one another. All participants believed that the Brothers thrived in a single-sex school environment and felt that NTSB gave parents a valuable, alternative option to send their boys to traditional coeducational schooling.

Summary of Key Findings

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented a narrative description of the participants and emerged themes collected from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. From the perspective of the participants, the single-sex school enabled the faculty to have a shared mindset and work together towards a common approach to improving social and academic outcomes for Black boys on their campus. The participants believed that NTSB was a safe learning environment in which Brothers were able to focus on their academics without the presence of girls on their campus to sexually distract them. Moreover, the participants believed that NTSB fosters a Brotherly learning environment in which Brothers treat each other with respect, care for each other, and hold each other accountable. Furthermore, the participants felt that the faculty were able to better manage the Brothers' behavior and were able to tailor their instruction to the Brother's learning style and interest, which improved student achievement at NTSB. While the participants expressed that there were many benefits for Black boys attending NTSB, they acknowledged that there was a lack of professional development at NTSB which resulted in untrained novice teachers, which had a negative impact on Black boys' learning experience. Lastly, the participants explained that the rise of COVID-19 (“coronavirus”) was a phenomenon

they never experienced before, and it forced them to have to change how they delivered instruction to the Brothers (i.e., virtual learning) and adapt to new district-mandated policies (i.e., grading policy). The chapter includes a discussion of the findings, limitations of the research study, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The underachievement of Black boys attending school in the United States of America continues to be a concern among many parents and communities of color who believe that traditional, urban coeducational schools are failing to meet the learning needs of Black boys (Toldson, 2008). Unfortunately, each school year, Black boys continue to rank last in almost every academic achievement indicator, remain over-represented in special education programs, and remain under-represented in talented and talented programs (Schott Foundation, 2015). Black boys are therefore considered to be one of the most at-risk student populations attending American public schools to date (Milner, 2012). In other words, Black boys are more likely to fail a grade level, become truant from school, and drop out of school altogether, which negatively impacts their life outcomes (Milner, 2012).

As a solution to addressing Black boys' underachievement, many urban school districts have opened up single-sex schools with the hopes of improving learning outcomes; however, due to the disproportionate number of single-sex schools servicing Black boys, little was known about their impact on Black boys' learning needs (Dwarte, 2014). Most of all, there was a gap in the literature in understanding how practitioners (principals and teachers) view single-sex schools and their ability to improve the learning outcomes for Black boys (Fergus & Noguera, 2010).

The purpose of this single-bounded case study was to use qualitative research methods (Yin, 2018) to gain an in-depth understanding of perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018) held by principals and teachers at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB, a pseudonym), a single-sex middle/high school located in North Texas. Specifically, the aim of this case was to examine the

viewpoints that principals and teachers held about NTSB and their ability to meet the unique learning needs of Black boys (Fergus & Noguera, 2010).

To develop an understanding of the phenomenon in this single-bounded case, the following research questions were used to guide this study:

RQ1. What are teachers' and principals' views towards an all-boys, single-sex school?

RQ2. How do teachers and principals of an all-boys single-sex school describe their abilities to meet the learning needs of Black boys attending their school?

RQ3. What internal barriers do teachers and principals of an all-boys, single-sex school see as hindering the learning experience of Black boys on their campus?

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the case study's major findings in connections to the literature discussed in Chapter 2 surrounding single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' learning experience and outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, I make known the limitations that impacted the study and how those limitations influenced my overall interpretation of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Then I make recommendations for future research that flow from my own findings. Finally, I conclude the paper, connecting my research to the broader policy issues that started my investigation into the phenomenon — single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' learning experience and educational outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings that emerged from this case study by synthesizing them with the scholarly work and theoretical framework I presented in Chapter 2. I discuss the following themes that emerged in response to the research questions: a) shared mindset, b) safe

learning environment, c) culture of brotherhood, d) a culture of competition, e) boy-friendly learning environment, d) lack of professional development, and e) the rise of COVID-19.

Shared Mindset

In Chapter Four, one of the main themes was that the faculty members had a shared mindset in fulfilling the original mission and goals of North Texas School for Boys (NTSB). Participants continuously stressed the importance for every adult in the building to have a common understanding of the needs of their students and to be on the same page about their approach when working with Black boys. Within the theme of a shared mindset was the idea that teachers had a shared approach in addressing the social/emotional and academic needs of Black boys, whom they referred to as "Brothers." Participants described many of the Black boys coming from single-parent homes located in impoverished neighborhoods, having learning gaps that needed to be addressed, and being more likely to experience racism in the U.S.

Teachers at the NTSB were not only committed to addressing the Brothers' learning gaps but were equally committed to preparing the Brothers to become exemplary family men, leaders within their communities and to teach them how to overcome barriers such as racism and poverty that they felt were just as important to Black boys' overall development. Prior to hiring, the NTSB administration was very purposeful in their recruiting and hiring practices, ensuring that every adult hired had good intentions and was committed to preparing Black boys to be leaders both inside and outside of the classroom. This theme is also highlighted within Fergus and Noguera's (2010) two framing theories for single-sex schools for boys of color, which I discussed in Chapter 2 — single-sex schools understand and know the social/emotional needs of Black boys, and single-sex schools understand and address the academic needs of Black boys.

Safe Learning Environment

In addition to sharing a mindset, the participants also provided a safe learning environment for both teachers and students. Participants felt that in coeducational schools, there were many distractions that took boys' attention away from their studies and many barriers which hinder their ability to effectively educate Black boys. In contrast, participants believed that single-sex schools removed many of those distractions and allowed teachers to develop all aspects of their boys.

Free from sexual distractions. Among the many sub-themes that manifested was that NTSB provided the Brothers a learning environment *free from sexual distraction*. In the context of coeducational schooling, many of the participants felt that the presence of girls interfered with Black boys' ability to focus on their learning because they were preoccupied with worrying about what girls thought of them when they made a mistake in class, competed for the attention of girls they were sexually attracted to, or because they became sexually aroused by what girls wore in class. But at NTSB, Black boys were able to concentrate on their studies because there were no girls present in the learning environment to distract them. This finding is consistent with Streitmatter's (2002) findings, in which boys reported that “the girls represented sexual distraction.... that they were kept from their work because they looked at the girls too often... and believed that single-sex classes had fewer distractions, and they got their work done” in single-sex classes (p. 223-224). Surprisingly, the single-gender school also provided a safe environment for male teachers:

When it [comes] to [working] one-on-one with a student of the opposite sex and me, I tend to feel a little bit more apprehensive.

Not only did NTSB shield boys from sexual distractions, but it also provided a sense of safety for Denver, who often felt uncomfortable delivering one-on-one instruction to girls in co-educational

settings. Male teachers working in all-boys single-sex schools do not have to worry about the appearance of impropriety when working with boys one-on-one as they do with working with girls one-on-one in coeducational schools. Essentially, Denver believed that separating boys and girls provided not only a safe learning environment for the boys but also a safe working environment for male teachers as well which was an unexpected phenomenon in this case that was not discovered in the review of the literature.

Teach social and academics. Another sub-theme that emerged was that the NTSB encouraged teachers to teach the Brothers both *social and academic skills*. In Chapter Four, I shared that the participants felt that they were somewhat restricted from teaching Black boys' social skills in coeducational schools but felt safe to teach their Black boys social skills during Lyceum — a daily gathering focused on social development: At NTSB, Black boys were taught to be socially responsive young men and a safe learning environment. During Lyceum, the faculty engaged Black boys in social discussions centered on politics, sexual orientation, harassment, poverty, drug prevention, and racism and discrimination. In addition, the facilitated discussions aimed at teaching the Brothers how to respect and interact with girls, which was critical because many Black boys often come from fatherless homes and lack firsthand knowledge of how a man should treat a woman. This finding supports Jones' (2014) assertion that single-sex schools provided a safe space for Black boys “to feel safe in their identities as students within their school” (p. 276) and further supports Fergus and Noguera's (2010) findings that single-sex school practitioners sought to “undo cultural and structural damage” and viewed “addressing social and emotional needs as paramount” (p. 6).

A Culture of Brotherhood

In addition to a safe learning environment, NTSB provided boys a sense of brotherhood in which friendships were formed, mentorship was developed, and a sense of belonging was created. Participants believed Black boys are viewed in a negative manner by society and were often referred to by racial slurs and therefore were called “Brothers” while attending NTSB. Thus, Brothers were encouraged to treat themselves and their fellow brothers with respect at all times.

Ambassador. Ambassadors were student leaders who were seen as representatives of the Brotherhood culture and were identified in every classroom at the school. Anyone who visited NTSB would be greeted by Ambassadors who referred to themselves and their fellow peers as “Brothers.” Ambassadors served as student liaisons between students, teachers, and administration and were expected to represent their school and Brothers well at all times and embody academia, brotherhood, character, and perseverance both on and off-campus. Above all, Ambassadors were expected to encourage and support their fellow Brothers, which, if replicated in urban schools, could help to reduce the amount of Black-on-Black crime that has plagued so many Black communities across the U.S. This finding is consistent with Fergus and Noguera’s (2010) belief that single-sex schools “through identity work begin the work of transforming Black boys into leaders” (p. 6).

Brother’s keeper. Another sub-theme that emerged from the culture of Brotherhood was that all Brothers were considered to be their *Brother's Keeper* at the NTSB. In Chapter Four, I explained how the participants believed that Brothers were family and looked out for each other by holding each other accountable for each other's actions. This meant that the Brothers, regardless of their grade level or age, accepted responsibility for each other’s successes as well as failures. The words “I Am My Brother's Keeper” were incorporated into the school's song and

creed, which the Brothers recited every day during Lyceum at NTSB. The Brothers genuinely cared for one another and would address any behaviors that did not align with the Brotherhood culture. At the same time, when the Brothers failed to address inappropriate behavior, they made no excuses and collectively accepted the consequences for their inactions. Fostering a culture that embodies Brother's Keeper is an integral part of the development of Black boys and could shield Black boys from exposure to the school-to-prison pipeline system, as discussed in Chapter 2. This finding is consistent with Jackson-Ruiz and Watson's (2014) finding that in single-sex schools, Black boys felt a sense of brotherhood where they "loved and cared for each other" (p. 12).

Big Brothers. Another sub-theme of the Brotherhood culture was that NTSB prepared high school boys to become Big Brothers. Big Brothers mentored younger Brothers, referred to as "Little Brothers" in elementary and middle schools, giving them the opportunity to develop leadership skills at the NTSB. Participants believed that Little Brothers looked up to Big Brothers and that the Big Brothers looked after their Little Brothers and taught them how to succeed in school. The NTSB mentoring program gave Black boys the opportunity to sharpen their leadership skills both on and off-campus. Similar to Ambassadors, Big Brothers served as student leaders; however, their mentorship went beyond the walls of the school, reaching younger Brothers in elementary schools. From the very beginning, Little Brother in middle school had Big Brothers in high school looking out for them. Big Brothers were responsible for getting the Little Brother acquainted with NTSB by taking them on school tours and introducing them to different clubs and activities on campus. This finding closely aligns with other Black male mentorship programs, such as Umoja Network for Young Men, an all male mentoring program in which Black men mentored young Black boys, referring to them as "little brothers"

(Jackson et al., 2014, p.404). However, NTSB's mentoring program differs from Umoja Network for Young Men mentoring program in that it was not an adult-based mentoring program in which Black men served as mentors to Black boys, but an internal, student-based mentoring program in which older Black boys served as mentors to younger Black boys. Nevertheless, these findings support Nelson's (2016) assertion that single-sex schools provide a culture "where boys assume the caretaker role of their fellow brothers" (p. 8) and Fergus and Noguera's (2010) assertion that in single-sex schools, "the young men are being primed to lead the next generation in transformation change for their communities" (p. 6).

A Culture of Competition

NTSB's creation of a competitive learning environment improved student achievement, managed students' behaviors, and boosted students' morale. In co-educational schools, boys engage in aggressive competitions to win the attention of girls, which resulted in classroom disruption, school fighting, and student suspensions. But at NTSB, the Brothers were encouraged to participate in healthy competitions aimed at improving their academic, behavioral, and social skills.

Brotherly rivalry. A sub-theme from this competitive culture was *Brotherly Rivalry*. Participants felt that the Brothers loved competing against each other, which enabled them to form closer bonds and hold each other even more accountable for their success and failures. NTSB capitalized on the competitive nature of boys by implementing a house and point system. The house and point system enabled teachers to encourage boys to take part in academic competitions and to demonstrate good deeds by rewarding house points and to discourage boys from misbehaving by reducing house points. The faculty viewed the competitive nature of boys as a positive rather than a negative characteristic. This finding is consistent with Hanlon et al.'s

(2010) assertion that “boys thrive on competition” and fits into broader research discussed in the literature review regarding single-sex schools’ ability to embrace the instinctively competitive nature of boys.

Boy-Centered Instruction & Environment

Another central theme is that NTSB provided a boy-centered learning environment that was specifically tailored to addressing the gender-specific learning needs of the Brothers. In coeducational schools’ practitioners center their teaching strategies around what was best in the best interest of boys and girls combined. But at NTSB, practitioners were able to focus all of their instructional strategies towards what was in the best academic interest of boys on their campus.

Be the Alpha. As part of boy-centered instruction, there is a need for teachers to assume the role of the class Alpha — authoritative figure. Participants believed that the Brothers responded to and respected teachers who always represented themselves as the authoritative figure in their classrooms. Brooklyn likened the experience to leading a wolf pack in which she had to first establish dominance. At NTSB, teachers were expected to establish themselves as the authoritative figure in their classrooms. There was a consensus that teachers who either shared personal information, joked around, or turned their backs on the Brothers in class would become easy targets and risk losing control of their classroom. Therefore, teachers were expected to be the Alpha — the authoritative figure — both inside and outside of their classrooms. The Brothers knew that their teachers were responsible for their learning and progress and were in charge of them at all times. Therefore, there were few classroom disruptions at NTSB. This finding was unexpected as it did not implicitly emerge in the literature review; however, it provided insight into how the participants viewed student-teacher relationships at NTSB, which was primarily

hierarchical in nature. Moreover, it counters Spielhagen's (2011) assertion that single-sex schools are not prepared to manage boys' behavior.

Hold him accountable. Another sub-theme that emerged was that NTSB teachers held the Brothers accountable for their academic performance. Participants believed that Black boys were often seen as unable to acquire advanced level knowledge in coeducational schools. However, Brothers at NTSB responded well to a learning environment in which teachers were fair, caring and held them accountable for meeting high academic expectations. At NTSB, teachers established and maintained extremely high academic expectations, and the Brothers lived up to those expectations. NTSB believed Black boys could learn rigorous content and taking advanced-level courses. To this end, teachers informed the Brothers that failure was not an option, and they were capable of doing more than they thought they could do, and that it was their responsibility to challenge them beyond their initial capabilities. In return, the Brothers maintained an exemplary academic record at NTSB. This finding is consistent with Fergus and Noguera's (2010) findings that that single-sex schools set high academic expectations for Black boys, who "are commonly seen as unable to perform in public schools and are, therefore, not given opportunities to do the type of work that will make them competitive with other college-bound students their age" (p. 6). Furthermore, it demonstrates that single-sex schools provide Black boys with more opportunities to enroll in advanced level courses, making them even more competitive with their peers.

Teach to his mind. Another sub-theme that emerged was that NTSB teachers were successful at tailoring their instructional practices to teach to the boys' minds. Participants recognized that the Brothers learned differently than girls and were more active, competitive, and cooperative learners and therefore benefited from learning from teachers who aligned their

teaching practices to account for their boys' learning styles. At NTSB, teachers not only recognized that boys learned differently than girls but incorporated gender-specific instructional strategies such as brain breaks, collaborative activities, hand-on projects, and competitions. Such boy-centered approaches allowed teachers to deliver highly structured, organized, and relevant lessons that captivated boys' minds. This finding is consistent with Bonomo's (2010) suggested strategies for boys in that "lessons should be kinesthetic and experiential with a variety of manipulatives" (p. 263) and Fergus and Noguera's (2010) second framing theory that single-sex schools understand how the academic needs of Black boys have surfaced and target strategies for addressing those needs.

Give him space to move. Another sub-theme that emerged was that NTSB teachers provided the Brothers space to move while learning. Participants believed that boys are more active than girls, have shorter attention spans than girls, and are incapable of sitting for long periods of time, and therefore need opportunities in the classroom to burn off physical energy.

At NTSB, teachers embraced the Brothers' natural instinct to want to move while learning by intentionally creating spaces within their classroom and in their lessons for the boys to move. The Brothers, therefore, were not confined to chairs situated in rows or forced to read for an extended period of time but instead had the freedom to move throughout the classroom while still being engaged in the learning process. This finding was important because many of the discipline issues found in coeducational schools were centered on the boys' refusal to sit quietly in their chairs for an extended period of time (Sax, 2016). However, NTSB's ability to strategically account for the active nature of boys by providing them opportunities and space to move throughout the classroom enabled the Brothers to feel free to be themselves without the fear of reprisal. This finding supports Bonomo's assertion that "without a physical outlet, their

aggressiveness will show up elsewhere” (p. 263) and Terry et al.’s (2014) assertion that single-sex schools “effectively shield Black males from the marginalizing effects of urban schooling” (p. 666).

Give him time to play. NTSB also gave the Brothers an opportunity to play during the school day. Participants felt that playtime was routinely missing from the learning environment as the Brothers matriculated to middle and high school and insisted that the Brothers loved having playtime even in upper-grade levels as well. At NTSB, the teachers recognized the need for their boys to have playtime, which they insisted was just as important to their overall development as their academics. To this end, teachers were strong proponents of protecting the Brothers’ recess time from being reduced for instructional purposes. Given that NTSB did not have any sports programs, the Brothers had no outlet by which to release their energy and cherished their time to play with their peers during recess. This finding is consistent with Martin and Fabes’s (2001) finding that boys who spent time playing with other boys became more active and Bonomo’s (2010) guidance for teachers to “let them play” (p. 6).

Lack of Relevant Professional Development

One disadvantage of the unique school arrangement within a larger urban school district was the lack of relevant professional development at NTSB. Prior to NTSB opening its doors to the first cohort of boys, the administration placed particular focus on ensuring that all teachers received gender-specific professional development. There was a consensus that professional development was helpful as it taught them how to adjust their thinking to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of Black boys. However, many of the participants believed that after years of continuous changes in administration, the focus on ensuring that teachers received

relevant professional development decreased, and this ultimately had a negative impact on many of the Brothers.

Teachers, specifically seasoned teachers, expressed great frustration with the lack of relevant professional development that many of the novices were receiving. Participants expressed concerns about new teachers not receiving the proper training needed to provide gender-specific instruction and manage boys' behaviors. During NTSB's founding years, it was expected that all teachers attend annual, gender-specific training; however, after a series of changes in school administration, the importance placed on teachers receiving relevant professional development decreased. This finding is expected and consistent with Gray and Wilson's (2006) finding that schools' leaders often fail to provide teachers with the training necessary for working in a single-sex school environment, resulting in frustrated staff. As one teacher put it, "there must be a better way to handle them. I would be more confident if I had been trained in strategies and methods to counteract their behavior!" (p. 296).

COVID 19!

The final theme that emerged was the overwhelming impact that COVID-19 ("coronavirus") had on participants' teaching experiences and students' learning experiences. Participants described how they adjusted to online learning platforms as the coronavirus forced schools to close in-person instruction and explained how students adapted to virtual learning. The instantaneous need for teachers and students to cut off in-person instruction and transition to virtual instruction in the confinement of their homes was an unexpected, forced change for everyone. Participants expressed that they missed seeing their boys and their frustrations with the negative impact the change had on the boys' learning experiences. Many of the boys, especially high school boys, did not attend the virtual morning Lyceum, which hindered their ability to

engage in social lessons and connect with their peers. Moreover, participants were disappointed with the newly mandated district grading policy, which they believed lowered student expectations. For many of the teachers, especially veteran teachers, this resulted in forced change.

The rise of COVID-19 undoubtedly had an impact on NTSB and all other schools around the world. The participants similarly recognized and understood that COVID-19 was a phenomenon that not only impacted their school but all other schools and students around the world. Moreover, while adjusting grade policies to account for the unusual experience frustrated many of the participants, I believe school officials were making decisions in the best interest of all students during this unpredictable and forgiving time in history.

Best Practices of an All-Boys, Single-Sex School

I presented Fergus and Noguera's (2010) two framing theories on single-sex schools for boys of color in Chapter 1. First, single-gender schools "understand and address the academic needs of Black and Latino boys." Second, single-sex schools "understand and have knowledge of the social/emotional needs of black and Latino boys" (p.40). Fergus and Noguera arrived at the conclusion that "we must now understand how these theories are translated into educational practices" (p. 30). To that end, I conclude this case study with a comprehensive list of best practices for school administrators and teachers to consider when serving Black boys.

With respect to how practitioners meet the social and emotional need of Black boys, principals and teachers at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB) explained that they incorporated the following best practices: (a) morning lyceum, (b) song and creed, (c) house system, (d) point system, (e) recess, (f) uniforms, and g) student leaders. Figure 3 depicts how school practitioners (teachers and principals) describe the social and emotional practices at NTSB, an all-boys,

single-sex school for boys of color (Black and Latino boys).

LYCEUM	SONG AND CREED	HOUSE SYSTEM	HOUSE POINTS	RECESS	UNIFORMS	LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyceum is a daily gathering to improve students' social knowledge. • Boys learn about dating, respect, sex, racism during Lyceum. • Lyceum helps boys grow into honorable and knowledgeable young men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A song and creed allow boys to honor their school. • Boys sang the school's song and recited the creed daily. • The song and creeds give boys a sense of purpose and pride in themselves and their school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House systems unite students in the pursuit of friendship. • Boys are assigned to one of four houses, each with its own identity and culture. • Boys in houses compete, form friendships and brotherhood in the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House points require boys to hold each other accountable. • When boys behave well, their house gain points; when boys misbehaves, their house loses points. • House points eliminate teachers from writing Black boys' referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recess allows boys to socialize, reset, and return to class ready to learn. • Boys were given 30 minutes each day to play with their peers. • Recess reduces Black boys' misbehaviors due to build-up energy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniforms give boys a common identity. • Boys wore Blazers, Dress Shirts and Slacks, a Tie, Belt, and ID Badge and Black socks and Black shoes. • Uniforms teach Black boys professional groom/dress standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is essential for boys' overall development into men. • Boys were given student leadership roles. • Leadership roles teach Black boys skills needed to lead their family and community.

Figure 3. Best social & emotional practices of a single-sex school.

With respect to how practitioners meet the academic needs of Black boys, principals and teachers at North Texas School for Boys (NTSB) explained that they incorporated the following best practices: (a) always exuding authority, (b) setting high academic expectations, (c) teaching to boys' learning style, (d) accounting for space in classroom layout and lessons, and (e) allowing for flexible and alternative seating. Figure 4 illustrates how school practitioners (teachers and principals) describe the academic practices at NTSB, an all-boys, single-sex school

for boys of color (Black and Latino boys).

AUTHORITY FIGURE	HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS	BOYS LEARNING STYLES	SPACE TO MOVE	FLEXIBLE SEATING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead your boys from a position of authority. • Do not reveal your personality or family information to boys, as doing so could be seen as a weakness by boys. • Use contracts in conjunction with your expert and assertive, disciplined approach to direct, re-direct, and manage boys' behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instill confidence in boys by setting high academic expectations. • Assign boys rigorous course work and enroll them in advanced-level courses. • Expect boys to produce high-quality work, and participate in discussions projects, and academic competitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that boys and girls learn differently and develop at different rates. • Boys are more active, competitive, visual, hands-on, and cooperative learners. • Teach to boys' learning styles and help to pique boys' interest in the content which will keep them focused and from becoming bored, off-task, and in trouble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting for extended periods of time is torment for boys. • Spacious classrooms allow the boys to get up from their seats and move around the room. • Devise a classroom management plan (contract) that outlines criteria for movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible seating instills a sense of ownership in the boys' class environment. • Bean bags, balance balls, wobble and foam stools, floor seats, and stand-up desks are all examples of flexible seating • Invest in flexible seating that allows boys to move freely.

Figure 4. Best academic practices of a single-sex school.

These best practices illustrate how single-sex schools remain a viable alternative to coeducational schooling for a group of young men whose home and neighborhood environments give them few options to succeed and even fewer role models who motivate them to achieve. Whether you are a superintendent considering whether to adopt all-boys, single-sex schools, or single-sex classrooms for your district and schools, a principal looking for ways to enhance test score and improve the overall climate and culture for boys, or a teacher looking for strategies to improve classroom management and the instructional environment for boys, we should consider adopting some, if not all of these strategies because our Black boys are counting on us!

Limitations

Due to COVID-19, all participants were interviewed virtually rather than in person, which was a limitation in this case study. We encountered connectivity issues and lagged audio during the virtual one-on-one interviews, forcing the participants to repeat themselves and recall

their previous statements. Connectivity issues were also present during the focus group. The participants were unable to hear each other's statements at times, forcing the researcher to pause the live video feed so that audio playback could be transmitted more clearly. Even though we had audio and video capabilities, the virtual, semi-structured interviews were not as personable, and I could not capture the group dynamics during the focus group. Specifically, we could not pick up on each other's nonverbal cues, which we would have been able to do in an in-person, sit-down interview, and focus group. Furthermore, the virtual interviews triggered a sense of nervousness among the participants, which would not have been the case during face-to-face interviews.

Implications

This study contributed to the existing body of literature surrounding single-sex schools regarding their impact on Black boys' education in the United States. Understanding the phenomenon through the lens of six single-sex school practitioners filled a gap in the literature. In particular, this case study presents stories shared by teachers and principals employed at an all-boys, single-sex school, broadening our understanding of single-sex schools' characteristics and their impact on Black boys' learning experience and educational outcomes.

This study has practical implications as it highlights the social and academic strategies employed to improve the Black boys' overall development in a single-sex setting. Implementing some or all of the social-emotional practices such as the lyceum system (a social gathering), recital of school song and creed, a house system, a point system, recess, and uniform, and leadership requirements may be the strategies needed to address many of the social-emotional deficiency in our Black boys. Equally important, implementing some or all of the best academic practices such as teachers assuming the role of an authoritative figure, establishing high

academic expectations, and tailoring their instructional and learning environment to boys' learning styles and physical needs may significantly improve Black boys academic outcomes.

This study also has policy implications as it shed light on the problems associated with leaders establishing single-sex schools in urban communities as an intervention for Black boys without developing, implementing, and sustaining a long-term strategic plan to provide relevant, gender-based, professional development for veterans and novice teachers alike. School leaders must ensure that ongoing, gender-specific professional development is part of the school model to help acclimate or re-acclimate teachers to a single-sex model. In doing so, teachers will better understand internal systems and know how to respond to boys' learning needs, positively impacting their overall learning experience and educational outcomes.

Single-sex schools are extremely controversial as proponents assert that they improve students' outcomes and social-emotional competence, and opponents on the other side disagree, insisting that single-sex schools only reinforce gender stereotypes and sex discrimination. For this reason, the legality of single-sex schools continues to surface in our judicial system. While the participants lacked first-hand knowledge to offer insight into any legal issues surrounding the existence of NTSB, it is important to note that single-sex schools continue to be met with legal challenges because of opposing views. This study will not end the debate surrounding single-sex schools; however, its findings shall ignite a dialogue about how we as change agents — leaders and teachers — can begin to view single-sex schools as a much-needed intervention for Black boys, rather than a social experiment.

Recommendations for Future Research

I discussed how it is common for Black boys' voices to be excluded from meaningful conversations about the challenges they face at school in Chapter 2 (Rowley et al., 2014). While

this study provides a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of single-sex school practitioners, I believe it is equally important to examine the phenomenon from the perspective of students. Therefore, I would recommend future researchers investigate Black boys' perceptions of single-sex schools and single-gender classrooms. Examining Black boys' perspectives on single-sex schools will make a significant contribution to the literature and the field of education because they are best able to articulate how they feel about learning in different school environments from girls and will shed light on which pedagogical strategies best enhance their overall learning experience.

In addition, there is a gap in research surrounding parents' perspectives of single-sex schools. Understanding parents' perspectives of single-sex schools and why they selected a single-sex school over a coeducational school could provide insight into why parents choose single-sex schools over the coeducational school. Therefore, I also recommend that future researchers investigate single-sex schools through the lens of parental perspectives. Furthermore, I believe that the findings of this study could have significant policy implications and assist urban school districts or school districts serving a high population of Black boys in deciding whether to consider single-sex schools as an alternative to traditional schooling to improve the learning experience and educational outcomes of Black boys.

Conclusion

For years Black boys have consistently academically lagged behind their male and female peers. This study is significant and supports existing literature suggesting that single-sex school models are better equipped to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of Black boys than coeducational school models. In analyzing data collected from interviews with six participants, the following themes emerged: a) shared mindset, b) a safe learning environment, c) a culture of

brotherhood, d) a culture of competition, and e) body-centered instruction and environment, f) lack of relevant professional development and g) Covid-19. Participants did not raise any legal issues concerning single-sex schools. I believe it was because only one of the interviewees was a founding teacher and thus had no knowledge of any legal issues surrounding the establishment of NTSB. The findings of this case study suggest that urban school officials who are looking to establish single-sex schools as an intervention to address challenges facing Black boys should not view single-sex schools as merely an academic intervention. However, school officials should understand that single-sex schools also provide Black boys social and emotional benefits that they would not otherwise receive in a coeducational school.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Principal Recruitment Email

Greetings Principal,

My name is Jorriod Moore, and I am a doctoral candidate at UT Arlington. I am conducting a qualitative study regarding the experiences of principals and teachers working in an all-boys, single-sex school. The purpose of this study is to understand the “best practices” of an all-boys, single-sex school learning environment, and its impact on Black Boys’ learning experience and educational outcomes as best described by a campus principal and classroom teachers.

For this study, I am looking for one campus principal, with a minimum of two years serving Black boys at the North Texas School for Boys. If you believe that you match these criteria, I would like to cordially invite you to participate in a one-one-one principal interview. I anticipate that the interview will take approximately 60 minutes, and it will take place virtually to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of assigning you a pseudonym, i.e., Jane Doe. The results of this study will be published and/or presented without naming you as a participant. Please let me know if you would like to participate in this study by responding to my email address at jorriod.moore@mavs.uta.edu.

Thank you!

Jorriod Moore

Appendix B

Teacher Recruiting Email

Greetings Teacher(s),

My name is Jorriod Moore, and I am a doctoral candidate at UT Arlington. I am conducting a qualitative study regarding the experiences of principals and teachers working in an all-boys, single-sex school. The purpose of this study is to understand the “best practices” of an all-boys, single-sex school learning environment, and its impact on Black Boys’ learning experience and educational outcomes as best described by a campus principal and classroom teachers.

For this study, I am looking for one teacher per grade level, with a minimum of two years serving Black boys at the North Texas School for Boys. If you believe that you match these criteria, I would like to cordially invite you to participate in a teacher focus group session with me and an individual interview. I anticipate that the teacher focus group will take approximately 120 minutes, and it will take place virtually to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The individual interview will also take place online and should last approximately 45 minutes.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of assigning you a pseudonym, i.e., Jane Doe. The results of this study will be published and/or presented without naming you as a participant. Please let me know if you would like to participate in this study by responding to my email address at jorriod.moore@mavs.uta.edu.

Thank you!

Jorriod Moore

Appendix C

Interview Protocols for Teachers

Procedures for Teachers:

Teachers will participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview and a focus group which will take place during the teacher planning period or time otherwise convenient for all participants.

The one-on-one interview will last no longer than one hour and the focus group will last no longer than 1 ½ hours. The focus group and interview will be audiotaped, transcribed, coded, and analyzed to understand the essence of the phenomenon that exist within an all-boys, single-sex school, with respect to Black boys.

Notification Email to Selected Teachers:

You have been selected to participate in this study because of your teaching experience at an all-boys single-sex school that serves a high population of Black boys. We are trying to learn from single-sex schools' teachers and principals to understand why Black boys are successful in single-sex schools. In addition, we think that teachers like you will give us ideas about how single-sex school settings best supports Black boys' learning. I will be recording this focus group so that I can write about what you have to say. In fact, your words will appear in my dissertation at some point.

Please take a moment and complete the following demographic information:

Demographic Information:

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

Subject/Grade Level: _____

Years at single-sex experience: _____

Years of coeducational experience: _____

Teacher Interview Questions:

- What are your views on single-sex schools?
- How well do boys perform in your class (i.e., grades, CAs, ACPs)?
- How do you best help boys learn?
- How would you describe your relationship with your students?
- How would you describe boys' behavior in your class?
- How do you manage boys' behavior?
- What professional development do you attend related to teaching male students?
- How do you create a boy-friendly classroom environment?
- Is there anything you would like for me to know about your philosophy as an educator that we have not already discussed?

Appendix D

Interview Protocols for Principals

Procedures for Principals:

Principals will participate in one-on-one semi-structured interview that will last no longer than one hour. The interview will be audiotaped, transcribed, coded, and analyzed to understand the essence of an all-boys, single-sex school, with respect to Black boys. Principal interviews will take place at a time convenient for them. This research study is not expected to pose any risks to participants.

Notification Email to Selected Principal:

You have been selected to participate in this study because of your principal experience at a single-sex middle school that serves predominately Black boys. We are trying to learn from single-sex school principals to discover why Black boys are successful in their single-sex schools. In addition, we think that principals like you will give us ideas about how single-sex schools best support Black boys learning. I will be recording this interview so that I can write about what you have to say. In fact, your words will appear in my dissertation at some point.

Please take a moment and complete the following demographics information:

Demographic Information:

Principal Name: _____

School: _____

School Level (Elem, Middle, High): _____

Years of single-sex experience: _____

Years of coeducational experience: _____

Principal Interview Questions:

- What are your views on single-sex schools?
- How well are your students performing on district and state assessments?
- What instructional strategies have your teachers successfully employed to help Black boys learn?
- How would you describe your relationship with your students?
- How would you describe boys' behavior in your school?
- How do you manage boys' behavior in your school?
- How do you prepare your staff to teach Black boys?
- How do you create a boy-friendly school environment?
- Is there anything you would like for me to know about your philosophy as an educator that we have not already discussed?

Appendix E

Informed Consent for Studies with Adults

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Single-Sex Schools as the Solution for Black Boys in America

RESEARCHER

Jorriod Moore, PI, ELPS, jorriod.moore@mavs.uta.edu, 972-704-5549

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR

Dr. Catherine Robert, ELPS, catherine.robert@uta.edu, 817-272-5166

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr. Jorriod Moore, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) department at the University of Texas at Arlington. This study is being conducted as part of the fulfillment of dissertation requirements. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate.

You have been invited to take part in this study because of your teaching experience at a single-sex school serving a large population of Black boys. We turn to single-sex schools' teachers and principals to provide us with a conceptual understanding of the best 'practices of single-sex schools and their impact on Black boys' learning experience and educational outcomes. You must have at least three years of experience working in a single-sex school to take part in this study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand the “best practices” of an all-boys, single-sex school learning environment, and its impact on Black Boys' learning experience and educational outcomes as best described by a campus principal and classroom teachers.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Participate in a 1-hour semi-structured, one-on-one interview with the researcher (Principal)
- Participate in a 1-hour, semi-structured, focus group with the researcher (Teacher)
- Respond to open-ended questions regarding the central phenomenon.

- All for interviews to be audio-recorded, transcribed, and decoded.
- All for your words to appear in a published dissertation at some point.

ESTIMATED TIME INVOLVEMENT

Over the course of one day, the participants will participate in either a 1-hour one-on-one interview or 1-hour focus group.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This research study is not expected to pose any risks to participants.

Informed Consent for Studies with Adults

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECT AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Previous research has focused on the academic gains made by Black boys who attend single-sex schools rather than understanding single-sex schools from the lens of teachers and principals who are responsible for making those gains possible. This study will significantly add to the existing body of research on single-sex schools serving Black boys by understanding single-sex schools from the viewpoint of school practitioners.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of assigning you a synonym name, i.e., Jane Doe. The results of this study will be published and/or presented without naming you as a participant. All paper and electronic data collected from this study will be stored in a secure location on the UTA campus and/or a secure UTA server for at least three (3) years after the end of this research.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Mr. Jorriod Moore, PI, at 972-704-5549 or jorriod.moore@mavs.uta.edu. Any questions you may have about your rights

as a research subject or complaints about the research may be directed to the Office of Research Administration, Regulatory Services at 817-272-3723 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date