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HOOD COLLEGE



A Community's Response to an Equity-Centered,
Comprehensive, School Redistricting Proposal

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Hood College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Organizational Leadership

by
Mary C. H. Weller

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A Community's Response to an Equity-Centered,
Comprehensive, School Redistricting Proposal

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ABSTRACT

In 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in America's schools. Yet, racial and socio-economic segregation continue in schools and invariably lead to differential academic outcomes for students correlated to both factors. Despite evidence that disruption of segregation benefits all students both academically and non-academically, attempts to alter the status quo frequently garner active and energetic resistance from socially dominant groups including white, middle-class parents. This qualitative, critical case study examined and contributed to the research on equity-focused, educational leadership by investigating the case of a large, diverse public school system in the mid-Atlantic, the pseudonymous Bowmantown Public Schools, when a comprehensive redistricting of attendance areas was introduced. The redistricting proposal was designed to improve facility utilization and increase diversity in schools.

The study probed the following research questions: (1) How did the community respond to a school system proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas? (2) Who were the community members that publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan? (3) What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period? and, (4) How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process? Critical Race Theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. Methodology included qualitative content analysis of over 2,500 testimonies filed by community members in

an approximate 6-week period in 2019. Data sources also included school system records, school system data sets, and a reflexive researcher journal. Findings indicated that though the redistricting proposal did not explicitly cite race as a rationale for the student reassignments, colorblind racism played a central role in people's responses. Arguments against the proposal included infringement on property rights and civil liberties. A counter narrative elevated interest convergence as a path forward.

Findings suggest that despite evidence showing racially heterogeneous learning environments offer benefits to all students, normalization of racial isolation in neighborhoods and schools artificially amplifies opposition to policies that might disrupt this racialized *status quo*. Leaders' attention to both counternarratives and unheard perspectives may hold the key to breaking the juggernaut of white privilege that has shaped educational experiences and structures in American public education.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In January 2019, the elected school Board of the pseudonymous Bowmantown Public School System (BPSS) directed the Superintendent of schools to design a comprehensive redistricting plan in accordance with school system policy. The school system's most recent review of migration and growth patterns in the community showed that many schools were outside facility use guidelines. Other schools exhibited disproportionate enrollments of students impacted by poverty. Both conditions underscored concerns about educational equity for students.

In Bowmantown, as in school districts throughout the United States, reassignment of students to new schools is viewed as a drastic measure; it stokes emotional responses from community members. Yet, when school construction and population growth diverge, redistricting of school attendance areas may be the only solution to alleviating overcrowding. With inevitable shifts in school assignments on the horizon, Bowmantown community members lobbied school officials as they developed a proposal, reacted swiftly and energetically when the proposal suggested transferring over 7,000 students to new schools in the next school year, and continued lobbying for delay after a final plan won approval to transfer some 5,000 students. The community's response to the proposal included thousands of testimonies coupled with protest marches, yard signage, and social media campaigns. Nearly all the outcry aimed to block the proposed changes. The activity attracted significant attention from both regional and national media outlets. Accusations of racism erupted.

My research applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the theoretical framework through which I examined the community's response to the school redistricting proposal. I sought to

develop understanding of who participated in the response, what they said, and to what extent race may have played a role in that response.

I began my research journey early in 2020. At the time, I had no inkling what would ensue in the following months. The COVID-19 pandemic gripped the world with particular vengeance on communities of color in the United States. A Minneapolis police officer murdered George Floyd. A deeply polarizing presidential election cycle climaxed with an insurrection against the United States. CRT was weaponized in the national conversation on education (Schwartz, 2021). Despite popular rhetoric to the contrary, race matters. If educational leaders are truly committed to supporting young people as they progress into adulthood, they must face that fact. The case of school redistricting in Bowmantown can provide valuable insight to that effort.

Statement of the Problem

Twenty percent of the way through the twenty-first century, America's neighborhoods and schools remain racially homogeneous. The color of one's skin still serves as a major determinant in the trajectory of one's life. In other words, America remains a racist society (Bonilla-Silva, 2019).

Racism is not uniformly defined in America. Frequently, it is depicted as an individual malady where people's personal biases and prejudicial behaviors lie at the root. Other times, racial hierarchization is said to result from institutional powers that tie race to one's access to even basic resources (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Guinier, 2004; Kendi, 2019; Kohli et al., 2017). Realistically, racism is far too complex to fall neatly into this dichotomy. Certainly, individuals hold prejudicial biases based on skin color, but the patterns indicate such a high level of

consistency from person to person that the origins are, at least in part, attributable to extrinsic forces (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003, 2015).

Throughout most of America's history, non-white people have been subjugated, and despite landmark civil rights legislation passed more than 50 years ago to eliminate all legal protections for racial oppression, Black people's lives stand in sharp contrast to white people's lives in America. Black people, on average, earn less income, possess lower wealth, and experience poorer health outcomes when compared to white people. Most Americans see these outcomes with little understanding of the historical impetus, so they develop personal theories to explain and make sense of what they see. Such personal theories, or *schema*, normalize to a point that even contradictory information is distorted to fit the embedded belief system. In other words, the observed racial environment results in commonly held internal beliefs about racial hierarchization that then influence people's actions that, in turn, reinforce the policies and practices behind the racial hierarchization in the first place (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Kendi, 2019). A negative feedback loop maintains racial *status quo*.

Meta-level organizations, like schools, operate in and emulate the racialized structures surrounding them (Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Ray, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). Despite clear evidence that disruption of this racialized cycle holds tremendous benefit for students, white people, often parents, tend to resist changes. Their resistance seldom invokes race explicitly but still serves to maintain social advantage correlated with race. Too often, the resistance is amplified to overwhelm alternative voices, and the cycle of racialization proceeds unchecked.

My research study examined the voiced responses of members within a diverse community when the school system considered a proposal to redraw school attendance boundaries in a comprehensive redistricting. The goals of the redistricting proposal were to

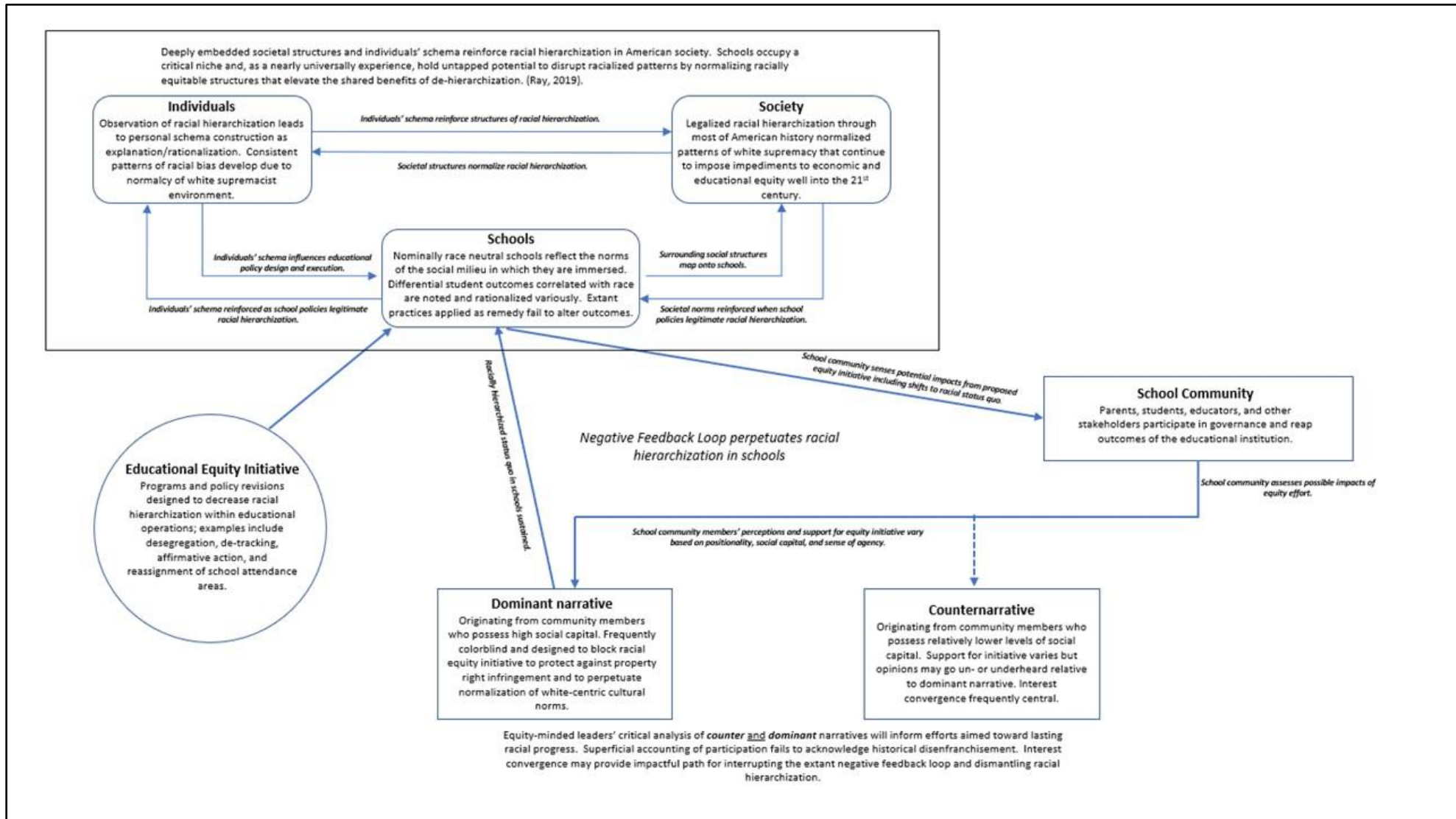
balance capacity utilization within schools where enrollments were either above or below rated levels; enhance educational equity by addressing concentrated enrollments of students who qualified for Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) services; and to plan for the imminent opening of a new comprehensive high school within five years. The proposal generated high levels of response, and though the plan did not include race as a factor in reassigning students, community members' responses indicated race became a central factor. I applied Critical Race Theory as the theoretical framework in analyzing school system documents, publicly recorded responses from community members, and my personal reflections to the case of Bowmantown Public School System's 2019 comprehensive redistricting of school attendance boundaries. The results of my study hold potential to make clear the prevalence and dangers of unacknowledged systemic racism in educational organizations so that leaders can address them effectively.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework, shown in Figure 1, is based on the assertion that schools are immersed in and reflective of the racial hierarchization that is prevalent in American society *writ large*. Despite widespread evidence that de-racialized schools offer significant academic and social-emotional benefits to students, patterns of racialization persist. In fact, when efforts to disrupt racialization are introduced, they consistently encounter energetic opposition from white community members aiming to maintain white privilege (Hagerman, 2018; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016; Wilkerson, 2020). This opposition blocks progress toward equity and may deepen the patterns of racialization further. Alongside the oppositional viewpoints are counter stories often emanating from community members whose voices may have been marginalized in the past. These counter stories hold great potential to disrupt the deeply rooted racialized cycle but seldom garner the attention they deserve.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Theoretical Framework

In this research study, I applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Bergerson, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2015, 2019; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Kohli et al., 2017) to examine community response to a race-neutral, equity-centered, comprehensive school redistricting effort in a large, diverse, suburban school district. CRT maintains that racism cannot be fully understood from an individualistic standpoint. Instead, racism includes fundamental structural components (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2019; Kendi, 2019). CRT has its roots in legal studies from the 1970's in the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman who were frustrated by the slow pace of civil rights advancement (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The concept of CRT first entered mainstream consciousness during the failed nomination of Lani Guinier to the post of Assistant U. S. Attorney General in 1993 by President Bill Clinton. Conservative pundits seized upon some of Guinier's writing where she suggested the only way minority racial groups could gain representation in elections is if each vote cast by a member of the racial minority group counted for more than one vote. Though her reasoning was intended to apply to post-Apartheid South Africa, it was quickly maligned by power holders within the United States as radically anti-white (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In 2020, CRT again reached mainstream awareness following a presidential executive order in October 2020 that restricted diversity training for federal employees and soon morphed into parental protests at school board meetings across the United States to "ban critical race theory teaching" in schools (UCLA Law News, 2021; Schwartz, 2021).

The tenets of CRT hold that racism in U. S. society is normalized to a point of "colorblindness" that prevents many people from even noticing its presence. Second, whiteness is viewed as property such that when white privilege is perceived as threatened, people believe

their civil liberties are threatened. Third, interest convergence appears to be the best path forward to eradicating racism. In particular, white people will only advocate for advancement of people of color if such advancement is advantageous to white people too. Fourth, CRT elevates the importance of counter narratives and storytelling. CRT scholars recognize that much research centers on white, male, positivism that neglects to affirm the experiences of those outside this paradigm (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2015; Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Storytelling offers an avenue to hear varied perspectives.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this qualitative, critical case study was to examine a community's response to a race-neutral, equity-centered proposal that comprehensively redistricted school attendance boundaries in a high performing, suburban, public school district. Unbalanced enrollments across schools triggered the elected school board to task the school system's Superintendent to develop a plan that would shift school attendance boundaries throughout the system in order to bring school enrollments within specified parameters. The Superintendent offered a proposal that reassigned over 7,000 students to new schools in the following year. Building capacities along with consideration of socio-economic status of students' families influenced the Superintendent's proposal. The plan garnered significant response from the community including thousands of testimonies, at least one public protest rally, and significant social media activity. My study examined the response captured in the public testimonies to understand more deeply who responded and what was said. I intended the analysis to draw critical attention to the issues and to inform future equity efforts among education leaders. The following section describes the research questions, overviews the methodology, and describes the context for the study.

Research Questions

The central research question and three sub-questions that framed this qualitative, critical case study were:

Central research question: How did the community respond to a school system's race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas?

R1: Who were the community members who publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?

R2: What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?

R3: How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?

Overview of Research Methodology

The critical case study of Bowmantown's race-neutral, equity-centered redistricting proposal included examination of public testimony and other data sources. Specifically, the data set included (1) publicly accessible documents generated by the school system in preparation for and in support of the redistricting process; (2) over 2,500 publicly accessible testimonies filed by community members during the redistricting process; and (3) my reflexive journal maintained throughout the research process to systematically document my research efforts, perceptions, and emotions. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis informed by a Critical Race Theory lens.

Ethical Considerations

I masked the name of the school system, the names of individuals who filed testimony, and other information that might reveal identifying details on Bowmantown. All research procedures followed the requirements of my Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school system. All data were securely stored on my password protected personal computer.

I systematically reviewed all data to identify and code emergent themes. I sought to tell the story of the BPSS community during the period in which the redistricting proposal was considered in order to provide insights that may inform future equity-centered leadership efforts.

Context

The study examined the community response recorded from late-August to mid-October of 2019 in reaction to the Superintendent's proposal to redraw school attendance boundaries in Bowmantown. BPSS is a large, diverse, suburban public school system in the mid-Atlantic region that is frequently categorized as a destination school system. That is, people accept high housing costs and long commutes to live in Bowmantown and reap the benefits of a BPSS education. The period of community response at the center of the study was part of an eleven-month effort that ran from January 2019 when the elected school board directed the Superintendent of schools to develop a redistricting proposal for their consideration, until November 2019, when the elected school board approved the final school boundaries for the following school year. The comprehensive redistricting was triggered by a school system report that showed many schools within the 70-plus-school school system were operating either markedly above or below designed capacity. Historically, comprehensive redistricting efforts in school systems trigger significant public engagement, and the effort within Bowmantown was not out of the ordinary in this regard.

Research Setting

BPSS, the setting of this research study, is a large, diverse, suburban public school system located in the mid-Atlantic region and serving over 50,000 students. The Bowmantown community includes over 323,000 residents who live in neighborhoods ranging from suburban to rural. The community and the school system are diverse along several dimensions including race, ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status. As one testament to the community diversity, the school system is categorized as a majority minority district, which means that no single racial or ethnic group holds majority status. The median household income in the Bowmantown community exceeds \$121,000, and over 60% of residents aged 25 and older have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. There are over seventy schools in Bowmantown, and the high school graduation rate exceeds 90%. Students in Bowmantown schools generally perform well on academic measures including state mandated, end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments. Despite the overall high achievement, however, gaps in scores between student groups are notable.

The comprehensive redistricting effort in 2019 was the first attempt in over a decade to shift school attendance zones in a significant way in BPSS. A previous plan to initiate redistricting in 2017 was abandoned when the safety of school system personnel and community participants was threatened. Migration patterns throughout the county, however, made redrawing school boundaries in 2019 imperative in order to balance building utilizations and provide equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Researcher Positionality

My positionality as researcher is important to define. I am a white, cis-gender, straight woman. I am an honorably discharged veteran of the U. S. military. I have advanced academic

experience and am part of the economic middle class of the United States. The racial hierarchy that defines the social strata in the United States works in my favor. In fact, it worked in my favor for so much of my life, I did not particularly notice the significance of the system for a very long time.

Race was generally not acknowledged in everyday conversation when I grew up; yet, I now realize, race dominated my life. My neighbors and schoolmates looked like me. I saw people who looked like me depicted in positive ways on television, in movies, and in print media. In the community where I grew up, white military leaders of the Confederacy were represented majestically. My schools celebrated segregationists through names, mascots, and “fight” songs. The world in which I was immersed was, unbeknownst to me, that of white supremacy. Much like Truman Burbank in the 1998 movie *The Truman Show*, I was living in a rendered reality that normalized certain people and behaviors; they happened to be consistent with those I claimed. However, also like Truman Burbank, my adult view obviated the world façade. I questioned the rules that were clearly not fair to everyone.

My professional experience as an educator helped me recognize the fallacies of my earlier world. My roles as teacher and educational administrator exposed me to a wide array of educational settings that I now realize shared one constant--no matter the context, white students received one experience in schools; Black students received a very different experience. A phone conversation crystallized my understanding of this educational reality.

In 2016, I served as a central office administrator for a core academic program in a public school system. A mother, who was white, called me to request my help regarding her daughter’s course enrollment for the upcoming school year. The available academic courses did not suit the parent’s conception of her daughter’s academic needs. Though several options existed, the parent

requested yet another alternative be provided. The parent described one course as “too hard.” The other, she said, would subject her daughter to “all of the potheads.” As I considered what I knew about students in the classes at this particular school, I was surprised to learn there was a preponderance of drug users enrolled in a particular class! I examined the enrollment data at the school and soon realized that “pothead” was likely the parent’s code word for students of color.

The moment served as an epiphany for me. Educational structures such as academic leveling of courses and school assignments that keep students in tight neighborhood cohorts also keep racial hierarchization firmly in place. This parent knew there were white spaces and non-white spaces in the school, and she wanted to keep her daughter in the white spaces. I further recognized that as an education leader, I must acknowledge and understand these structural realities deeply. Until the structures can be undone, racial equity in schools and in our American society will remain elusive.

Boundaries

My research examined the public response to the Superintendent’s redistricting proposal as recorded in the public record from August 2019, when the Superintendent presented the proposal, until mid-October 2019, when the school board began public deliberation and introduced modifications. This six-week period was one segment within a longer timeline that began in January of 2019 when the school board first directed the Superintendent to develop a redistricting proposal for their consideration and action. Prior to the release of the Superintendent’s plan, the school system contracted with an external consultant, convened an Area Attendance Committee (AAC), surveyed the community, and hosted public hearings to gather community input. The materials generated during this period guided my research by clarifying context, but I used school system generated documents and data sets directly related to

the redistricting proposal alongside my reflexive journal to support my analysis of public comment for the study.

Significance of Study

This study builds on other studies that have examined community responses to equity-centered, structural changes in schools and school systems. Though community response is shaped by the specific circumstances surrounding each case, rallying among affluent, white community members to ensure their children learn in predominantly white educational spaces is a common theme. Evidence shows diverse learning spaces hold tremendous potential benefits for all students in terms of both academic and social-emotional learning. Thus, abnormalizing racially homogenous school settings holds great potential to abnormalize racial hierarchization more broadly. Educational leaders must be equipped to lead these efforts including the charged process of school redistricting.

The present study adds to the literature by applying the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory to examine the community's response to a race-neutral redistricting plan. It examines patterns of response and people's ideas about equity and race. The results hold potential for educational leaders who seek to dismantle existing power structures that disadvantage students of color.

A Word About Race

Though race dominates and defines American social structures, it is seldom acknowledged explicitly (Irving, 2014; Kendi, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2015; Wilkerson, 2020). American author James Baldwin (1962) wrote, "Not everything faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

His words ring truer in this century than when he wrote them in the last century. The academic disparities between white and Black students in America's schools cannot be eliminated if they are ignored or attributed to any and everything except racial hierarchization. The fact that the U. S. Supreme Court has placed limits on the extent to which race can be considered when assigning students to schools does not help the effort to tackle the very real impacts imposed by race (Ancheta, 2008; Monroe, 2008). American education and American educators are under siege to remove race from consciousness in 2021. This research paper does not intend to cast blame on any individual or group. Our modern racialized society is rooted in a past that we cannot change. We do, however, have the power to acknowledge these actions and to make different decisions today.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides operational definitions for key terms used throughout this paper.

Attendance Area refers to the geographic area assigned to attend a designated school.

Attendance Area Committee (AAC) refers to a group of community members knowledgeable about education and the community and invited by the Superintendent to advise school system staff on the development of a redistricting proposal.

Black refers to people of African descent who live in the United States. In keeping with current convention, the word Black will be capitalized when reference is made to people of African descent in order to signify its fundamental importance in social organization in the U. S. (Appiah, 2020; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

Colorblind describes the twenty-first century practices in the United States not to acknowledge skin color as a factor influencing social organization in the country.

Comprehensive Redistricting is a process used within school systems to reassign students from across the full district to individual schools to meet system goals such as optimization of facility use.

Equity centers on social justice. It is not equivalent to equal or the same for everyone because social structures in the United States have privileged some people over others. Instead, equity refers to ensuring people have what they need.

Large, diverse, suburban school system describes the Bowmantown Public School System which serves over 50,000 students in over seventy school buildings with no single racial or ethnic group in the majority.

Oral testimony refers to the written record of a person who delivered a statement in person at a public hearing. It does not necessarily represent what the person actually said orally; many are far too lengthy to have been communicated aloud in the allotted three minutes. It is what exists in the public record.

Polygon is the unit of analysis used by school system personnel to analyze and develop school attendance zones. Over 700 polygons were considered during the redistricting. Roughly speaking, a polygon can be equated to a neighborhood.

Race is a socially constructed category designed to sort people based on some arbitrary characteristic. It is neither an eternal nor essential category as racial distinctions have changed over time. Despite its social and arbitrary construction, race has real effects on people's lives as social systems are built around racial categories and impact people's life experiences (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003; Kendi, 2019).

Racism occurs when policies serve to establish or maintain racial hierarchization and differential access to opportunities and resources (Anderson, 2017; Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Guinier, 2004; Kendi, 2019; Kohli et al., 2017).

Traditionally marginalized is used to identify individuals and groups of people who have historically not held the same social privilege or who have had civil rights blocked both legally through Jim Crow laws and through traditional practice in the U.S.. People who have been part of the traditionally marginalized groups in the U.S. include nearly all people who are not identified as of European descent (Wilkerson, 2020).

White refers to people whose ancestors originated in Europe and who identify themselves as members of the white race (Irving, 2014; Wilkerson, 2020). In keeping with current convention, white will not be capitalized when referring to white culture or people (Appiah, 2020).

White Privilege is the practice of developing and supporting policies that offer people who are classified as of the white race (typically of European heritage) advantages over others who are not classified as part of the white race. It is systemic racism and is used interchangeably with *white supremacy*.

Written Testimony refers to a statement that was delivered to the public record via US mail or email. The individual did not appear at a public hearing to deliver the message.

Summary

This chapter overviewed and set the context of my research study. My study examined the community response to an equity-centered proposal to comprehensively shift school attendance boundaries in a large, diverse, suburban school system. My qualitative, critical case study included review of the school system's communication related to the proposal as support

of my systematic analysis of the publicly recorded response. Through the process, I developed understanding of how the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit were perceived by the community. The results of the study hold potential to inform educational leaders who are leading equity efforts in their organizations. Subsequent chapters present a review of literature; a detailed methodology; findings; and discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review contains an overview of empirical studies and other informational texts relevant to twenty-first century racism, racialization of schools, and community reactions to efforts at reducing school racialization. Section one of this review outlines contemporary colorblind racism in the United States. Section two describes the current, racialized state commonly found in American schools along with the negative outcomes for students associated with that racialization. In the third section, I describe community perceptions and reactions to efforts within educational systems to reduce or eliminate racialized hierarchization of people. The last section overviews literature relevant to my theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) including the value of counter stories to combat systemic racism.

My review's organization aligns to my study's conceptual framework. My research effort is based in the premise that American education mirrors the racial hierarchy endemic in American society at large. Both systems and individuals contribute to that racialization, and schools, situated at a meta-level between the wider society, at the macro-level, and the individual, at the micro-level, are uniquely positioned to interrupt racial hierarchization. Yet, when race-neutral, equity centered initiatives are introduced to educational systems, they are blocked through collective efforts from powerful and often white community response. These dominant stakeholders deny the existence of systemic racism, counter suggestions that individuals harbor negative ideas rooted in race, and fight to maintain a white supremacist status quo. Countering voices are overwhelmed, and white students retain advantageous positioning in schools.

Twenty-first Century Racism

In contemporary America, most white people bristle at the term “racist” and claim not to be racist and not to see color (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). In fact, even the U. S. Supreme Court has said looking past skin color is necessary to move past historical effects of legalized discrimination (Ancheta, 2008; Monroe, 2008). However, the fact is that hierarchization of people and groups in societies is ubiquitous, and contemporary America stratifies along racial lines more than any other social dimension (Gould, 2002). The mechanism for racial stratification is typically explained either through either individualistic or large-scale, systemic means (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003, 2015, 2019; Gould, 2002; Kendi, 2019; Tilly, 1998). In the individualist explanation, there are seen to be only a few, “Archie Bunker” types who perpetuate discrimination. The narrative asserts that by ignoring race, generally, and changing the minds of these individual racists, true equity will emerge. However, over fifty years since the end of Jim Crow laws, racism persists throughout the United States with patterns that display such consistency that individuals are likely not at the root (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Kendi, 2019).

The alternative, systemic explanation attributes pervasive and embedded racial hierarchization to norms and processes that, simply put, privilege white people. This twenty-first century racism is structural in nature and is frequently described as colorblind racism. It is hard to detect and even harder to counter. Many people, especially those of European descent for whom societal systems work nearly flawlessly, never question why the system fails others. Instead, personal theories that hold the victim accountable arise. Non-white people are described as lazy or immersed in deficient cultural norms that hold them back. Colorblind racism fails to acknowledge the 400 plus years of purposeful racial discrimination in America (Anderson, 2017;

Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003, 2015, 2019; Kendi, 2019). Much like a fish does not realize it is wet, many white people, immersed in a white *habitus*, fail to recognize the discriminatory system in which Americans live (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

White Supremacy

Racism does not operate in a singular and exclusively discriminatory direction. The elevation and privileging of white people are critical components. In fact, it is the explicit privileging that makes dismantling and reconstructing racialized systems so difficult.

The term white supremacy is problematic. For some, it conjures images of hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Yet, it is not necessarily referring to the violent and hateful actions of a few. Instead, it describes a system in which advantage to resources is nearly automatic for white people. It describes a system that those who enjoy advantages are loathe to dismantle. In fact, they may actively block attempts at change if simple apathy or inaction are insufficient defenses (Kendi, 2019).

White People's Attitudes About Race

Bonilla-Silva (2003) conducted a seminal study examining the racial perceptions of white people in late twentieth century America. Using interview data from two, large-scale efforts, colorblind racism, its functions, and the basic profile of colorblind ideology were examined. Participants included students from three colleges of varying size and location in the U. S. and working adults who resided in the Detroit area. The students were selected using convenience sampling methods while the working adults were randomly selected to comprise a representative sample. Despite the potential for differences in their perspectives due to the different sampling methods and the fact that college students tend to exhibit more racially liberal views than the

general public, the findings from the two groups were remarkably consistent (Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Bonilla-Silva (2003) applied four frames of colorblind racism to analyze the discourse of the participants captured in the interviews. These frames were: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Abstract liberalism refers to a belief that everyone is capable of and responsible for their well-being. It relies on meritocracy and holds that with hard work, each individual is equally likely to succeed. Naturalization is an attitude that little need be or can be done to reverse discrimination as it is a result of the natural order of society. Cultural racism is used to explain away the lower social status of Black people as a result of cultural norms that do not encourage hard work. Minimization of racism is a denial that racism is even relevant in contemporary American society.

Though white people tend not to acknowledge race, when they do, these four frames are frequently applied to distort the realities and impacts of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). The language that undergirds these frames is subtle; several semantic moves characterize their invocation. For example, in the study, when white participants spoke about race, they would become incoherent in their speech, regularly preface statements with denial of racism, and project race onto others but not themselves. It was not uncommon to add diminutives that “cushioned” statements and attitudes about efforts to reduce racism. These included claims such as only being “a little bit against affirmative action” (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 57). White participants applied storytelling to rationalize their perspectives and the social structures they identified as valuable to them. They were quick to point to individual cases of Black people who, in their view, had succeeded in the current system as evidence that with hard work, one can get ahead (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 97).

Life experiences of the white participants indicated significant racial isolation. Highly segregated living conditions were consistent; few could point to significant interactions with Black people. They did not socialize together, and their work or school relationships were superficial (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This isolation was naturalized with few questioning the origins or logic of separation (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). This white *habitus* resulted in consistent schema across individuals to rationalize the state of racial relations in America (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 123). In other words, white supremacy was fully normalized. Much like the fish that fails to realize it is wet when swimming in the ocean, participants in the study, and white people throughout the U.S., see their individual realities as truth. People develop schema that rationalize their experiences and block their readiness to consider alternative truths.

Racialization in Schools

Organizations, including schools, in 21st century America are assumed to be race neutral. In reality, though, schools and other organizations tend to reproduce the social structures in which they are immersed (Ray, 2019). Thus, despite outlawing racial segregation following the landmark case of Brown v. Board, true integration of America's schools remains elusive (Kohli et al., 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

A Single School Example

In a large, qualitative study, Lewis and Diamond (2015) completed a four year case study analysis on race and its effects on student learning within a large, high performing, diverse high school in the mid-western U. S. The school served approximately 3,500 students, and the student body was about 45% Black, 45% white, and 10% other races/ethnicities. It was in a well-resourced community that voiced strong support for education generally. During the study, some

170 stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty, and school administrators, participated in interviews.

The findings indicated that contemporary racial patterns found in society at large were evident in the school. Black students and white students reported over surveillance of Black students. They also reported harsher consequences for the Black students (Lewis and Diamond, 2015). Resource advantage for white students was noted through the high participation rates of white students in advanced academic offerings such as honors classes when compared to Black students. White parents were quick to point out their high levels of advocacy to get their children in the higher academic tracks even when otherwise advised by teachers or desired by individual students (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Parents indicated an assumption that better teachers were assigned to the honors classes. There was also a sense of worthiness, and unworthiness, associated with the students in the honors and regular classes, respectively. The fact that the white students were apparently getting into classes with better teachers simply served to compound the advantages of race since the students were already advantaged. The tracked classes established achievement hierarchies that fell along racial lines (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Essentially, whiteness served as a commodity for students and their families that they traded for academic advantage.

Black students recognized the role race played in their opportunities within the school. They reported concern that their skin color would hinder their chances to get ahead later in life. Black and white students shared nearly identical aspirations for educational success, but Black students' dreams went unrecognized by many in the school. Instead, some adults clung to explanations such as "oppositional culture" and a desire not to "act white" as rationale for gaps in performance on standard measures (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Disparities in patterns of discipline were noted frequently. White parents stated that if their children entered the school's system for discipline, they would readily engage school administrators regarding consequences. School personnel also acknowledged this practice and explained how they would evaluate each situation to determine if the student's parents might retain an attorney when assigning consequences. Imposed consequences would be inversely proportional to the likelihood that the family would retain legal counsel (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). White parents were quick to confirm that they knew how the system worked, and they would readily apply this knowledge to ensure desired outcomes.

Students referenced incidents where white students received the benefit of the doubt from security personnel and other adults in the school. Both Black and white students told stories of Black students being stopped in the hallway for dress code infractions just as white students wearing similar attire were allowed to proceed (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

The highly racialized academic hierarchy perplexed some administrators and frustrated Black students in the school. One student remarked the separation made it feel as though there were two distinct schools in a single building. Administrators speculated the arrangement must have been confounding to the students since they had all started school together in the same classes in elementary school. Though differentiated trajectories correlated to race became reality in later elementary grades, the structures of the high school greatly exacerbated the differences. Beliefs among white parents and students normalized these differences with both groups expressing an expectation that white students would find their way to honors level classes and academic success (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Confoundingly, the white parent participants articulated great respect for diversity. They told stories of specifically selecting the school community over others because of its diversity.

They wanted their children to experience different cultures than their home cultures. However, these same parents were quick to seek advantages for their children when opportunities arose. In one example, when suggestions were made to change structures and practices such as altering course leveling, parents conveyed both ambivalence and hostility. Their remarks indicated they did not want to lose their advantage. White parents knew how the system worked, and they were not reticent to work that system fully. School administration bowed to this response out of a concern over white flight (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Parents regularly employed colorblind rationale and language to justify their positions. They attributed their capital to hard work and meritocratic values. Many described resource availability as limited and were quick to push others aside to ensure access for their own children (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). When interviewers probed more deeply into parents' attitudes toward race, many offered incoherent responses or offered what was, essentially, a verbal shrug (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

Students enrolled in regular classes were often described as having deficient character or being unwilling to forward sufficient effort to get ahead. It was this combination of factors that, in the white parents' view, caused the gap in performance on standardized measures. The responsibility was placed squarely on the shoulders of the Black students and their families. Structures in the school went unimplicated, and racial hierarchy persisted unabatedly (Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

The study's findings, though focused to a single school, point to structural barriers for Black student success that are rationalized and, in some cases, vehemently defended by white parents who already hold significant social advantage. The aggregate racial schema of

individuals reinforced the white supremacist structures in a feedback loop that proved challenging to disrupt. The reinforcement was implicit and subtle, but the results were very real.

Systemic Example

The persistent mirroring of society's racialization is not limited to single school examples. In a ten year qualitative study that included 260 interviews with parents, teachers, administrators, journalists, and students, Rosiek and Kinslow (2016) documented white supremacist influences leading to resegregation of schools in the Riverton school system. Riverton, a pseudonym for a school district in the United States formerly under court ordered desegregation, achieved unitary status and began dismantling its diverse, mega-high school to build smaller schools closer to assigned students' homes. The new status empowered the school board to decide that the single high school should be divided into three smaller high schools offering opportunities for new construction and new alignments in the community. Student participants described how their expectations for racially homogenous schools were sadly confirmed when, in fact, the three resultant schools' boundaries were finalized (Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

Participants in the study were opportunistically recruited and represented a wide array of perspectives on the changing school system. Black students, teachers, and community members described hearing rhetoric in both public and private venues that devalued the Black students. They saw two new school buildings quickly erected in the wealthier, white suburbs. They experienced the organization of a nearly all Black school in a repurposed building in the more urban region of the community. Students in the new buildings received new materials such as athletic uniforms that bore the names of the newly minted mascots. The repurposed school building in the urban center assumed the name of the former mega-school, and students

continued wearing athletic uniforms and using other materials already emblazoned with the original school name (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

Parents in the newly formed suburban schools lobbied unsuccessfully that the charter for the prestigious International Baccalaureate (IB) program be transferred to one of the new, suburban schools since the urban school was now seen as both lower performing and dangerous (Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). The parents' beliefs were reinforced when the administrative reality of lower enrollment in the urban school limited the array of academic offerings (Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

White parents articulated a clearly lower respect for the Black spaces, and their messages were often stated in public forum (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). School board members were not shy to state that stemming white flight significantly influenced their decisions. When interview data were examined for evidence that factors such as social class might explain people's attitudes, no such data were found (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016).

Riverton had a unique opportunity to serve students better in more personalized educational environments through the formation of smaller schools. They also had the opportunity to enrich students' learning experiences by prioritizing diversity. Instead, the school system legitimated racialization by emulating historic patterns of segregation and bowing to the priorities of those already in possession of high influence (Ray, 2019).

In another systemic example, Chapman (2013) qualitatively examined the experiences of Black students who were bussed to attend predominantly white schools in nearby suburbs. The stories from the students underscored the ill effects of racial segregation in schools. The research team conducted interviews with focus groups of students who consistently reported that the higher academic tracks in the schools were perceived as property by white students. Students

also noted the stark reputational difference between the predominantly white suburban schools and the predominantly Black urban schools. To wit, the lower academic track classes in the suburban schools were viewed as significantly more academically advantageous than the like course in the urban school. Participants also noted differences in behavior standards as many reported being held accountable for infractions that white students were not. Despite these unfair disparities, the participants also emphasized their knowledge that they could not bring these differences to light. They especially knew they dare not attribute the noted differences to race as they would be labelled irrational. In other words, these students suffered real consequences as a result of colorblind racism, but they were not able to name it. Instead, they were left to assume the same colorblind rhetoric as others and to continue to bear the brunt of its effects (Chapman, 2013).

Advantages of De-racializing Schools

Racially integrated learning environments bring both academic and non-academic advantages to all students (Wells et al., 2016). The following section offers evidence from the literature related to these advantages.

In a report to federal lawmakers, Kahlenberg, Potter, and Quick (2019b) noted that not only are diverse schools consistent with education's stated purposes of supporting social and economic mobility along with social cohesion, they are also cost effective and result in higher academic outcomes for students. In the report, they argued that standardized test scores increase, college enrollment rates rise, dropout rates decrease, and gaps between student groups diminish. Critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity are enhanced as students confront new ideas and different perspectives. Additionally, racial bias is reduced since the racialized course enrollment often seen in schools is diminished. Students begin to see that everyone contributes

positively to the greater society, and students are found more likely to act in concert with social justice efforts in the future. Economically, diversifying schools and increasing the outcomes for all makes sense because the need for special funding structures for low performing schools is reduced.

Academic Advantages

Examining the relationship between non-racialized schools and student learning outcomes is a challenging research problem since schools in the U. S. generally apply the same racialized practices already outlined in this review. As an alternative means to study the issue, Mickelson (2015) examined longitudinal data on academic outcomes in the form of middle school end of course tests in mathematics and reading among students in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. His novel approach allowed him to quantify the time students had been exposed to racially homogenous school enrollments in their elementary schools. Results of student performance indicated that the more time students spent learning in predominantly Black, racially imbalanced elementary schools, the lower their grade 8 end-of-course math and reading scores. In looking at middle school racial composition, Mickelson (2015) further found that the higher the percentage of Black students enrolled in the middle school, the lower were scores in reading and math. Surveys of teachers in schools revealed that teachers often held different learning expectations for students in environments that included higher percentages of Black students. These results suggest that racial differences in achievement might be altered if racial desegregation in schools were prioritized (Mickelson, 2015).

In another study within schools in North Carolina, Sharma, Joyner, and Osment (2014) examined student performance on North Carolina end- of-course assessments for Algebra I and English I among ninth grade students. They controlled for economic disadvantage, race, and

designation as gifted. The student scores demonstrated a correlation between racial isolation and student academic performance. Economic disadvantage and giftedness were not found to be related. The study also considered possible impacts from teacher quality and experience level. As with Mickelson (2015), the impact of the teacher was relevant since teacher experience level was generally lower at schools where the percentage of Black students was higher (Sharma et al., 2014).

Non-academic Advantages

Significant evidence indicates that Black students in predominantly white schools, receive both implicit and explicit negative messaging about their social status and worth (Kohli et al., 2017; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). Juvonen et al. (2018) surveyed California middle school students in grade six, their parents, and their teachers to investigate individual students' perceptions of vulnerability and their beliefs about fairness within diverse schools. Individual student exposure to racial diversity was measured at both the school and classroom levels using Simpson's diversity index. The Simpson diversity index indicates the level of racial isolation a student experiences in a school or a class. A Simpson value close to one would indicate the student is in a highly diverse setting whereas an index closer to zero indicates greater homogeneity. The Simpson index was calculated for each participant relative to the school and to the student's class schedule. Students in schools that were more ethnically diverse reported feeling safer, less victimized, and less lonely. Greater school-level diversity was also associated with more positive perceptions of teachers' fair and equal treatment of students from all ethnic groups. Thus, more positive psychosocial outcomes were associated with high diversity schools (Juvonen et al., 2018).

Student perceptions on vulnerability and fairness with respect to their exposure to diversity within individual classrooms within the schools was also examined. There was no relationship between exposure to diversity and perceived vulnerability evident. However, diversity exposure and perceptions of fair treatment were positively correlated (Juvonen et al., 2018). Cross level interactions between classroom level and school level diversity were also tested. Students who were exposed to classroom level diversity that was higher than the mean diversity level for their schools perceived fairer treatment by their teachers. When students' exposure to classroom level diversity was lower than the mean school diversity, the school level diversity did not predict the students' perception of fairness (Juvonen et al., 2018). In sum, schools and classrooms with higher racial and ethnic diversity mean students felt safer, less victimized, and less lonely. Students also perceived teachers' treatment of all students was more socially just in school environments with higher levels of diversity (Juvonen et al., 2018).

In summary, schools that privilege diversity among students have positive impact on both academic and nonacademic measures. When students learn in environments where exposure to students of different races is limited, their performance on academic measures appears lower. Additionally, students in highly diverse schools and classrooms benefit by feeling safer and more valued. These results imply that highly diverse learning environments can abnormalize the racialized structures prevalent both in and out of schools.

Parental and Community Perceptions of Race in Schools

School racial demographics impact people's perceptions of schools. They also impact community economic measures including home prices in substantial ways. The following section outlines some of these relationships as well as describing community and parent reactions when efforts to enhance equity by diminishing racialized structures are initiated.

In a paper presented at a national symposium centering on inclusive community development, Wells et al. (2017) reported on two studies examining diversity and its fragility in demographically diverse communities. The first study was in Nassau County on New York's Long Island. The second was in a gentrifying area of New York City. The studies applied a mixed methods approach and included qualitative interviews and case study analysis, and quantitative analysis of demographic patterns, property values, and academic outcomes alongside surveys of homebuyers. The goal was to capture people's perceptions of school quality (Wells et al., 2017). The findings indicated that reputations of schools are often based on perceptions rather than objective data. Property values were found to be impacted by changes in enrollment demographics. Specifically, when enrollment percentages of Black and Latinx students increased in schools in Nassau County, the home values near those schools decreased. Follow up surveys revealed that people in Nassau County were influenced in their home purchase decisions by the reputations of the schools as represented by the students enrolled in those schools. Few reported ever visiting the schools or conducting objective research into the schools. Instead, people perceived exclusivity as a desirable feature in a school.

A similar belief system was found operating in the gentrifying sections of New York City. White families who moved into apartments that were zoned for schools with higher Black and Latinx student populations tended to opt for private school placements. The parents reported a belief that the neighborhood schools had serious problems, but they were unable to name them. Reputations, though only conceptual, had very real effects on people's decisions and the local economy.

Billingham and Hunt (2016) conducted an experimental study to measure parents' perceptions of school quality with respect to the proportion of Black students enrolled in the

schools. The survey measured pro-white stereotype bias. It also measured that bias when considered alongside school racial composition of hypothetical schools. The researchers systematically varied the racial composition of a hypothetical schools within the survey and found that as the proportion of Black students in a school increased, there were consistent and significant negative correlations of white parents' propensity to enroll their children in the hypothetical schools. In other words, white parents indicated decreasing willingness to enroll their own children in schools educating increasing percentages of Black children.

In a novel study that seized upon the shift of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools' governance after attaining unitary status, Weinstein (2016) examined residential demographics over time as school demographics shifted. Neighborhood and school demographics were examined in the years preceding and following the end to court ordered bussing that had been designed to achieve racial integration in schools. The research was designed to measure if neighborhood demographics changed as a result of neighborhood rezoning. The results showed that when the percentage of Black students enrolled in an elementary school increased, the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood became less white over time. The neighborhoods surrounding schools shifted to match the school demographics. Thus, white flight became a real phenomenon in a school system where integration had proven impactful for many years.

Reactions to Redistricting of School Attendance Areas

Schools realign attendance areas for a variety of reasons. In the 1970's, rezoning was in response to court ordered busing to decrease *de facto* racial segregation. In the twenty-first century, redistricting of school attendance zones may result from overcrowding, new school construction, or attempts to alter the demographics of a school or schools. The following section

describes community reactions to redistricting in school systems along with the impact of the reactions.

Lareau et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative case study on a year-long redistricting effort in a high performing and wealthy school district in the northeastern U. S. The study included analysis of all correspondence sent to the district offices by community members. Additionally, school board meeting transcriptions, postings to online discussion boards, and media coverage of the redistricting effort were analyzed. The case study was rounded out with interviews with school system personnel and five parents.

The school system under study was described as a “destination” system where families sought to purchase homes in order to take advantage of the high quality schools (Lareau et al., 2018). There were two high schools in the district, and both held outstanding reputations. The racial representation of students in the two schools differed, however. Thus, when redistricting appeared on the horizon, parents activated immediately to block any redistricting plan even before introduction. This energetic and blocking response continued throughout each phase of the redistricting effort.

Parents in the school system generally held white collar, professional positions. They displayed elite educational credentials. They were quick to use these tools of high social capital against the school system. They orchestrated activities such as wearing matching shirts to school board meetings and sitting in groups to capture media attention and to draw attention to their activism (Lareau et al., 2018). Their criticism included meticulous scrutiny of each recommendation made by personnel in the district offices. They regularly called upon their own panel of experts to weigh in on the proposal.

The resistance lodged by parents never questioned the quality of the two high schools involved. Instead, parents invoked arguments about transportation, continuity of peer groups, and senses of community ownership. They spoke in terms of educational advantage as property, and they were eager to exchange their social capital as currency to ensure their children attended the school they chose.

Siegel-Hawley (2013) examined a redistricting effort in Henrico County, Virginia to understand how parental action can influence redistricting decisions. Henrico surrounds Richmond, Virginia from west to east along its northern border. Since the 1970's, Henrico has experienced both significant growth and significant diversification. The redistricting effort examined in the study was intended to reassign students to balance enrollments across multiple schools when a new high school opened in the predominantly white western region of the county. The study compared the proposed and resultant school attendance zones following a contentious process that included vociferous outcry by parents in some regions of the county. The final assignment of student resulted in one high school, Henrico High School, to include fewer than 1% white students in the school's enrollment. Conversely, three schools in the predominantly white west end each showed enrollments that were more than 80% white. The school board invoked nominally race neutral decisions in drawing and redrawing the boundaries in response to community members. In the end, individual school demographics reflected racial concentrations that stood in stark contrast to the shifting demographics across the county.

Frankenberg and Kotok (2013) examined how suburban school districts implemented attendance zoning policies to encourage racial diversity in schools. In a series of 224 interview during the 2009-10 school year in suburban districts within seven large metropolitan areas classified as racially diverse, they found that fear of white flight impacted policy decisions. The

districts' need to compete with surrounding jurisdictions to retain residents and their tax dollars was palpable. Community leaders indicated unwillingness to lose affluent families to other areas. This attitude coupled with leaders' propensity to steer well clear of topics perceived as racially preferential in order to avoid potential litigation, resulted in schools that reflected racial concentration.

Parental Reactions to Other Equity Efforts

School system policies to encourage equity and diversity do not only focus to moving students across schools. Efforts to increase diversity within schools also occur. This section overviews one effort to increase equity and access to advanced course work in Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California and the public outcry that ensued. This case is relevant for both the community reaction it captured as well as the theoretical framework and methodology employed.

Researchers examined community reactions to an equity initiative to alter science course schedules at Berkeley High School (Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016). For many years, the school offered laboratory instruction for its advanced science courses during before and after school meetings. The rationale was that moving the labs outside of the regular school day freed time in students' schedules to take multiple advanced science classes and to include other advanced coursework during the school day. However, enrollments in the laboratory sections outside of the regular school day were disproportionately white. Thus, the school attempted an update to its program to disallow the before and after school laboratory instruction and to require all laboratory work to occur during the regularly scheduled school day. The objective was to increase accessibility to the advanced work for students who did not have transportation to or from school outside of regular bus service.

White parents reacted swiftly and energetically through filing testimony, leveraging social media, and mobilizing the press. The reaction was so energetic, in fact, that the school quickly relented and reinstated the before and after school laboratory instruction. A critical race theory lens was applied to the social media posts from parents. The analysis revealed that white parents viewed their children's access to high volumes of advanced course work as property. They indicated beliefs that a resource was being taken from them; they consistently failed to recognize any value to increasing access for other students. The parents categorized some students as deserving of access to resources based on their hard work. Other students were categorized as undeserving. Instead, they would need to settle for whatever was available to them based on their limited resources. Importantly, parents never invoked race explicitly in their comments. Nevertheless, they applied significant levels of privilege in their narrative. It was also noted that a counter narrative from non-white parents was grossly absent. School leaders appeared to hear almost exclusively from the predominantly white and socially privileged parents (Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016).

Critical Race Theory

The theoretical framework applied in this study is that of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT originated among legal scholars to conceptualize the impact of white privilege in American society (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). It aims to move beyond the typically dominant narrative to elevate counter stories from people who are not always heard in a society of white privilege. CRT was developed to redress historical injustices that were otherwise considered irrelevant as evidence (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This section describes CRT, its tenets, and its relevance to my proposed study.

Tenets of CRT

Normalization of whiteness stands as a central tenet in CRT. This normalization means that people and traditions stemming from or associated with northern European heritage are privileged (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This privilege is not simply a perceived privilege or a psychosociological problem of prejudice. Instead, white privilege is a structural reality (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

Interest convergence is a second critical tenet of CRT. Interest convergence values solutions to racial discrimination that benefit all people rather than a single group. The principle acknowledges that conditions for Black people will only improve if a decision or outcome will also improve conditions for white people. An early and concrete example of the power of interest convergence surfaced in Bell's (1980) critical analysis of the *Brown v. Board* decision. In this review, the resultant desegregation decision resulted not from a commitment to benefit Black Americans as much as a commitment to protect the stature of the United States on the global stage. Afterall, how could the United States be viewed as a leader of the free world during the Cold War if it maintained a legalized system of separation between the races in schools?

Liberalism, and its inability to solve the issues of race, comprises a third tenet of CRT. Many people credit America's racial hierarchization to individual choice among Black people who are perceived as lazy or not valuing education or economic mobility. People who subscribe to the power of liberalism to improve people's lot in life fail to acknowledge the centuries of discrimination underlying our present time. Liberalism, and its corollary meritocracy, only serve to maintain the hierarchy and stratification that already dominate American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

A fourth tenet of CRT is the value of the counter narrative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Counter narratives, as the name implies, are the stories of events and experiences that stand in contrast to the stories typically heard from the dominant, and generally white, narrative. Elevation of counter narratives provide a contrasting perspective that can change minds. Emphasis on counter narrative also empowers people who *feel* validated when their traditionally marginalized stories assume a central position. People *are* validated when they are heard (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Importantly, despite the inclusion the term “race” within Critical Race Theory, CRT is not limited only to issues of race. CRT is nuanced and values intersectionality. Numerous subdisciplines extend to many marginalized groups by critiquing societal norms of the white privilege that shapes America (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This prioritization of intersectionality also highlights that people do not fit neatly into discrete categories. Instead, people are many things, and the intersection of identities can mean individuals feel acute and complex levels of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Despite contemporary and popular depictions of CRT, it is not a framework designed to flip America’s racial hierarchy.

Individual Versus Structural Racism

Within CRT, two schools of thought predominate. The first is the individualist school that maintains racism can be undone using psychosocial strategies that change minds and attitudes of individuals. The individualist school elevates issues such as biases and microaggressions.

The second school of thought is the realist school. This perspective argues that attitudinal change is insufficient to eliminate racism. Even though race is a conceptual and social construct, is also agential and continually feeds individuals’ attitudes and beliefs (Bonilla-Silva, 2019;

Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). As alternative to concentrating on individuals, the realist perspective seeks to change structures as means to eliminate racism. In the end, imposition of a rigid dichotomy on CRT fails to acknowledge the nuances and complexity of race in contemporary America.

Relevance to the Study

CRT provides an effective theoretical framework for my study because it challenges the traditional perspective applied in decision making within American schools. When the Supreme Court outlawed segregation of schools, Black students were integrated into white schools, but Black teachers were forced out of the teaching profession. White schools and white societal choices were set as the norm (Bell, 1980; Ray, 2019). This privileging of white perspectives has continued as racialized practices persist unabated in America's schools well into the twenty-first century (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). My study foregrounds white privilege as the prevailing factor in schools as microcosms of the surrounding community. The results of the study hold potential to inform educational leaders who wish to initiate lasting and racially equitable change.

Summary

This literature review overviewed relevant empirical studies and texts by leading scholars on the topics of contemporary racism, racialization of schools, and community response to efforts to deracialize schools. It also included an overview of Critical Race Theory as a theoretical framework for my study. The current scholarship reveals that contemporary racism remains deeply embedded in American society and is frequently difficult to identify; it is tightly ingrained within everyday societal structures. Though it will sometimes surface as bigoted behaviors from individuals, it is much more than mere behavior. Contemporary structural racism

is fundamentally a part of American society and privileges white people and white culture above others.

The racialization found more generally in American society is replicated in organizations such as schools. Much as structural racism is easily and frequently denied by white people, the racialization of schools goes unchallenged despite its very real impact on students. Finding examples of de-racialized schools to highlight racialization's ill-effects is challenging, but empirical evidence shows both academic and nonacademic benefits to students when they have the opportunity to learn in more racially integrated environments. This evidence will periodically spur educational leaders to introduce equity measures intended to reduce racialization including reassignment of students to school buildings or reorganization of academic programming within schools.

Yet, school leaders tread carefully around racial equity educational reforms. There are legal parameters that govern these actions (Ancheta, 2008; Monroe, 2008). The precedent of community backlash must also be considered. Empowered white parents frequently mobilize to block such measures (Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Rosiek, 2019; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016; Siegel-Hawley, 2013; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016).

Critical Race Theory provides a theoretical framework through which to examine even race-neutral, educational equity initiatives intended to enhance diversity in schools by acknowledging the privileging of whiteness in organizational structures and prioritizing the counter narratives of marginalized people. This study examined the public response of community members to a race-neutral proposal to assign students to different schools to enhance educational equity with the intention to better understand their reactions and to provide insights for educational leaders seeking to enhance learning experiences for all students.

A summary of this literature review is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1*Summary of Literature*

Topic	Summary	Relevant Literature
21st Century Racism in America	Race dominates 21 st century American society. Social structures shaped by the historical legacy of Jim Crow continue to influence people's lives, but their roots go unacknowledged. Without explicit recognition of these systems, individuals, especially white people who live in isolation from non-white people, organize personal schema based in principles of liberalism, naturalization, culture, and minimization of race to explain the racial realities they see.	Ancheta (2008) Anderson (2017) Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2003, 2015, 2019) Gould (2002) Kendi (2019) Tilly (1998)
Racial Inequity in Education	Schools are not racially neutral. They occupy a meta-level niche where they are influenced by both the greater, social structures in which they are immersed as well as the values of the individuals who participate in them. Despite holding similar aspirations for educational achievement, white and nonwhite students' educational experiences stand in stark contrast. Lower expectations and higher surveillance by adults are just some of the behaviors exhibited toward learning spaces with higher nonwhite participants. Institutional practices in school buildings and classrooms perpetuate these beliefs and lead to racial homogeneity.	Chapman (2013) Kohli et al. (2017) Ladson-Billings (1998) Lewis & Diamond (2015) Ray (2019) Rosiek (2019) Rosiek & Kinslow (2016)
Impact of Racially Equitable Education	Significant evidence points to both academic and nonacademic benefits for all students who experience racially heterogeneous educational settings.	Juvonen et al. (2018) Kahlenberg et al. (2019) Kohli et al. (2017) Mickelson (2015) Rosiek & Kinslow (2016) Sharma et al. (2014) Wells et al. (2016)
Community Response to Racial Equity Efforts in Education	Racial composition of schools and classrooms influence white people's perceptions of education quality. When efforts to increase racial heterogeneity in schools are introduced, white parents wage blocking efforts both individually and collectively. Their arguments tend not address race explicitly. Instead, they apply meritocratic arguments that leverage social capital to overwhelm change efforts.	Billingham & Hunt (2016) Frankenberg & Kotok (2013) Lareau et al. (2018) Pollack & Zirkel (2013) Siegel-Hawley (2013) Weinstein (2016) Wells et al. (2017) Zirkel & Pollack (2016)
Critical Race Theory	Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides an effective theoretical framework through which to view equity efforts by acknowledging the normalization of whiteness; emphasizing interest convergence; exposing the ineffectiveness of liberalism; and elevating the counternarrative. Application of CRT also allows for consideration of the nuances and interplay between individualistic and structural roots of racism.	Bell (1979, 1992) Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2015, 2019) Delgado & Stefancic (2017) Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) Pollack & Zirkel (2013) Ray (2019) Rosiek (2019) Rosiek & Kinslow (2016)

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this critical case study employing qualitative content analysis, I examined a community's response to a race-neutral, educational equity initiative that comprehensively redistricted school attendance boundaries in a large, diverse public school system. I sought understanding of who participated in the response and what they said with a particular interest in what they said about race. A review of literature revealed that schools in America, like so much of American society, remain racially segregated despite evidence showing positive academic and non-academic gains for all students in racially diverse learning spaces. The literature further showed that when schools attempt to enhance educational equity through reduction in racial segregation, white parents frequently mount resistance. This resistance, however, seldom invokes race as an explicit rationale. Instead, parents tend to offer colorblind arguments that devalue racially inclusive spaces. They argue that change to racial *status quo* infringes on their property and civil rights. In this study, I applied Critical Race Theory (CRT) as my theoretical framework to conduct a qualitative content analysis of over 2,500 public testimonies filed by community members in the fall of 2019.

This chapter details the methods used to conduct the study. It is organized into the following sections: (1) research design, (2) setting, (3) role of the researcher, (4) research questions, (5) data collection methods, (6) data management, (7) data analysis, (8) participants, (9) boundaries, and (10) trustworthiness.

Research Design

This study employed a critical, qualitative case study design to examine the community's response to comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas. Understanding this response

holds promise to inform educational leaders who seek to implement equity initiatives in the future.

I applied a case study structure so I could examine this contemporary phenomenon fully (Yin, 2018). The events surrounding the introduction, deliberation, and final outcome of this structural equity initiative were not unique. Nor were the responses from discrete sectors of the community unique. In fact, it was the ubiquity of the events and processes that made this situation so ripe for case study analysis. The study can inform practice, policy, and action in the present and the future (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Maxwell, 2013).

A qualitative approach to this research problem proved advantageous as compared to a quantitative approach in that qualitative research allows for ongoing inquiry with continual emergence of understanding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Qualitative research has also carved a niche in the areas of social justice and moral discourse on race, gender, class, and power in the twenty-first century (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These were concerns I believed to be at the center of this contentious redistricting effort. My selection of qualitative research was also consistent with my intended goal of spurring conversation in the community about normative power and traditional practices. Importantly, though qualitative research is inherently flexible and responsive, my methodology included systematic and robust data collection and analysis of evidence surrounding this discrete example of a structural equity initiative in a public school system.

I chose a critical paradigm due to its consistency with many qualitative researchers' focus in recent years on social justice and power shifting. Critical research intentionally spurs social change against master narratives and inequities, is openly ideological, and carries democratizing goals (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In keeping with precedent in critical research, I was not a

fully passive and objective observer. As researcher, I sought to shine a light on an all too common social marginalization process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

I employed multiple lines of evidence in my research. Public testimonies comprised my primary data source. They originated from community members with varied relationships to the school system and the redistricting proposal, across a swath of time, and through multiple modalities. I triangulated these data to deepen my insight and to bolster the study's trustworthiness. I wove together multiple perspectives that, when aggregated, would result in a colorful and complete tapestry.

Setting

This case study centered on the pseudonymous Bowmantown Public School System (BPSS), a large, suburban, public school district located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, with a national reputation for high academic performance. Many people consider BPSS a destination district where families sacrifice convenience and spend substantial portions of their income on housing so their children can attend the well-renowned schools. Bowmantown's location, coupled with its reputation, resulted in significant growth in recent decades. July 2019 census data indicated a racially and ethnically diverse population of approximately 326,000 people in Bowmantown. Table 2 shows the racial and ethnic demographics of Bowmantown in 2019.

Table 2*Racial and Ethnic Groups as Percentage of Total Population in Bowmantown in 2019*

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Total Population
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1%
Asian	20%
Black or African American	20%
Hispanic or Latino	7%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	<1%
Two or more races	5%
White	50%

Note. Data taken from U. S. Census Bureau and rounded to mask identity of Bowmantown.

Overall, Bowmantown has high wealth, but disparities along racial lines exist. Table 3 displays average annual income in Bowmantown with respect to racial and ethnic demographic groups in 2018. Only demographic groups that comprised more than 5% of the population in 2018 are included.

Table 3*Average Annual Income in 2018 for Selected Racial and Ethnic Demographic Groups in Bowmantown*

Race/ Ethnicity	Average Annual Income
All	\$115,600
Asian	\$125,000
Black or African American	\$90,100
Hispanic or Latino	\$86,400
White	\$128,000

Note. Data from Bowmantown community's official website and rounded to mask identity of Bowmantown.

BPSS students perform well on most traditional measures of academic achievement, but there are significant gaps in achievement among student groups. Percentages of students by reported racial and ethnic groups who scored proficient or above on state mandated, end-of-grade and end-of-course mathematics and reading assessments in 2019 are shown in Table 4 and Table

5. Scores are reported only for student racial and ethnic groups that comprise at least 5% of the overall student population.

Table 4

Percent of Students by Racial and Ethnic Groups Scoring Proficient on State Mandated Mathematics Assessments in Elementary, Middle, and High School in 2019

Race/ Ethnicity	Grade 5	Grade 8	Algebra
All Students	54%	18%	56%
Asian	77%	29%	84%
Black or African American	29%	10%	27%
Hispanic or Latino	30%	11%	28%
Two or more races	53%	25%	57%
White	65%	29%	74%

Note: Student performance data from state department of education and rounded to mask identity of Bowmantown.

Table 5

Percent of Students by Racial and Ethnic Groups Scoring Proficient on State Mandated Reading Assessments in Elementary, Middle, and High School in 2019

Race/ Ethnicity	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
All Students	59%	61%	66%
Asian	75%	80%	83%
Black or African American	40%	39%	41%
Hispanic or Latino	38%	39%	44%
Two or more races	60%	64%	75%
White	69%	72%	81%

Note: Student performance data from state department of education and rounded to mask identity of Bowmantown.

Despite or perhaps because of rapid growth, BPSS school attendance areas remained relatively stagnant in the decade preceding the 2019 redistricting proposal situated at the center of this study. Localized reassignment of students to schools due to new construction of elementary and middle schools occurred, but school system leaders aborted an attempt to comprehensively redistrict school attendance boundaries in 2017 after threats against community members serving on an advisory committee erupted. This meant that by 2019, several schools in

BPSS enrolled students numbering well over their rated capacities. Other schools were notably under enrolled.

In January 2019, the elected Board of Education (BOE) directed the BPSS Superintendent to convene an Attendance Area Committee (AAC) to make recommendations regarding reassignment of students to schools throughout the community to relieve overcrowding. BOE policy “School Attendance Areas” (SAA) set parameters for this work. In late August of 2019, the Superintendent presented a plan to the BOE for consideration. In the Superintendent’s proposal, more than 7,400 students would be assigned to attend different schools at the start of the 2020 school year when compared to the schools they attended in the 2019 school year. In Bowmantown, assignments to schools are determined by students’ home locations within attendance areas approved by the BOE. Generally, the attendance areas are contiguous geographical regions located in close proximity to the assigned school.

The following sections provide additional background on the school system’s Policy SAA, the development of the Superintendent’s redistricting proposal, and the processes through which community members could provide feedback to the BOE on the proposal.

Overview of BOE Policy SAA

The BOE policy “School Attendance Area” (SAA) enumerated a process to develop and adopt school attendance area boundaries within BPSS. To ensure anonymity, I have assigned the pseudonym “School Attendance Area” (SAA) to this BOE policy in lieu of using Bowmantown’s unique naming convention for policies.

In January 2019, the BOE directed the Superintendent to develop a proposal to redraw school attendance boundaries to alleviate overcrowding in schools. The proposal would be presented for public feedback in the fall of 2019, and the resultant redistricting would take effect

in the fall of 2020. In February 2019, the BOE adopted revisions to policy SAA effective immediately. Policy SAA delineated the redistricting processes and included the organization of an Attendance Area Committee (AAC) comprised of community members appointed by the Superintendent with responsibility to provide feedback to the Superintendent and school system staff as they developed the redistricting proposal. School system staff, according to Policy SAA, were to use a variety of factors in developing attendance area proposals including demographic characteristics of schools such as racial/ethnic composition along with percentages of students participating in Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FARMS) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. Policy SAA also outlined standards for public advice and comment to accompany the professional staff's recommendations for revised attendance areas.

Developing the Redistricting Proposal

Comprehensive redistricting of school attendance boundaries in a large school system is extremely complex. This section describes the processes used in Bowmantown to develop the proposal put forward by the Superintendent in August.

Polygons

To promote clear communication regarding reassignment of students to schools, the school system's planning team divided Bowmantown into 701 polygons. The polygons served as the unit of analysis for planners to evaluate the impact of various redistricting solutions. Polygons varied in size but, as their name implies, formed closed geographic boundaries around designated areas. Every home address in Bowmantown was assigned to a polygon, and when a polygon was assigned to a school's attendance area, all addresses within that polygon were assigned to that school. Planning staff used estimated projected enrollments for each polygon so that they could evaluate the impact of shifting polygon assignments to different schools.

Each polygon was assigned a number for identification purposes. According to BPSS information posted on its official website, the community was divided into 300 polygons numbered 1 to 300 when the planning technique was first introduced two decades ago. Population growth and development resulted in a need to subdivide the community into more polygons. When existing polygons are subdivided into multiple polygons, the original polygon number was retained as a part of each resulting polygon. As an example, polygon 176 was among the original 300 polygons designated by BPSS staff. Due to growth, the polygon was divided into four polygons over time. To clarify the historical development of the polygons and their geographic proximity to one another, the four polygons resulting from the original were numbered 176, 1176, 2176, and 3176. This same convention was applied throughout the full set of 701 polygons used by planning staff in BPSS.

Community Input

The Superintendent convened the AAC in June 2019. AAC members were charged to represent the at-large community in an advisory capacity to the Superintendent. According to Policy SAA, the responsibilities for members of the AAC included review of available and relevant data on school enrollment and community composition. All AAC meetings were open to public attendance, but there was no public participation during the meetings. Meeting minutes were posted online for the public's review.

From June 14 to August 1, 2019, the school system administered an online survey via its website to gather public input on the redistricting. According to data posted on the BPSS public website, the online survey collected over 2100 anonymous responses and included at least one response from a person associated with each of the district's 70+ schools. The per school participation varied widely from fewer than ten responses from some school communities to over

100 responses from others. Following the close of the survey, both raw and processed data were posted online for public access.

In addition to the survey, four public input sessions were conducted during July 2019. Three sessions were scheduled on weeknights and held at high schools located at geographically diverse locations within the school system. The fourth session was conducted on a Saturday to accommodate community members who had conflicts during one of the other sessions. Residents were encouraged but not required to attend the session located closest to their homes. The testimonies presented during the input sessions were not archived, and no publicly available records indicate either the number of attendees or speakers.

School system staff and an independent contractor compiled the information gathered from the survey and public input sessions along with the recommendations of the AAC. The resultant proposal was presented to the BOE in August 2019. Public feedback was invited following the presentation of the proposal and prior to the planned BOE action in November.

Summary of the Superintendent's Proposal Development and Public Feedback Processes

In late August, approximately 8 months after the BPSS BOE directed the Superintendent of schools to initiate redistricting, the Superintendent presented a comprehensive redistricting proposal for consideration by the BOE and public. The Superintendent's proposal recommended that over 7,000 students from across the large, suburban school district be assigned to attend different schools at the start of the 2020-21 school year. The moves would enhance educational equity by adjusting school enrollments to be within parameters and to reduce concentrated enrollment of students impacted by poverty in some schools. The public comment period opened immediately, and the BOE encouraged public participation through both public hearings and written statements. Initially, the BOE scheduled three public hearings. Each hearing was

dedicated to a specific geographical region of Bowmantown and capped at 110 speakers. Participation required pre-registration of each person who wished to speak during a hearing. When the participation levels exceeded capacity of the initially scheduled hearings, four additional public hearings were scheduled.

Written feedback to the Board was accepted via either electronic or traditional mail at any time. A special use, electronic mail address to which all Board members had equal access was created to receive the electronic comments. Rules stated that all written testimony was to include the originator's full name and the polygon number where they lived. Civility in accordance with BPSS policy was emphasized for each interaction route.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher constantly makes decisions regarding data collection and interpretation. Credibility of the research must be carefully protected. To that end, I explicitly and consistently monitored my positionality throughout all phases of the research. I centered the fact that as a white person, I have reaped the benefits of many privileges afforded to white people in the United States. On the other hand, as a woman, I have also felt the sting of marginalization. I brought beliefs to this research effort that might have influenced my efforts such as:

- My belief that society in the United States privileges people of European descent.
- My acknowledgement of personal benefits derived from the historical practice of white privilege.
- My understanding that many people who have and continue to benefit from white privilege do not explicitly realize their benefit.

- My commitment that I am on a journey to more deeply understanding the dynamics of racialization in the United States as my upbringing immersed me in white privilege and imprinted upon me ideas about racial hierarchy that I must consciously face and fight.
- My acknowledgement that the state of racial unrest reached critical levels in the United States in the period of this research from 2020 and 2021.
- My conviction that racism in the United States is a problem that white people must own.

This set of understandings caused a significant tension within me throughout the research endeavor. As researcher, I had to be cognizant of my emotions and unconscious biases simultaneous with my rational and conscious interpretation of data. I faced a duality I had not previously explored or acknowledged. Recognition of dualities, however, can offer deep insights. As example, consider the conflict among physicists prior to the 20th century regarding the nature of light as either a wave or a particle. Distinct lines of research led to distinct and singular understandings. Many scientists were convinced that light behaved only as a wave when their studies, designed to measure the wave properties of light, revealed significant insight into this behavior. Other scientists were convinced that light behaved only as a particle. Their studies, designed to measure particulate properties, revealed significant insight into light's particulate behaviors. In other words, a singular or myopic research focus will lead to limited insight. It is only when one considers both the wave and particulate models of light simultaneously that one can truly understand nature. Acceptance of a duality revolutionized and clarified our modern conception of nature. My research aim was to maintain a similar dual awareness. This required diligent effort to ensure I moved beyond my personal experiences to a fuller view on race and its

impact. I was and am on a journey; I am still learning (Irving, 2014; Wilkerson, 2020). This research effort required my explicit expenditure of energy to practice empathy for people whose life experiences differed from my own (Bergerson, 2003; Radd & Grosland, 2018; Rosiek, 2019; Wilkerson, 2020).

Research Questions

My research questions were designed to understand community response to a proposal for a major structural change, in the form of comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas, within BPSS. The central and sub-research questions were:

Central research question: How did the community respond to a school system's race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas?

1. Who were the community members that publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?
2. What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?
3. How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?

Data Collection Methods

Written testimonies submitted by community members and archived on the BPSS publicly accessible website comprised my primary trove of data. I served as the primary collector and filter throughout this study and applied rigorous and systematic procedures to access and store the data from the start (Maxwell, 2013). In the following sections, I describe data collection and its analysis as distinct steps for clarity; however, it is important to note that due to the large

volume of data, I conducted collection and analysis concurrently. Not only did this decision prevent an overwhelming accumulation of data, but it also supported me in making carefully considered adjustments as the research proceeded. I documented each decision carefully through a reflexive journaling process. Table 6 shows the data sources aligned to my research questions.

Table 6*Research Questions and Data Source Matrix*

Central research question: How did the community respond to a school system's race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas?			
Sub-research Questions	School System Documents	Public Testimonies	Reflexive Journal
1. Who were the community members that publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?	X	X	X
2. What are the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?		X	X
3. How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?		X	X

Document Analysis

Data throughout this project came to me primarily in the form of written documents. This mode proved advantageous as documents are stable, lack reflexivity, and remain available (Bowen, 2009). For this research case, several distinct classifications of documents provided information for my examination. These included documents generated by the school system to communicate the elements of the proposal and participation processes to the community, data sets presented by the school system as backup to the proposal, and testimonials delivered by community members to the school board and archived by the school system during the public comment period.

BPSS prioritized communication with its community and invested heavily in strategic communication during the 2019 redistricting effort. In 2017, BPSS organized for the first time a Division of Communications that included executive-level leadership. In personal communication, a member of the division confirmed that the impetus for this organization lay in the aborted and contentious redistricting attempt from 2017. Leadership in BPSS made explicit commitment to communicate transparently with the community during the 2019 redistricting effort to avoid the negative experiences seen earlier. To wit, communications personnel used the school system's publicly accessible website as the single archive for all community testimony and system generated documents related to the comprehensive redistricting effort. I used this archive to construct the *corpus* for my analysis. The following sections describe each of these distinct sets of documents.

School System Generated Documents

BPSS promulgated information related to redistricting throughout the months leading up to the Superintendent's proposal presentation. These included announcements of public meetings for the Attendance Area Committee (AAC), public hearings, and public survey opportunities. My formal review of BPSS documents began with the Superintendent's full written proposal and PowerPoint slide presentation presented to the elected school board near the end of August 2019. These materials were stored as a part of the meeting's public record as required by state law. Data sets showing historical and projected enrollments in schools, demographic information, and academic measures served as backup to the proposal documentation and were accessed from the school system's website.

Community Member Testimonies

BPSS archived over 2,500 testimonies from community members as part of the public record for the period from late August to mid-October 2019. Community members had access to several paths to register their opinion on the proposal. These included participation in public hearings, submission of messages through electronic mail to a specially designated electronic mail address equally accessible by all members of the school board, or submission of hard copy correspondence through the U. S. Postal Service.

Oral Testimonies from Public Hearings

Community members delivered oral testimonies at one of seven scheduled public hearings. The public hearings occurred over the course of a month. Originally, only three hearings were scheduled. More were added to accommodate the large number of participants. Each was intended to serve people in particular geographic regions. Table 7 shows the dates for each of the public hearings.

Table 7

Dates in 2019 for Public Hearings on Bowmantown's School Redistricting Process

<u>Public Hearing Dates</u>
September 17
September 24
September 26
October 7
October 10
October 14
October 15

The public hearings followed consistent procedures that required individuals to pre-register and stick to an enforced three-minute time limit for testimonies. Participants were instructed to bring twelve written copies of their remarks for submission to the board's administrator for archival purposes and to include their name and the polygon number associated with their home.

For purposes of this project, I used the written record each testifier presented to the BOE at the public hearing for my analysis. These written testimonials did not necessarily match the words actually spoken at the public hearing; however, I chose not to include the video recordings of people's oral presentations purposefully. Throughout the project, I refer to these written records collected during the public hearings as "oral testimony" in keeping with the manner in which they were categorized in the BPSS archive.

Following each public hearing, BPSS staff digitally scanned and uploaded the testimonies collected in the hearing as a single portable document format (PDF) file. The files were organized in folders by the date of the public hearing on the BPSS website.

Electronic Mail and USPS Delivered Testimonies

Community members also had the option to submit a written statement to the BOE at any time via either electronic mail message or USPS delivered letter. School system administrative

support staff collected and uploaded copies of both types of correspondence to the school system's publicly accessible webpage. Rather than scanning each individual's written testimony as a single file, messages were collected over time and scanned in as single pdf documents that were conventionally named according to the period covered. The collection periods ranged from a single day to a week in duration depending upon the volume of correspondence. Table 8 displays the inclusive date boundaries used to organize the written testimonies submitted to the BOE and included in the public record.

Table 8

File Groupings for Written Testimonies Stored on the BPSS website

Written Testimony File Upload Dates	
August 27-28	September 11-13
August 28-29	September 13-14
August 29-30	September 14-16
August 30-September 1	September 16-17
September 1-2	September 18-19
September 2	September 19-20
September 2-3	September 10-11
September 3	September 11-13
September 3-4	September 13-14
September 4-6	September 14-16
September 4-10	September 16-17
September 10-11	September 18-19

Community members were instructed to include their full name and the polygon number assigned to their neighborhood on their submissions. They were also informed that their testimony would become part of the public record and that no editing would be applied prior to upload to the school system's website. Lastly, the community was instructed that if a testimony were not deemed to adhere to school board policy on civility, it would not be posted but would be archived elsewhere.

Document Handling Protocols

The authenticity and reliability of documents used in qualitative research ought to be well established. In this study, it was reasonable to trust the veracity of the documents. They were accessed from the school system's official web site which was subject to state level "sunshine laws" imposing a requirement for transparency in communication between government agencies, including public school systems, and the public.

All documents from BPSS were downloaded onto my personal computer as portable document format (PDF) files. Immediately upon download, I made copies of each file to serve as my working versions. All original files were stored in specially designated folders on my hard drive to protect their integrity.

Since the downloaded files included aggregated testimonies scanned and stored as a single document. I separated these into individual files using Adobe Acrobat. The resultant individual testimonies were uniquely named so I could distinguish individual testimonies from one another dependably

Reflexive Journal

To monitor my subjectivity, I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study. This became an established habit where I recorded my reactions, questions, and concerns regularly. It served as a near real-time documentation of my experiences with the intention that it would help me understand how I, as researcher, might impact the study. I recognized early in the research process that I could not fully compartmentalize my life experiences. Thus, I approached the research effort critically and fully committed to constantly examine the impact of power, ethics, and equity so I could present my findings accurately and with integrity (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2019). Just as scientists strive for minimal perturbation when measuring physical systems, I sought to be of minimal impact on the phenomenon at the center of this project.

Data Management and Protection

All data used in this study were part of the public record; however, to mask the identity of BPSS, I applied data management and protection protocols during all phases of data collection and analysis. All identifying information such as school names was scrubbed and replaced by pseudonyms. I maintained spreadsheets that matched these pseudonyms with the actual identifying information separately in secure and separate files. I stored all files on my password protected, personal computer to which only I have access. I maintained my reflexive journal in a secure location.

Data Analysis

Though qualitative research includes emergent elements, I applied systematic analysis procedures throughout the project (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Maxwell, 2013). In this section, I provide an overview of how I made meaning from my sources (Seidman, 2019). Since there were vast quantities of data generated in this qualitative study, I began analysis contemporaneously with data collection rather than allowing the data to accumulate to unmanageable levels (Maxwell, 2013). This practice also helped me refine my data collection techniques throughout the study period. I applied qualitative content analysis (QCA) that used both deductive and inductive coding frames to discern meaning.

Qualitative Content Analysis

QCA is a qualitative technique applicable to a variety of content and suitable to examine most any element of text (Bengtsson, 2016; Boréus & Bergström, 2017; White & Marsh, 2006). It is a flexible technique, open to both inductive and deductive analysis and shares a number of

similarities with other qualitative analysis techniques (Schreier, 2012). An important distinction of QCA is its use to reduce rather than open data. This property makes it a particularly useful technique to address descriptive research questions like those guiding this project (Schreier, 2012). When applied to idea analysis, QCA can lead to identification of both manifest and latent meaning in text (Bengtsson, 2016).

I conducted QCA in two distinct steps on the *corpus* of testimonies. First, I read and coded the full set of over 2,500 testimonies to code for the mode of testimony (oral or written); the testifier's relationship to the school system (parent, student, or other category to include people such as former students, grandparents, at large community members, or representatives of an advocacy group); the testifier's stance on the proposal (support, oppose, or none); and the polygon number associated with the testifier's home location. During this initial review, I recorded field notes related to patterns or unique characteristics associated with individual testimonies. I used an Excel workbook to record my codes and fieldnotes.

In the second phase, I coded a purposively selected subset of testimonies for their idea content (Bengtsson, 2016; Boréus & Bergströöm, 2017; Schreier, 2012). I read and reread each testimony and applied open coding to ideas expressed. I used NVivo to record my codes and the associated passages, but I completed the process of coding manually. The coding process proceeded iteratively as I began to associate the concrete excerpts from the testimonies with abstract ideas from my theoretical framework (Maxwell, 2013). Following the initial open coding, I returned to my set of codes to review the associated data. I identified categories in a second pass and themes in a third pass to lead me to my statements of finding. My research questions guided my review and analysis throughout.

Participants

Participants in qualitative research are typically people who respond to surveys or participate in focus groups or interviews. In my case, I use the term participants to refer to the people who submitted testimonies included in my purposeful sample of 302 testimonies analyzed for idea content. I used two methods to identify this subset. First, I randomly selected 123 testimonies from among the more than 2,500 testimonies. Then, I selected the balance of this set following review of my collected field notes. In this second phase, I sought to include testimonies that represented the community's full narrative.

Appendix A displays information about the participants including their identified associations with the school system, their stances toward the proposal, the mode used to file the testimony, and the identified polygon where they lived. To protect anonymity and allow for specific reference to individual testimonies when communicating my findings, I assigned pseudonyms to each individual using an alphanumeric code that indicated the mode of delivery, the testifier's identified role, the BPSS data set from which I retrieved the testimony, and a unique three-digit number to distinguish among similarly categorized testimonies. As an example, a testifier assigned the pseudonym OP-E-002 represents the person who submitted a testimony as a part of a public hearing (O) and identified as a parent (P). The public hearing where the testimony was submitted was held on October 10 (E). The number 002 distinguishes this testimony from others submitted by parents during this same public hearing event. Figure 2 illustrates this nomenclature.

Figure 2

Example Nomenclature Convention Used for Participant Pseudonyms

O	P	-	E	-	002
<i>Mode of Testimony</i>	<i>Role of Testifier</i>		<i>Data set Indicator</i>		<i>Unique Identifier.</i>
O = Oral W = Written	P = Parent S = Student O = Other		A = First set of testimonies by date of submission; subsequent letters assigned in sequence as shown in Table 9 and Table 10.		Number to distinguish individual testimonies that shared other characteristics.

Table 9 displays the data set indicator and the inclusive dates for testimonies assigned this indicator from among the written testimonies. Table 10 displays the data set indicators and the associated dates for the public hearings where oral testimonies occurred.

Table 9*Data Set Indicators Used to Identify Written Testimonies*

Inclusive Dates	Data Set Indicator
August 27-28	A
August 28-29	B
August 29-30	C
August 30-September 1	D
September 1-2	E
September 2	F
September 2-3	G
September 3	H
September 3-4	I
September 4-6	J
September 4-10	K
September 10-11	L
September 11-13	M
September 13-14	N
September 14-16	O
September 16-17	P
September 18-19	Q
September 19-20	R
September 21-24	S
September 24-27	T
September 25-October 7	U
October 7-11	V
October 11-14	W
October 14-21	X

Table 10*Data Set Indicators Use to Identify Public Hearings*

Inclusive Dates	Data Set Indicator
September 17	A
September 24	B
September 26	C
October 7	D
October 10	E
October 14	F
October 15	H

In selecting testimonies for idea analysis, I sought to include a sample of testimonies from both the written and oral testimony sets. I also strove to consider testimonies originating

from people identifying from among the three roles (parent, student, and other) in numbers that would help to surface specific narratives that might arise from any particular role. I also sought to include testimonies that represented support and opposition to the proposal. In total, I analyzed 144 oral testimonies and 158 written testimonies originating from parents, students, and others in the community for idea content. Table 11 displays the number of analyzed testimonies based upon testifier role, mode of testimony, and stance on the proposal. I did not seek to draw a sample with the same attributes as the full set of testimonies. Instead, I selected testimonies to offer insight to the full range of views expressed by the community and continued my analysis to saturation.

Table 11

Testimonies Analyzed for Idea Content by Testifier Role, Mode, and Stance

Role	Mode	Stance	Number
Parent	Written	Support	34
Parent	Written	Oppose	66
Parent	Oral	Support	29
Parent	Oral	Oppose	75
Student	Written	Support	0
Student	Written	Oppose	13
Student	Oral	Support	3
Student	Oral	Oppose	20
Other	Written	Support	29
Other	Written	Oppose	16
Other	Oral	Support	9
Other	Oral	Oppose	8

Boundaries/Delimitations

This study focused on community response from the presentation of the Superintendent's proposal to redistricting in late August 2019 until the BOE began its public deliberations in mid-October. Though community comment continued until the BOE's final action on the redistricting in mid-November, I chose not to include these comments as they were likely influenced by the new ideas introduced in the deliberations phase. Public comment also occurred through social

media during the period under study, but I chose not to examine these due to a burgeoning practice of using private groups within this medium. That is to say that reliance on only public posts on social media sites would likely have misrepresented the chatter within the social media realm. Additionally, I could not establish the credibility or identify of social media contributors to the level that I established credibility of the testimonies.

Trustworthiness

Credibility in qualitative research begins in the design of the study and must be attended to throughout (Yin, 2018). In this study, I attended closely to potential complications and conflicts throughout the collection and interpretation of the data (Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2018). This section reviews my steps that ensured trustworthiness of my data.

Credibility

Credibility was supported through my use of multiple lines of data. I gathered information from school system generated documents, publicly accessible testimonies delivered by community members over a period of time, through multiple modalities, and from people connected to the studied process in a variety of ways. These multiple lines of information were triangulated to provide robust answers to the research questions (Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2018).

Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent others would reach similar conclusions to those I reached in this research study. Qualitative research is inherently subjective. My life experiences and biases cannot be eliminated, but I declared those biases to support full transparency of my subjective impact. I also applied bracketing by engagement of critical colleagues prior to and during the study (Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018). Though I cannot separate

myself from my experiences or perspectives, I have strived to make them known to others (Maxwell, 2013).

I employed a reflexive journal to increase transparency of the research and make clear to others exactly what I did, what I was thinking, and how I was reacting (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The journal was an ongoing, near real-time chronology of my thinking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology used in this qualitative case study designed to understand community response to a race-neutral, equity-centered, structural change in the form of comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas in the Bowmantown Public School System. I have discussed the critical nature of the research design and described the context in which the research was set. I described my positionality, which is particularly poignant in this critical study. My methodology ensured I remained objective and open to discovery throughout the research process, and the combination of information sources allowed for effective triangulation for a more complete understanding of this complex phenomenon in Bowmantown. The next chapter presents the findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This analysis of Bowmantown Public School System is a case study examined the response of a community to a 2019 proposal that comprehensively shifted school attendance areas within a large, diverse, suburban school district and set up a scenario in which over 7,000 students, or about 12% of the student population would attend different schools in the 2020 school year. In the study, I used qualitative content analysis to analyze the public testimonies submitted by community members regarding the proposal to determine who voiced an opinion and what they said. I also applied information contained in school system generated documents and maintained a reflexive journal to support my analysis. The central and sub-research questions were:

Central research question: How did the community respond to a school system's race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas?

R1: Who were the community members who publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?

R2: What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?

R3: How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?

Chapter 4 contains the findings of the study organized by the sub-research questions in sequence. The explanation of analysis procedures precedes the presentation of each set of findings. The discussion of findings and answer to the central research question are included in chapter 5. This chapter is organized into the following sections: (1) my research journey; (2)

participants in the public debate; (3) explicit and implicit narratives; (4) race, opportunity, and merit; and (5) summary.

My Research Journey I

As noted in earlier chapters, my life experiences as a white woman who grew up in communities steeped in artifacts of the “Lost Cause of the Confederacy” undoubtedly impacted my perspective on this project. To monitor that impact, I maintained a reflexive journal. Like a critical friend, the journal accepted my raw ideas and provided me a space to grapple with my emotions and alternative interpretations. This process turned out to be particularly important as the research period coincided with one of the most turbulent and uncertain periods in America’s history. The COVID-19 global pandemic began in March of 2020 and flowed into a period of racial reckoning and unrest following the murder of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020. The contentious Presidential election in November 2020 led to a surreal insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. I, like people throughout the country, witnessed in real-time, this profound threat to the peaceful transfer of executive power.

In the ensuing months, people dug their heels into their chosen ideological camps. Soon issues such as whether to participate in COVID vaccination clinics, open schools to in person learning, or wear masks as a mitigation strategy to combat community spread of COVID-19 mixed with efforts to prevent the purported “teaching” of critical race theory in schools. It felt as though the polarization and unrest were taking direct aim on my project! I could not ignore the deepening divisions. Though I tried to conduct this work objectively within the turbulence, I found it nearly impossible to compartmentalize completely. Like others, I felt a need to stake out my own positions on these issues. My reflexive journal, however, helped me examine my

emotions and responses to more clearly examine the issues arising in this research more thoroughly. I applied reflexive exercises to challenge my choices and interpretations in the project so I would not be blinded by my own ideology. I also used my reflections to muster courage when it felt as though one side of the ideological divide might make my work moot or possibly dangerous. I committed to reporting the facts of the Bowmantown redistricting case credibly so my audience and I could understand.

In the end, I have tried to be scrupulous in my research methods. I have strived to be intellectually honest in my analyses. Early in my research, it became obvious that the volume of testimonies far exceeded my capacity to review each fully. The recurrent themes also made clear that exhaustive analysis of each testimony would be unnecessarily redundant. Thus, I developed procedures to sample methodically across the testimonies and to focus on crucial points of definition.

In sum, the presentation of findings and the analysis in the following sections arise out of carefully monitored processes and thorough self-reflection within the context of the research questions and the dynamic environment that surrounded me. I do not attempt to include every detail raised during the public input period. I am not trying to cast people of Bowmantown as villains or heroes. There is no single “truth” in the Bowmantown redistricting case. My analysis is intended to offer a clear, credible, and critical examination of the several truths as people communicated them through public testimonies.

Participants in the Public Debate

Research question 1 asked, “Who were the community members who publicly voiced their opinions on the proposed redistricting plan?” To answer this question, I applied qualitative content analysis to the 2,508 testimonies available in the public record maintained on the BPSS

website to determine each testifier's role (student, parent, or other) with respect to the schools in Bowmantown and the reported polygon in which each testifier's home was located.

Next, I applied BPSS data included within the Superintendent's proposal to identify the prospective impact of the redistricting proposal on each testifier. I further applied data provided on the school system website related to neighborhood demographics in developing a description of some of the public debate participants. Appendix B includes a three-tier map depicting my process to move from initial analysis of testifier role and identified location of residence with respect to planning unit, impact on school assignment as a result of the proposal, and neighborhood demographics to achieve a more complete description of participants.

In preparation for analysis, I downloaded the testimonies stored on the publicly accessible BPSS website to my computer's hard drive. I read each testimony to record whether the person who submitted the testimony identified as a student, a parent, or some other role. Examples of other roles included members of advocacy groups or homeowners' associations, grandparents, or other community member. Individuals who did not clearly identify their relationship in the issue were coded within the "other" category. I also recorded the polygon or planning unit in which the person identified their residence. In the instances where the writer did not identify the location of their home, I coded the planning unit as undisclosed. I used Excel to record these data along with field.

I reviewed 538 files that I categorized as "oral testimonies." As described earlier, these were scanned copies of the written statements submitted by individuals who spoke at one of the seven public hearings. These scanned statements were not necessarily what the individual said during the public hearing as a testifier could only speak for 3 minutes. Many of these files included multiple pages of content.

I also reviewed 1,970 testimonies submitted by community members either through electronic or conventional mail channels. I categorized these as “written testimonies” to distinguish them from the testimonies submitted during the public hearings. As with the oral testimonies, I accessed the scanned copies of the statements that were organized by date of receipt by BPSS staff.

Role Analysis

Of the 2,508 testimonies, approximately 77% (1,926) were submitted by people who identified themselves as a parent of students in the schools. Approximately 9% (225) of testimonies were delivered by people who identified themselves as current students in the schools. The remaining 14% (357) of testimonies were delivered by people who identified their association with the schools as something other than a parent or student or who did not detail their association. Table 12 displays the reviewed testimonies according to role and mode of testimony.

Table 12

Testimonies by Testifier Role and Mode of Delivery

Testifiers’ Role	Number of Oral Testimonies	Number of Written Testimonies	Percent of All Testimonies
Student	105	120	9%
Parent	376	1550	77%
Other	57	300	14%

Neighborhood Analysis

I coded each testimony for the polygon in which the testifier reported residence. BPSS planning staff subdivided the school system’s area into 701 polygons. Each was assigned a unique number following the convention described in chapter 3. The set of reported polygons is

not inclusive of all polygons. Polygons that were not identified as a place of residence by a testifier are omitted.

Submitted testimonies originated from people who identified their homes as being in one of 227 of the total 701 polygons defined by BPSS staff. This means that community members who submitted testimonies identified as living in about 32% of all defined polygons in Bowmantown. Thus, approximately two-thirds of the planning areas in Bowmantown either did not have any residents file testimony or were not identified by the testifier. Relevant to the latter situation, it is notable that 450 testimonies, or approximately 18% of all testimonies, did not include sufficient information to identify the polygon in which the testifier lived. I coded these as “undisclosed.” Appendix C displays the number of testimonies submitted in each participating polygon by testifier role. The percentage of the total testimonies represented within the polygon is also displayed. The columns regarding proposed school transfers are described in the next section.

I examined the distribution of testimonies across the 227 participating polygons and determined it was not proportional. I noted 17 polygons where the number of testimonies submitted in each represented 1% or more of all testimonies submitted during the period included in this case study. These 17 polygons equate to only 2.9% of all polygons. Table 13 displays the total number of testimonies and the number of testimonies submitted by testifier role in these 17 polygons.

Table 13*Testimonies by Testifier Role and Polygon for Selected Polygons*

Polygon	Submitted Testimonies	Student Testimonies	Parent Testimonies	Other Testimonies	Percent of Total Testimonies
28	44	3	39	2	2 %
64	72	1	69	2	3 %
129	36	4	30	2	1 %
159	30	10	20	0	1 %
176	238	31	190	17	10 %
183	25	2	21	2	1 %
186	49	5	42	2	2 %
232	38	13	25	0	2 %
1028	81	9	66	6	3 %
1183	27	1	22	4	1 %
1185	77	8	63	6	3 %
1186	151	19	121	11	6 %
1200	75	7	64	4	3 %
1256	173	4	154	15	7 %
2028	27	0	24	3	1 %
2176	29	2	19	8	1 %
3176	150	33	108	9	6 %
Total	1322	152	1077	93	53 %

In aggregate, people who identified themselves as living in just 2.4% of all identified planning areas in Bowmantown submitted more than half of all the testimonies included in the public record with respect to the comprehensive redistricting proposal.

School Assignment Analysis

I used the Superintendent's proposal to identify the impact on prospective school assignments for people who submitted testimonies. Fifty-two percent (118) of the polygons represented in testimony were impacted by at least one prospective school transfer. Appendix C shows the proposed school transfers by polygon for the full set of 2,508 testimonies coded. To ensure anonymity, I assigned random numbers to substitute for the names of schools in

Bowmantown. Schools at the elementary level are designated with ES at the start of their pseudonyms. Middle schools are designated with MS at the start of their pseudonyms. High schools are designated with HS. In the 17 most active polygons identified in the preceding section, there was at least one proposed school reassignment for each. Table 14 shows the proposed school reassignments for these 17 polygons.

Table 14

Proposed School Reassignments by School Level in Selected Polygons

Polygon	ES From=>To	MS From=>To	HS From=> To
28		MS54=>MS02	
64	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
129	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
159	ES45=>ES56	MS91=>MS62	HS55=>HS65
176			HS09=>HS41
183			HS09=>HS41
186		MS54=>MS02	
232	ES26=>ES213	MS03=>MS75	HS65=>HS76
1028		MS54=>MS02	
1183			HS09=>HS41
1185		MS54=>MS02	HS09=>HS41
1186		MS54=>MS02	
1200			HS09=>HS76
1256	ES139=>ES62		
2028		MS54=>MS02	
2176			HS09=>HS41
3176			HS09=>HS41

Neighborhood Demographic Analysis

To understand more about the people who submitted testimonies related to the proposal, I examined data provided by BPSS on neighborhood demographics. Due to the large volume of data, I focused my demographic analysis only on the 17 most active polygons and found that, for each of these polygons, most students at each school level identified as either white or Asian. Table 15 displays the demographic information at each level of school for each of the 17 most active polygons. The numbers represent actual projected enrollment at each school level for the

2020 school year according to BPSS where elementary schools are represented by ES, middle schools by MS, and high schools by HS. In cases where fewer than 10 students are in a group, the data are suppressed and marked with an asterisk.

Table 15

Projected School Enrollment and Demographics within Selected Polygons

Polygon	School Level	Enrollment	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic	Two or More Races	White
28	ES	35	21	*	*	*	*
	MS	31	13	*	*	*	13
	HS	63	21	*	*	*	26
64	ES	64	20	*	*	*	35
	MS	21	*	*	*	*	*
	HS	47	12	*	*	*	20
129	ES	45	11	*	*	*	29
	MS	24	*	*	*	*	18
	HS	42	*	*	*	*	32
159	ES	66	*	*	*	*	50
	MS	34	*	*	*	*	29
	HS	47	*	*	*	*	40
176	ES	87	51	*	*	*	12
	MS	50	31	*	*	*	*
	HS	73	43	*	*	*	*
183	ES	33	*	*	*	*	16
	MS	21	*	*	*	*	12
	HS	17	*	*	*	*	*
186	ES	36	19	*	*	*	10
	MS	33	22	*	*	*	*
	HS	37	*	*	*	*	20
232	ES	47	16	*	*	*	28
	MS	27	*	*	*	*	11
	HS	34	*	*	*	*	22
1028	ES	50	32	*	*	*	13
	MS	37	10	*	*	*	23
	HS	89	25	*	*	*	45
1183	ES	32	*	*	*	*	16
	MS	21	*	*	*	*	12
	HS	36	10	*	*	*	15
1185	ES	26	*	*	*	*	12
	MS	22	*	*	*	*	11

Polygon	School Level	Enrollment	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic	Two or More Races	White
1186	HS	22	*	*	*	*	10
	ES	89	53	*	*	*	26
	MS	59	35	*	*	*	23
1200	HS	54	19	*	*	*	25
	ES	36	*	*	*	*	19
	MS	16	*	*	*	*	*
1256	HS	29	*	*	*	*	16
	ES	140	32	19	*	15	64
	MS	67	17	12	*	*	29
2028	HS	67	12	17	*	10	25
	ES	17	*	*	*	*	*
	MS	11	*	*	*	*	*
2176	HS	35	10	*	*	*	11
	ES	14	*	*	*	*	*
	MS	12	*	*	*	*	*
3176	HS	17	*	*	*	*	12
	ES	42	25	*	*	*	*
	MS	35	24	*	*	*	*
	HS	45	21	*	*	*	13

Note: Cells marked with an asterisk (*) indicate fewer than 10 students in that category.

Summary

Research question 1 asked, “Who were the community members who publicly voiced their opinions on the proposed redistricting plan?” This section presented data about the number of testimonies submitted, the role of the people who submitted testimonies, the location of the testifiers’ residence, the projected impact the proposal had with respect to school assignment for the testifiers’ polygons, and the approximate demographics for students in 17 polygons where over half of all testimonies originated. Taken together, these data lead to statement of finding 1:

In the over 2,500 testimonies filed between late August and mid-October 2019, 77% (1,926) originated from people who identified as parents; 14.2% (357) originated from people who identified themselves as community members who were members of advocacy groups,

grandparents, graduates, interested residents, among others; and 9.0% (225) originated from people who identified themselves as current students in BPSS. Geographically, testifiers' reported home locations fell in only 32% (227) of all planning polygons. Of these polygons, approximately 52% (118) were impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. Notably, some 53% (1,322) of all submitted testimony originated from people who identified themselves as residing in just 2.4% (17) of all the planning polygons. Each of these 17 polygons was impacted by at least one proposed school transfer, and the dominant racial and ethnic groups reported by students in these polygons were white and Asian.

Explicit and Implicit Narratives

Research question 2 asked “What are the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?” I analyzed the data in two phases to answer this question. First, I recorded the stance stated by each testifier in the full set of over 2,500 testimonies. Second, I purposively selected and then coded a subset of 302 testimonies for their idea content using qualitative content analysis.

Testifiers' Stances on the Proposal

Nearly all (99.9%) of the more than 2,500 testimonies explicitly stated a stance of either support or opposition to the proposal. Only two testimonies did not state an explicit stance. Ninety-four percent (2,362) of submitted testimony explicitly stated opposition to some or all of the proposal. Table 16 displays the distribution of testimonies according to the testifier's role and stance of either opposition or support for the proposal

Table 16*Testimonies by Stance and Testifier Role*

Testifiers' Role	Number of Statements in Opposition	Number of Statements in Support
Student	221	4
Parent	1849	77
Other	292	63

Appendix D displays the distribution of all testimonies by stance and testifier role across all polygons where testimonies were submitted.

To complement my finding for research question 1, I examined the level of support or opposition among the testimonies submitted by testifiers from the 17 polygons where more than 50% of all testimony originated. The data showed that 99.8% (1,320) of the testimonies submitted from these neighborhoods explicitly opposed the proposal. This included 100% (152) of the students who submitted testimony as well as 100% (93) of testimonies submitted from the other category. Only two testimonies submitted by people identifying as parents in these polygons expressed support. Table 17 displays the distribution of testimonies according to stated role of the testifier, the testifier's identified location of residence, and the testifier's stance on the proposal for these 17 polygons. Appendix D shows the stance and role associated with each of the 2508 submitted testimonies.

Table 17*Testimonies by Testifier Role and Stance in Selected Polygons*

Polygon	Total	Students Opposed	Students Support	Parents Oppose	Parents Support	Other Oppose	Other Support
28	44	3	0	39	0	2	0
64	72	1	0	68	1	2	0
129	36	4	0	30	0	2	0
159	30	10	0	19	1	0	0
176	238	31	0	190	0	17	0
183	25	2	0	21	0	2	0
186	49	5	0	42	0	2	0
232	38	13	0	25	0	0	0
1028	81	9	0	66	0	6	0
1183	27	1	0	22	0	4	0
1185	77	8	0	63	0	6	0
1186	151	19	0	121	0	11	0
1200	75	7	0	64	0	4	0
1256	173	4	0	154	0	15	0
2028	27	0	0	24	0	3	0
2176	29	2	0	19	0	8	0
3176	150	33	0	108	0	9	0
Totals	1322	152	0	1075	2	93	0

Explicit Narrative

I purposively selected 302 testimonies for analysis of idea content using qualitative content analysis (QCA). I used two methods to identify this subset. First, I randomly selected 123 testimonies from the full set of testimonies. Then, I selected the balance of this set following review of my collected field notes. I sought to include testimonies that represented the community’s full narrative. Chapter 3 details information about the 302 “participants” who submitted these testimonies.

In selecting testimonies for idea analysis, I sought to include a sample of testimonies from both the written and oral testimony sets that served to represent the messaging emanating from people identifying among the three roles (parent, student, and other) and in numbers that

would help to surface specific narratives that might arise from any particular role. I also sought to include testimonies that represented both the dominant (oppositional) and the counter (support) narratives in the community. In the end, I applied QCA to 144 oral testimonies and 158 written testimonies. Table 18 displays the distribution of analyzed testimonies based upon testifier role, mode of testimony, and stance on the proposal. I did not seek to draw a sample with the same attributes as the full set of testimonies since the number of testimonies in opposition to the proposal surpassed the number in support so greatly.

Table 18

Testimonies by Testifier Role, Mode, and Stance Included in Idea QCA

Role	Mode	Stance	Number
Parent	Written	Support	34
Parent	Written	Oppose	66
Parent	Oral	Support	29
Parent	Oral	Oppose	75
Student	Written	Support	0
Student	Written	Oppose	13
Student	Oral	Support	3
Student	Oral	Oppose	20
Other	Written	Support	29
Other	Written	Oppose	16
Other	Oral	Support	9
Other	Oral	Oppose	8

Appendix E displays the distribution of testimonies included in QCA for idea analysis by polygon, testifier role, and mode of testimony. Table 19 displays the number of testimonies included in QCA for idea content from each of the 17 highlighted polygons.

Table 19*Testimonies by Polygon and Mode Included in Idea QCA*

Polygon	Oral Testimonies Analyzed	Written Testimonies Analyzed
28	1	2
64	1	3
129	1	1
159	2	1
176	12	33
183	2	1
186	0	4
232	9	0
1028	4	2
1183	2	3
1185	3	4
1186	7	2
1200	2	4
1256	4	2
2028	0	2
2176	0	1
3176	5	3

Idea Analysis

After reading each selected testimony, I applied open coding to identify ideas expressed by each author. I first read the testimonies to understand the gist of the message and returned to read and reread each while marking significant passages that represented and helped explain the testifier's perspective on the proposal. I examined these surface codes to discern patterns that allowed me to categorize my codes. Finally, I organized these categories into themes that identified the major patterns. Appendix F displays my three-step analysis moving from codes to themes for codes related to research question 2. The frequency of each code is indicated in parenthesis but is not intended to imply that the significance of the codes was based solely on frequency. These are included for reference only. The explicit narrative themes included:

1. Approval of the proposal would result in negative consequences for students, families, and the community.
2. Processes used to develop the proposal were flawed and indicative of overreach by the school board.

The themes communicated implicitly in the dominant narrative were:

1. High levels of organization were evident among people who opposed the proposal.
2. People who expressed opposition leveraged professional expertise and highlighted individual circumstances to support their stance.

A counternarrative arose too. This group of testimonies offered general support for the proposal saying it would bring challenges but arguing that the benefits in terms of equity and improved educational outcomes for all students outweighed the challenges. Data supportive of each theme, including representative quotations from testimonies, are provided in the following sections. I purposefully selected a wide array of quotations from numerous participants.

Poor Outcomes for Students

Prospective negative outcomes for students were frequently cited as rationale for blocking the proposal. These included poor physical and mental health outcomes (103 references), diminishment in social ties (47 references), and a reduction in students' opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (38 references).

Testifiers emphasized that the increased stress associated with the transfer to a new school could result in substance abuse and poor mental health outcomes. As one example, "OO-C-001" from polygon 1186 stated in testimony submitted during the third public hearing that,

Many opiate abusers begin in their teens with pain pills and quickly progress to "heroin," which more often than not is actually fentanyl and deadly. This is happening in [Bowmantown] now and STRESS of redistricting thousands of teens will increase the risk

for substance abuse. The current redistricting plan proposed will cause a great deal of STRESS for a great many children and their families as well as their communities.

People also mentioned concern over negative health impacts due to lost sleep and changed commuting patterns. “OS-C-017” from polygon 1183 stated in public hearing that,

“Sleep plays a vital role in my health and wellbeing. Getting enough sleep protects my mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety. At a young age, I developed bad migraines from lack of sleep, continue to struggle with this today. On school nights, I am probably in bed before any of my classmates because I know if I don't get enough rest, I will suffer the consequences. In this plan, I would be redistricted from [HS09] which is 5 miles away from my neighborhood, to [HS41], which is 8 miles away. That is almost double the distance! The neighborhood high school bus currently comes at 6:25 a.m. If you move our polygon to [HS41], I am guessing I will need to get on the bus before 6 a.m. to get there on time. I believe this would have huge impacts on my sleep, school performance, and school attendance and tardiness. I need my sleep!”

“OS-C-018” stated in the same public hearing,

I love my bus ride, and after talking with my sister and my parents my bus ride is going to be longer. I always get very hungry after school and if I don't eat, my head really hurts. Our bus driver is amazing but does not let us eat on the bus because we all would make a mess. If I have to go to a far school, my head will hurt every day.

Testifiers also expressed concern that students would lose friends and suffer negative consequences related to their social ties. In an early oral testimony submitted in public hearing, “OP-A-017” from polygon 1266 said, *“It is cruel to completely dismantle peer groups for the few children that will be asked to move schools, and it hinders our children's ability to maintain lasting friendships with their neighborhood peers,”* “OP-D-014,” from polygon 176, asserted that, *“Increased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide [due to] forced separation from friends, classmates, teachers at current neighborhood schools.”*

Student participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by the school or in the community was predicted to be wane due to altered travel patterns and changed peer groups. These included sports, clubs, and after school tutoring. “OP-B-002” lamented,

“With this redistricting, I worry that extracurricular activities will suffer as new students at greater distances may be unable to find ways to get home in the absence of after-school buses. Extracurriculars are so important in high school – for student enrichment, college applications, and a sense of belonging to the school.”

Another parent, “OP-G-009,” a few weeks later, noted,

(Parent) All students with this current plan will have to endure longer commute times and therefore decrease their opportunity for tutoring, after school help, and team sports. ALL of which colleges and other forms of higher education consider to be important in their selection process.

Though less frequently cited, testifiers also referenced concern that students would suffer negative academic-related outcomes if the proposal were approved. Among these was an inability to complete assigned work. Student testifier “WS-E-004” from polygon 176 wrote to the BOE that,

We moved to this area only about a year ago because we wanted to live close to the schools. I remember being 20-to-30-minute bus rides where I used to live and I hated them. I would get home very late and didn't have enough time to finish my projects, homework, and attend after school classes. It made me very stressed, that's why we moved closer to school.

High school students articulated concerns over potentially losing teacher and coach recommendations for applications and honors. As an example, during a public hearing, “OS-C-010” stated, *“the teacher recommendations that students like myself have worked for would be in vain if we leave the school and are forced to go to another school and build the teachers' trust once again.”*

Poor Outcomes for Families

There were 195 references related to poor outcomes for families as a result of the proposal. These ranged from increased burden (151 references) to a loss of perceived family property (27 references) to a hampering of parental engagement in the schools (17 references).

Chief among the prospective burdens for families was transportation. Many parents described lengthy commutes to jobs in large, metropolitan areas. They argued that a change in the location of their children's schools would result in an inability for the parents to either provide supervision for bus transit to and from school or for parent drop off and pick up. As "WP-E-005" from polygon 176 wrote:

I am the only parent who is working 35 minutes away ...as compared to my husband who is an hour plus away and in order to pickup my daughter from her after school activities. I will need to take 50 minutes out of my daily work schedule for the round-trip commute, and make up the time in the evening.

The challenges associated with transportation for working mothers were specifically emphasized. One father from polygon 176, "OP-G-008," stated as a part of his testimony, "*I can't even imagine my wife handling 2 kids pickups/drops, afterschool activities, cook for kids, handle a high demanding job when I'm on a business trip.*" Another parent (polygon 232), "OP-D-005", described disruption of established neighborhood supports,

The mothers in our community have formed their own "Mom Tribe" that is a network of mother's (sic) who support one another. They help each other out with before and after care. They are a text message/phone call away if they need someone to be there when their son or daughter gets off the bus because they are not able to make it due to work obligations. We are a banded community support system.

Testifiers referenced potential loss of property that included both tangible and intangible items. For example, "OP-F-010," attributed recent damage to his child's cell phone to her already challenging school bus ride. He opposed the proposal on the grounds that a longer bus commute would present more opportunities for his daughter's phone or other belongings to be lost saying, "*Have you ridden in a school bus lately? My daughter can't stand it. It's noisy, crowded, and bumpy. She cracked her phone during one of those bumpy rides. Daddy was not happy!*"

As part of testimony delivered to the Board, a middle school student, “OS-C-006,” expressed dismay that his family’s mortgage and property taxes would not protect his desire for stability in school assignment.

My mom and dad work very hard to pay for the expensive mortgage here for me to go to [MS54]. I hardly see my mom and dad in the house at the same time. They are always working. My mom needs to work night shift, and my dad constantly need to work into the middle of the night and he has to go to numerous business trips. I started doing home chores at very young age, like vacuuming the floor, shoveling snow, and now cooking. I do not understand why we have to go to another school while we are doing well now. I do not understand why we have to pay the expensive mortgage to go to a less desired school, while still paying enormous taxes and now even more taxes for all of the hard-working middle class, families of immigrants and non-immigrants, who pay the most taxes for the county. It is punishment of hard work and integrity. This proposal makes [Bowmantown] go backwards.

Among immaterial property, time was frequently cited as a concern. Testifiers, both adults and students, spoke of time as being “stolen” much like a material object. Parent “OP-E-004” described the changed schedule as punishment saying, “*Taken together, this proposal would rob teenaged students of an entire night's sleep per week and would do so during their most stressful years. Who gives you the right to punish our kids in this way?*” Students expressed concern that lengthier bus rides would impede their productivity with one student, “OS-C-012,” claiming, “*Busing would take away 270 hours of my year, and I cannot use this time to do anything productive.*” Others, like “OP-G-012,” made clear that time was a top priority for their families and was accounted for like other commodities.

Time is a precious commodity in my family's life... and, quite frankly, I forbid you to take that away from us! You shouldn't have that right. You must appreciate the power you're wielding and how your decisions impact the thousands of [Bowmantown] citizens you were elected to represent.

Lastly, testifiers described potential loss of family traditions associated with schools. They mourned the loss of shared experiences among siblings and the tainting of prized memories. For example, “OS-C-012” said:

Currently, I am an 8th grader at [MS31]. However, I already think of myself as a [HS9 community member]. With the school being just one mile away, I drive by it almost every day. I have excitedly looked forward to the day I can become part of the [HS9 community]. So to all of a sudden tell me that I may have to go to a different building when I am so close to my current one, came as a big shock. I have an older brother that attends [HS9] already as a sophomore and a junior next year. He loves his school and is very involved in sports and clubs. I always imagined myself going there with him.

“WS-F-001” remarked:

[I will] be reminded of the legacy my older sister left behind only to abandon it, starting over at a new school and an entirely different environment. My sister was an avid student in the community. She managed track and cross country, all while participating in choir and acapella. If you remember, last year the track team suffered from a great loss, one that directly impacted the school community, and with that, my sister. As she cried her heart out, it was you who comforted her. So many memories were made throughout my sister's time at [HS9], including exhilarating highs, devastating lows, and just small moments she'll reflect on for the rest of her life.

People also described the loss of community they anticipated if their families were assigned to attend a school outside of their defined neighborhood. As an example, “OP-G-007” said:

Our neighborhood ... has followed the concept of neighborhood schools since its inception. Our houses have been districted to [MS54] and [HS9] from the time they were built i.e. the last 23 years. But we are now told that we no longer belong to our neighborhood schools in [Bowmantown].

Poor Outcomes for the Community

Numerous and negative outcomes for the community were identified in testimonies. These included perceived damage to neighborhoods and the sense of community they offered (51 references), diminishment in the positive reputation enjoyed by Bowmantown (75 references), negative economic implications (69 references), negative environmental consequences (15

references), and concerns that hostilities would develop within the larger community (3 references).

People expressed an intense sense of value in the community feeling of their neighborhoods. In a testimony delivered in the second public hearing, parent “OP-B-013” stated, “[The proposal] *shatters our community by breaking our children up into 3 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 2 high schools.*”

Anticipated loss of special events such as holiday celebrations and shared access to resources was bemoaned. Parent “OP-D-015” explained that these experiences were foundational to selection of their home’s location.

The big motivator was the...community. We chose this for our family. We shop, eat, play sports and other activities, and worship with this community... for now. How much of this will we get to do when our children will have a bus ride of 70 minutes each way?

Community members explained that Bowmantown’s reputation that had made it a destination for families in the past, would be tainted if the proposal were approved. For example, “OP-G-008,” who also identified as a realtor, testified as already having seen negative impacts from the proposal saying,

Being a realtor, I can tell you that you'll be discouraging Intellectuals from coming to Bowmantown. One of my friends who has a job in [a nearby metropolitan area] had given a down payment for a house in Bowmantown; He (sic) lost his down payment of \$10000 but he still didn't buy the house because he doesn't want to go thru all of this in future.

“WP-F-004,” described dissatisfaction with the plan in light of having moved into a specific school attendance area by explaining, “*I have seven-year-old twins and we moved to [Bowmantown] for the excellent educational system. I am very disappointed in the*

superintendents (sic) plan to re-district that was recently announced. Our neighborhood is 0. 6 miles from the high school.”

Economically, people criticized the plan for its perceived negative impact on businesses, employment, and the school system budget. “WP-G-003” wrote,

Other impacts that have not been discussed include the shock to the county transportation network, the impact on area businesses, and the cascading impact to all area residents. To move 7,200 students. we would need an additional 100 buses (72 students fit on one bus); to be fair, some of those students already ride buses, so let's say it would be 50 buses. Still many walking students will be converted to bused students...each bus costs nearly \$50,000 to operate. That is \$2,500,000 if we reasonably assume an additional 50 buses. Think of all the wonderful things that could be done in classrooms for that much money; are we paying to educate, or paying for our kids to take daily joyrides around the county?

Testifiers further communicated concern for the environmental impact that would prospectively result from the proposal. As one working parent (OP-G-010) stated, “*Growth and a lack of road infrastructure have lead (sic) our mostly rural county to an increase in traffic. The proposed plan is not only bad for our environment but for our commutes.*”

Though less frequently cited, testifiers described concerns over student and community safety as a result of the proposal. They emphasized that more time on the road for students introduced new opportunities for automobile collisions. Community member, “OO-A-003,” went on record to say, “[T]he Superintendent's Plan contributes to sending young drivers, parents, and additional busses down... already dangerous and congested roads.” “OP-E-006” added in testimony that:

The longer children spend on the school bus, the greater the chance of being involved in an accident and of being on the school bus during adverse weather. Last Spring, my two elementary school children were on the bus two times during a tornado warning. The bus had departed [school] prior to the warning and had no choice but to continue the route, dropping off children during an active tornado warning.

Criticism of Processes

Frequent criticism arose over the perceived processes used to arrive at the proposal, and testifiers recommended disapproval on these grounds. Particularly, people accused the school system personnel who developed the proposal of violating established school system policy (121 references). They also pointed out perceived corruption among both elected and appointed leaders (33 references), exclusive and opaque procedures in the development of the proposal (29 references), and lack of evidence substantiating the proposal in its effectiveness (19 references). People also articulated opposition on the grounds that the issues the proposal was designed to rectify were not within the purview of the school board (51 references).

One parent, “OP-D-008,” testified about this alleged policy breach saying,

Under Policy..., this redistricting was triggered because of capacity, not equity concerns. And this year's boundary review process was changed to ensure that feedback is focused on the ideas presented in the feasibility study. That didn't happen here. The AAC wanted to redistrict based on equity first and foremost...The AAC purposefully misapplied [the] Policy... to fit their vision of redistricting and acted outside of their scope of authority.

Another parent, “OP-D-011,” noted that the proposal failed to comply with the required outcomes enumerated in school system policy writing, “*The superintendent drafted a plan using socioeconomic data and did not fix overcapacity in certain schools. The public was not informed of social economic factors as a primary driver earlier this year when the feasibility study was released.*”

Accusations of corruption crept into testimony and included statements about enrichment of elected officials who were making decisions based on the locations of their homes. In the eyes “WP-M-003”:

As a taxpayer, I'd also like to know why some county councils' families will be redistricted to a better school district if the proposal is passed. I believe that somebody needs to address this issue. You owe an explanation to all [Bowmantown] taxpayers.

Another community member, “WO-B-003,” added,

In addition, your proposal will surely cause home values in some areas to decline, putting undue stress and financial burdens on families who have made conscious choices to live, work, and school their children in a particular area. At the same time, homeowners whose children might now be bussed to higher performing schools will most assuredly see an increase in their home property values as a result. This is so very wrong on every level!! As a result of this, it is inevitable that some will be in favor of this redistricting but for all the wrong reasons.... not because it will benefit students, but because it will benefit homeowners. In a perfect world there would be total equity for all people; unfortunately, we do not, nor will we ever, live in a perfect world. To penalize people for striving and succeeding is nothing short of unethical and immoral.

Testifiers described perceptions of having been excluded from the proposal process due to the location of their homes or their origins. They believed the superintendent’s AAC overrepresented some regions of the community and some social groups in comparison. For example, “OP-D-013,” stated,

The Superintendent ignored community inputs and handpicked an AAC which does not represent the whole [community of Bowmantown]. [HS9, HS76, and HS65] communities have no representation. Asian Americans and immigrant citizens are significantly underrepresented in the committee despite they represent 20% of [Bowmantown] population.

Another parent, “OP-B-001,” stated in testimony delivered during the second public hearing, a similar line of argument saying, “*For example, Asian takes 19% population in [Bowmantown]. However, AAC committee, which should represent the community diversity to give recommendation to the superintendent, did not contain any Asians.*” Or as parent, “OP-D-010,” noted in more general terms, “*Most disheartening is how undemocratic this whole process has been.*”

There were also accusations that the proposal was experimental in nature. Testifiers claimed there to be no or insufficient data pointing to benefits of moving young people from

lower socioeconomic situations to schools of higher SES. “OP-D-002” said during public comment that,

The proposed plan asks us to make great sacrifices in terms of increased commuting time, loss of sleep, and disruption of critical social support systems. There is not sufficient data to back the achievement of the Superintendent's laudable goals with this plan. Do not ask us to make these sacrifices without strong evidence that they will lead to the desired outcomes.

Later in the testimony, “OP-D-002” went on to say, “*Do not risk the psychological well-being of our students to follow a flawed plan which lacks empirical backing.*”

Also related to process were people’s claims that the concentration of low SES in Bowmantown was not a problem appropriate for the school board to tackle. One parent, “OP-G-007,” stated, “*I am holding up the map of the FARMS distribution in [Bowmantown]. As you can see, they are concentrated in pockets. Any changes to the composition of this map lies with the County Council and not with the BOE.*” Testifiers argued that over-crowding and concentrated areas of poverty resulted from unmonitored and uncontrolled development in the community. Community member, “WO-Q-001,” stated, “*It was poor planning on the county's part and people who were lured to the County by the real estate market to pay for overprice houses to attend high performing schools in the neighborhood.*”

Summary of Explicit Narrative

Community members who submitted public testimony overwhelmingly opposed the proposal to redistrict the schools. The reasons for their opposition included anticipation of poor outcomes for students in terms of physical and mental health, social ties, and opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. They also described anticipated negative outcomes for families due to increased burden, violation of property rights, and diminishment of opportunities for parents to participate in school related activities with their children. Arguments against the

proposal were also presented on the grounds of poor outcomes for the community overall. The negatives included destruction of established communities; damage to the community's reputation, economy, and safety; and environmental well-being. Testifiers also criticized the proposal as a violation of established policy and as evidence of corruption among elected and appointed officials. They described an exclusive and undemocratic process that was based not on empirical data but served as an experiment in social arrangement at the expense of young people.

Implicit Narrative

Discerning the implicit narrative of the community presents greater challenges when compared to explicit. Testimonies offer stability, but they do not allow for deeper probing to understand intent behind messaging the way interviews do. Nonetheless, patterns related to content and processes associated with the community's response provide robust evidence for the latent or underlying narrative. This section analyzes the evidence of the processes of organization such as the use of templates and petitions (319 testimonies) as well as the messages communicated through commonly applied language conventions such as elevation of professional expertise or status (138 references) along with the frequent articulation of sensitive information intended possibly to spotlight testimonies for increased consideration (12 references).

Templates and Petitions

Over 300 of the 2,508 submitted testimonies used one of several letter templates or included a petition signed by community members. This equates to approximately 12% of all testimonies. The templates varied across neighborhoods and reflected groups' specific priorities. Interestingly, there were instances when the blank template was forwarded by an individual as part of the testimony. In most cases, people who used the templates added their personal contact

information. There were instances when several templated letters came from a single address and from people with shared surnames likely indicating that a single family had likely filed several identical statements. Appendix G shows three examples of templated letters included among submitted testimonies. Information that could identify Bowmantown or the testifiers has been redacted. The three letters date from August 27 to August 28. The first came from a resident of polygon 179. The second and third came from residents in polygon 3176. The text is nearly identical across the three letters.

Petitions were submitted by advocacy groups and neighborhood associations. The number of signatures varied within the petitions, but all submitted petitions were in opposition to the proposal. A page from an example petition in opposition to the proposal is shown in Appendix H. All information that could identify Bowmantown or individuals who signed the petition has been redacted.

Professional Expertise and Status

There were 139 references among the 302, idea-coded testimonies where testifiers stated their professional role or other experience as evidence of expertise related to the proposal. Testifiers included physicians, data scientists, and strategic experts. “OP-F-010,” as an example, objected to the proposal and discounted the need for any change in school boundaries saying, “*As a degreed engineer, I would say, if it isn't broken, don't fix it.*” Others pointed to special insight such as when “OP-G-012,” said, “*My wife and I have spent a combined 40 years in public service. And after many years of developing and managing large-scale strategies, I have an appreciation for the difficulty in making strategic decisions with multiple competing variables to consider.*” One community member, “OP-D-001,” identified as a physician and emphasized experience treating pediatric sleep disorders to underscore expertise to testify in opposition to the

proposal stating, *“I am a physician and one of my specialties is sleep medicine. I regularly see and treat pediatric patients. I did my sleep medicine fellowship [that] included training in pediatric sleep medicine.”* In describing mental health concerns, community member, “OP-G-003” said, *“I am a psychiatrist who knows the developmental milestones of our children. They should not suffer from this psycho-social distress. Please be wise not separating them from their friends in MS54 to move them to the MS02.”*

Several community members leveraged their professional expertise to conduct additional analysis on the proposal and to introduce new arguments in opposition. “OP-D-004” stated,

[A]n audit of the plan generated surprising results. Over 70% of the resulting data in the presentation is sadly wrong...1) Endemic over or under inflated capacity and FARM numbers 2) [HS41] FARM changing by only 2%, not 8% 3) [MS54] capacity changing from 103% to 87%, while uprooting kids from their community...On this basis, this whole process should be stopped until financial and process audits are completed at the BoE, to gain sure footing.

Special Circumstances

Testifiers revealed sensitive information about students such as medical diagnoses or special service details to argue against the proposal. This is particularly notable since testifiers’ full testimonies became a part of the public record, and, in many cases, were readily traced to individuals. Sometimes the information was relatively benign such as when “OP-D-015,” explained, *“My daughter suffers from car sickness on long rides. She’s already regularly worrying about how she’ll make it through over 2 hours on a bus each day.”* Other times, the information was more sensitive such as when “WS-T-001” explained,

My brother is special needs, and he sometimes gets seizures and has to be picked up from the bus even in the five minutes it takes to get to school. Even if he gets seizures in school, it isn’t that hard for my parents to pick him up from school.

There were also cases where the information centered on sensitive mental health issues such as “WP-F-012” who, when testifying against the proposal, said of her child, “*My son suffers from anxiety and mild on-and-off depression.*”

In a particularly sensitive example, “OP-A-003,” who also identified herself as a teacher, shared information about suicide ideation among her children to emphasize the importance of her perspective.

PERSONAL STORY: I will tell you that I have 3 children, all very different. My oldest is a boy that is well liked and involved in many sports teams, and he considered suicide in 7th grade! I was of course mortified but was fortunate enough to recognize the stressors and be able to talk him through this as a parent. I ask him about this often, even now that he seems much more adjusted to life and the inherent stress that comes with it. Just this past year when we were talking, he actually told me "even though I can talk to you mom, it was my friends that got me through the tough times". Then, when I talked to my kids this summer about the stats given above, my daughter also told me she had considered this - and I NEVER EVEN KNEW! I am a teacher who knows what to look for as well as an educated, involved parent and I never saw it. Again she told me "don't worry mom, it was a long time ago and I talked to Grace about it (Grace is her best friend). A long time ago meaning she was in 4th, 5th, or 6th grade! SO, I'd really like you to consider letting kids finish with their current school. They need each other more than ever at this time.

Summary of Implicit Narrative

Moving beyond the explicitly stated narrative in the testimonies is challenging due to the inability to probe more deeply into the testimony. Indirect evidence such as the use of templates and petitions along with rhetorical tools such as highlighting professional expertise, however, provide insights leading to finding an implicit narrative of perceived entitlement among testifiers. They recognized their strong social networks provided avenues for efficient amplification of opposition. Emphasis on professional credentials lent legitimacy to their statements. People revealed sensitive information about their families as grounds for enhancing their influence in affecting the board members’ opinions.

Counternarrative

Not all testifiers sought to block the proposal. There were 144 testimonies (6%) submitted that explicitly supported the proposal. I coded 44 for idea content. Unlike the testimonies in opposition, there were no discernable geographic patterns associated with the statements of support. Themes that emerged from the set of testimonies included acknowledgement that challenges accompanied the proposal (41 references). Testifiers also noted the proposal would be an important first step in redressing historical inequities (9 references). There were five references touting the potential for positive outcomes for all students if the proposal were approved. Community member OO-B-006 applied similar rhetorical devices to those noted as a part of the implicit, dominant narrative when she identified herself as a lifelong resident of Bowmantown with an earned PhD. She underscored her testimony in support of the proposal by emphasizing she was a product of Bowmantown schools and, ultimately, had benefited from the experience of moving among Bowmantown's schools as a student. She stated,

I have lived here over 50 years. I am a proud graduate of HS41. In a 9 year grade school career (I skipped 3 grades), I attended 6 different schools. How did that affect me? When I went to high school I had 2 sets of middle school friends to keep up with instead of just one. When I went to college and was surrounded literally by thousands of absolute strangers, I did not pannick (sic). I was confident in my ability to make new friends without having to impress anyone with binge drinking or any other behaviors trying to be popular.

Another resident, "OP-B-007," acknowledged his less popular stance when compared to his neighbors but encouraged the BOE to act by saying,

My neighbors are decent, sensible, good-hearted, comfortable people. They want you to reject the proposal for desegregation, or delay it for a number of years. I say, no. Our county's most vulnerable children cannot afford for you to stop or delay desegregation.

The Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) at high school HS41 (OO-B-004) submitted a statement of support by emphasizing,

Ultimately, we are trusting that the Board's final plan will be based on both/and, not either/or, decision making. At [HS41], we know that there would be no winners. only losers in an either/or, zero sum game process and those losers would be all of our children. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. admonished us over 50 years ago, there is nothing more dangerous than "willful ignorance and conscientious stupidity". Please do not fall prey to those forces and unwittingly endanger the minds, bodies, spirits, and futures of all our children.

“WP-T-008,” late in the public comment period, acknowledged the challenges presented by other community members as reasons to oppose the proposal while simultaneously supporting the proposal based in moral terms by saying,

While we can't undo historical missteps around this process nor can we, overnight, correct the inequities in our housing and zoning laws or shortfalls in our school revenue, what we can do right now is follow our moral compass and continue to anchor ourselves in [Bowmantown's founder's] vision to create an "open city" and a place that would "uplift, inspire, stimulate and develop the best in man."

Summary of Counternarrative

Only about 6% of all testimonies expressed explicit support for the redistricting proposal and constituted a counternarrative to the dominant narrative of opposition. The statements acknowledged challenges would likely accompany the redistricting but emphasized that positive outcomes also awaited. Testifiers emphasized the enhanced educational equity ushered in with the proposal and celebrated an opportunity to undo years of inequitable decision-making in Bowmantown and elsewhere. In short, testifiers relied heavily on interest convergence by elevating the benefits that everyone would reap by the new arrangement.

Summary and Statements of Finding

Of the over 2,500 testimonies submitted in response to the redistricting proposal, 94% stated opposition and originated from only a few neighborhoods within the larger Bowmantown community. The reasons for opposition included stated beliefs that the proposal, if implemented, would result in poor outcomes for students to include reduced physical and mental health due to factors such as lost sleep and increased stress. People also cited concern over damage to social ties as young people might attend schools different than the ones where their established friends were assigned. There was also opposition on the grounds that student participation in extracurricular activities such as clubs, sports, and academic support would suffer. Such exclusion from activities would mean students would not have ready access to teacher recommendations. Opposition also centered on the increased burden on families due to transportation changes. This would especially be felt by working mothers. Many people also saw the proposal as infringing on property rights by damaging family traditions centered on schools and eating into already stressed schedules. Parent involvement, seen to be important to both student and school success, was also thought to be threatened by the proposed attendance patterns. Potential for damage to the community was also identified. In this area, community cohesiveness, reputation, the economy, and the environment were seen as threatened. Opponents also cited explicit weaknesses in the processes used to develop the proposal. They communicated concern over the inconsistent application of approved policy along with accusations of potential corruption and exclusivity. Finally, there were charges that the proposal was not based on valid evidence, and testifiers were not supportive of having their children used as part of an “experiment.”

Implicitly, the dominant narrative exposed belief among testifiers that social status, represented by organized response and amplification of professional achievement, should lend credence to their statements of opposition. Participants also showed readiness to apply sensitive information about family members to underscore the significance of their stances.

A counternarrative arose in approximately 6% of the testimonies. This counternarrative offered tempered support for the proposal as a means to rectify historical inequities and to enhance outcomes for all students through increasing diversity in learning spaces and broadening social circles. Testifiers acknowledged the many challenges that accompanied the proposal but offered support saying the benefits would outweigh the challenges.

In summary, two statements of finding arise for research question 2. These are:

Statement of Finding 2: *Explicitly, two different narratives arose. One, a dominant narrative, opposed the proposal saying it would result in negative consequences for students, families, schools, and neighborhoods. Participants in the dominant narrative also characterized the processes used in developing the proposal as illegitimate. A counternarrative, on the other hand, explicitly supported the proposal by emphasizing prospective benefits for all members of the community while acknowledging the challenges that faced the full community.*

Statement of Finding 3: *Implicitly, participants in the dominant narrative leveraged social capital to amplify their statements of opposition. Tactics included citing professional credentials, expertise, and experience and applying templated letters and petitions that were distributed within community networks. Testifiers also told stories that included sensitive information about their children to draw attention to their views.*

Race, Opportunity, and Merit

Research question 3 asked, “How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?” To answer this research question, I applied a three-step interpretive process that began with inductive coding as described for research question 2. I identified passages within testimonies related to race, opportunity, and merit, categorized these ideas to discern patterns, and, after considerable reflection, identified themes that shaped my analysis and statement of finding. A three-tier code map appears in Appendix I. The emergent themes related to this research question were:

1. People expressed support for equity generally and in the abstract, but their support waned when steps to enhance equity impacted them personally.
2. Though there were instances of overtly racial tropes within a few testimonies, race was not frequently referenced in explicit ways. Cultural racism that valued assets of some students over others was commonly seen.
3. Deeply embedded, historical or systemic racism emerged as an important theme within the counter narrative

Before presenting my findings, I offer a personal reflection of my experience surrounding this research question. My findings and their interpretation follow.

My Research Journey II

The reflective phase for this research question introduced a variety of challenges. Continual application of reflexive journaling supported my synthesis, but it is important that I acknowledge that I am only beginning my journey toward genuine racial consciousness. As noted later in this section, there were instances where overtly bigoted statements were recorded. I recoiled when I encountered these—appalled at the blatant and insensitive phrasing. As

researcher, I was confident that these statements represented clear data points for use in my report. Identifying the more subtle references to race proved challenging. I had read and reread the literature on colorblind racism and knew some of the clues I should seek (Bonilla-Silva, 2003); yet, I recognized early that I could not approach my analysis as a purely academic exercise. Race in America is slippery. When one becomes aware of its power, one realizes it shapes nearly every aspect of our lives. One's perception of the power of race depends upon which side of the racial shaping tool one is on. People who are Black in America have deep understanding of the power of race from their earliest days (Senna, 2021). People, like I, who, due to the color of our skin have lived our lives avoiding acknowledgement of race, must exert effort to see even partially the strength of that racial shaping tool.

I do not pretend to be an expert at understanding this metaphorical racial shaping tool fully. The analysis that follows undoubtedly falls short and likely includes amateurish elements. I have struggled through the last 18 months since the murder of George Floyd and the so-called "racial awakening" of America to decide if my effort is worthy to share. I think it is, but I want to make clear, that I know my analysis is deficient. I say this not to undermine my effort but to remind myself and others whose lives have followed trajectories similar to mine, that our racial awakenings will never be complete. We must accept the fact that we will fall short but commit to continued and humble growth. Thus, the analysis that follows is presented with humility and as one phase of a continual work in progress.

Equity

Many community members who stated support as well as opposition to the redistricting proposal declared their support for equity generally (67 references). "OP-G-012," opposed the proposal on the basis of its inconvenience saying, "*While I support efforts to advance equity in*

our schools, I am here in opposition to [the Superintendent's] redistricting plan due to the undue burden it places on my family.” “WP-Q-003” explained, *“I totally get and don't oppose the goal of closing the achievement gap between socioeconomically diverse students in Bowmantown. I very much oppose doing this through redistricting.”* While community member, “WO-A-003,” encouraged more deliberation on the matter saying,

I understand the importance of diversity and equity and support reasonable, sensible approaches to balance the student population at different schools. But I feel that it is utterly unfair to bus students around just to achieve this goal, without considering any other factors for alleviating overcrowding at schools.

Others expressed concern that a shared definition of equity had not been achieved within the community thus making its inclusion as a goal in the redistricting proposal inappropriate. “OP-F-007” said, *“The concept of equity, used as the center piece of the proposal, was not based on public input and was never debated and discussed with the community.”*

Still other community members viewed the proposed shifts in school attendance areas as inequitable. Two community members in the fourth public hearing expressed concern over student safety should the proposal be approved. The first, parent “OP-D-010,” wrote,

As an Indian-American citizen, born in the U. K. and raised in the United States, I cherish diversity. [The nearby county] where I grew up, is incredibly diverse, and I was particularly concerned about the issue when we moved here to western [Bowmantown], having been told before by local residents to "go back to my country." Racism is not just black and white.

A short time later in the public hearing, parent “OP-D-014” filed a statement that said,

Two weeks ago, at the BOE public hearing, a supporter of the superintendent's redistricting plan from HS41 screamed at my friends and their two young children: "I can't wait for you all to go back to Asia"! It is hateful and scary. I fear the safety of my children and all children if they are redistricted by this very divisive and forceful plan.

Minimization of Race

Though race received few explicit references within community testimony, its absence may actually underscore its presence. Afterall, race is a taboo topic among white people in America (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Within the analyzed testimonies, there were 14 instances where people declared their commitment to turning a blind eye to the concept of race. “OP-E-015,” stated,

Diversity is what attracts other diverse people to Bowmantown. We teach our kids to respect, accept, and befriend all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, and backgrounds. My children are colorblind. We believe in equity, as we also believe in the equal treatment of all children.

In a similar vein, community members expressed satisfaction with the level of diversity already present in their neighborhoods and schools. Parent “OP-G-001” explained, “*We are Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Indian, Colombian, Lithuanian, Russian, African-American, Caucasian, Ethiopian, bi-racial-and that is just our 5th grade!*” In another statement, “OP-G-008,” argued that racial, ethnic, and socio-economic categorization of students ought to be avoided because “*I feel kids are just kids - leave them alone*”. Community member, “WO-K-003,” discouraged any discussion of race by accusing Black community leaders of weaponizing it in saying, “*Black leaders in [Bowmantown] are only looking for their own political power and using poor black children as an excuse.*”

Culture

Statements in opposition to the proposal cited people’s culture as root cause to differential educational performances and outcomes (10 references). The elevation of these factors allowed them to undermine the proposal since increasing diversity in schools, they felt, failed to target the underlying issues. In a written statement of opposition, “WP-M-002,”

asserted, “*Studies show that many of these underprivileged families take with them the same habits and attitudes that undercut local school success.*” Several additional testimonies focused on unstable or non-supportive family structures. For example, “WO-J-001” wrote:

Then the "racism" term will be used instead of realizing these children come from a home environment that does not stress education as other cultures do... Test scores will be low. Bad behavior will be high. Discipline will be high. This will be among the Black students. Other Students will be upset that FARM students replaced their friends. There will be a socio-economic class separation. Black students will not be as smart as Asians and radical groups will be upset that Blacks aren't in AP classes and Asians will be upset because AP classes will be watered down so Blacks can pass them. Dumbing down the school system is not what [HS41] parents had in mind when they bought their houses. The core culture of Blacks and Asians' attitude toward education so different. Mixing these children will be a disaster.

WO-K-004 wrote:

No matter where you put the farm students, students from middle and high income, test results will always be the same. Asians will score the highest, whites, next, browns and blacks lowest. It's not the schools that is causing low test results and graduation rates. Data shows that Blacks as a group has lowest achievement scores for the last 50 years. It is the culture of the home environment (whether the family is functional or dysfunctional) Many Black students will be at a disadvantaged because the top student leaders will emerge and may not have leadership positions because they were removed from majority black [school] to a very highly competitive school...If this proposal is passed watch the radical black groups complain...Same pecking order...

Rather than following the Superintendent’s suggestion to increase diversity in schools, several community members offered alternative suggestions that left students’ school assignments unchanged by initiating mentoring programs to bolster student appreciation of high academic performance and aspirations (27 references). “OP-F-009” shared their viewpoint with:

I had a conversation with two of my coworkers. They are both young college educated black electrical engineers that grew up in poor neighborhoods. After hearing their stories about how they broke the cycle and went to college I asked them a question, when you were growing up was going to college a topic of conversation anywhere in your lives. Did your parents, siblings, relatives, friends ever bring up going to college. They both said no, college never came up in daily conversation. In contrast, that’s just about all we talk to our kids about. The subject of college and the importance of doing well and getting high grades in high school so that they can get into a top college is a daily topic

of conversation. So, if the problem is that poor kids are not frequently encouraged to go to college while well to do kids are, the solution to the problem seems obvious, not easy, not quick, but obvious. The school needs to start teaching kids from a young age about the advantages of going to college... give them encouragement and implement targeted programs like bringing successful minority college graduates from poor backgrounds to their FARM breakfasts to talk to them and teach them the benefits of a college education... You have a unique opportunity here. One beneficial outcome of this redistricting mess is that the whole county is hyper aware of the problem and ready to do whatever it takes to fix this issue where poor kids are left behind.

In some cases, the proposed mentors would be assigned from only select regions of

Bowmantown. Parent, “OP-D-004,” stated,

Focus on the FARM kids, in their local communities and schools. Mentor them, inspire them, challenge them on a personal level... Starting in 1st grade... Institute mandatory public-private partnerships with non-FARM parents, who would volunteer tutor on evenings once per grading period, at county sites, where beneficiaries become motivated to learn in a positive mentorship space.

Another parent, “WP-L-001,” wrote to the Board saying,

What the FARM students lack in general is the level of (outside of school) mentoring they need to weather the various challenges and to succeed; their families may not have the financial means to hire tutors or to expose them to the various enrichment opportunities. The problem needs to be addressed head on as opposed to moving the students around... fund such programs as free after school mentoring/tutoring, free after school enrichment programs, etc. Let's do something REAL for these kids, provide them the resources they need to succeed and they will break the vicious, generational cycle of poverty once and for all!

Other testimonies included support for increased funding to enhance the skill of educators and to upgrade academic offerings in schools. “WP-F-004” wrote, “*I am very much in favor of raising additional funds for the school including possibly additional taxes, and possibly raising developer fees further. Schools that are struggling should be receiving additional funds at the expense of schools that are not.*”

“WP-L-003” argued along a similar line writing:

Funnel county funding to schools that are under performing or most in need to create true test score improvement. Use this funding to improve teacher/administration quality, (training, tenure, etc.), increase school resources, upgrade class offerings, and increase

support programs for parents which leads to improvement at all levels. This will undoubtedly increase student performance while still allowing families to remain within and receive critical support from their communities.

Testimonies suggested that some students in the community brought more assets to the educational environment than others. They suggested these students could serve as role models for others through extracurricular volunteering or through in school programming such as magnets. Two examples from parents' testimonies include:

High school kids can volunteer and give attention to kids that need help; Save the cost of bussing and use it to hire teachers and resources where we need them...The problem we need to address as a community is a serious one - and one that we should work together to find a great solution together. This rushed plan will not solve it. Let's figure out how to do better than this. –OP-G-008

An alternative solution could be to establish magnet programs in the poor performing schools and let students choose to go there... The magnet program attracts smart students who are willing to commute there from other communities and in the meantime offers opportunities to students assigned to the school may not have if it is not a magnet school. More AP classes could be offered and more academic focused clubs could be established. Bringing in smart students to low performing schools is fine but this should be done voluntarily, not by force. It could be a win-win to everyone if done property. – WP-F-013

Not every reference tied to culture was devoid of racial connections. In a few, shocking instances, community members overtly applied racial stereotypes to justify disapproval of the Superintendent's proposal. In a written statement, community member, "WO-R-002," said,

Maybe I sound racist or elitist but let me tell you about me. I am black, my parental grandparents were poor but they stressed one thing: education and their children achieved in THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL and it was passed down to their children (my mother) and we all achieved IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL. That was in [a nearby metropolitan area] but forced integration changed that. People moved out and the city became (majority) all Black. It should have not changed the schools but it did. Look at [that city] today. From the number 1 school system in the 1950s to the poorest performance schools... The urbanized blacks are the same. 77% of black births are born to single mothers and blacks... make up 12% of the US population, account for 54% of the murders with (50% black on black crime) This is a reality and people are

afraid. There is a breakdown in the family and sending children to other schools will not work.

Community member, “WO-Q-001,” echoed similar beliefs within written testimony saying,

It's all demographics. There is a group (mainly urbanized Blacks) that take the schools down. Neighborhood down. More crime, Stats show the truth and now Blacks want to act surprised when they have destroyed school systems and neighborhoods... Enough of social experimentation. It's children's lives we are talking about. Graduating from HS9 is much prestigious than graduating from HS41. Just google fights at HS41...Behavior of Blacks is unacceptable. Black politicians refused to call out the behavior of Blacks (Check out brawl at Disneyland video in July) That's the typical behavior of the urbanized black. We make excuses for them. That's why no one wants to live near them, go to school with them. They are rude and crude. Slavery ended 400 years ago. STOP MAKING EXCUSES. The Black Community needs to take responsibility for the behavior of its people or the white man will take them back to place where they don't want to go. Why do schools have to change achievement levels just because having a majority black population?

In oral testimony, middle school student, “OS-C-006,” stated,

Just two days ago, one of my neighbor's father, a hard working Chinese American, was yelled at by a white women, "Can't wait for you to go back to Asia!" Imagine all the discriminations I will receive if I go to MS02, just because I am Asian. I feel safe in MS54 as I have lots of classmates from Asia. It is mentally vitally important for me to be in a diverse community...where families value education and hard work.

A parent, “WP-F-003,” said,

Racial Diversity: It is somewhat unclear if this is a voiced concern or not. In reading social media, there have been a small handful of vocal antagonists saying nasty things like, "HS09 needs to learn diversity!" From that, I gather that this concern of diversity is not exclusive to race or gender, but it also extends to experience, education, faith, and ideals. We do not foster focused purely on the color of skin. I would argue that diversity is diversity by taking all of those diverse things and mixing them in one bucket such that there is no longer diversity of mind. That said, there is undoubtedly disparity between the racial and socioeconomic demographics in the schools located in [the more urban part of Bowmantown] and those schools in the suburbs and rural area. These demographics seem to track with FARM statistics as well as school performance. Here, it seems that the suggestion is that by spreading the racial diversity, the underperforming schools will do better. But would that not also suggest that the higher performing schools will be brought down?

Systemic Racism

The counternarrative also included explicit reference to race, but it differed in that it emphasized long-standing and oft invisible systemic racism (25 references). For example, community member “WO-N-001,” said in a written statement,

Racism is at the heart of this whole debate. Once we own that fact then maybe progress can begin to be made... Time is of the essence. Children's lives are at stake. While we debate my grandson and other black and brown students continue to go without having their academic needs address in this school system.

“OO-B-005” saw race as a central issue encouraged action to correct long-standing precedent of ignoring race.

I urge the Board to make decisions that will correct the deleterious effect of years of non-action by redistricting our schools to address, not only overcrowding and poverty, but to also address de-facto segregation, which has created an "us" versus "them" mentality in our county.

In another example, community member “WO-N-001” wrote testimony centered on the lingering effects of legally sanctioned racial segregation that have gone unaddressed.

Institutional, systemic practices, and government policies created the great divide that we have today. The injustices of redlining, discriminatory banking practices, discriminatory zoning and planning practices along with unexamined racial attitudes and the myopic telling of the history of this nation have all contributed to the condition of our society.

Summary and Statement of Finding

Race was seldom explicitly referenced in public comment related to the redistricting proposal. Yet, it was implicitly pervasive. Community members expressed enthusiastic support for the concept of equity in the abstract, but they stopped short of committing to action that would bring its achievement. America has established modern practice that avoids discussion of race (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, 2015). The few explicit references to race suggest this practice was at play in Bowmantown.

In lieu of implementing the redistricting proposal, community members offered alternative solutions that regularly failed to acknowledge the assets offered by all students throughout Bowmantown. These solutions encouraged the commitment of resources to enhance young people's lives where there were perceived deficits in family support, goal setting, and role models.

Importantly, a counternarrative was present wherein people highlighted the deep roots of racism that continue to impact communities and individuals daily. Participants in the counternarrative, though smaller in number when compared to the dominant narrative group, courageously and clearly called for action from the BOE to alter structures on behalf of young people and the community.

The accumulated evidence for research question 3 leads to statement of finding 4: *The concepts of race, opportunity, and merit appeared differently in the dominant and counternarratives. The dominant narrative expressed support for equity in general, but testifiers seldom referenced race or racial equity specifically. People who participated in the dominant narrative cited family dysfunction, deficient role models, and low aspirations as primary hurdles to success for students impacted by poverty. They advocated for increased resource allocation in lieu of school reassignment. Participants in the counternarrative, however, explicitly cited the lingering effects of deeply embedded, systemic racism as rationale for the Board of Education to approve the new school boundaries.*

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings to the three sub-research questions based upon my content analysis of public testimony included in the public record maintained by the Bowmantown Public School System related to the Superintendent's proposal for comprehensive

redistricting of school attendance areas. It was coupled with a review of school system generated documents and my reflexive journal. Table 20 displays each of my statements of finding with the associated sub-research question. Next, Chapter 5 presents discussion that synthesizes these findings to answer the central research question.

Table 20

Research Questions and Statements of Finding

Central research question: How did the community respond to a school system’s race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas?	
Research Question 1 Who were the community members that publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?	<p>Statement of Finding 1: In the over 2,500 testimonies filed between late August and mid-October 2019, 77% (1,926) originated from people who identified as parents; 14.2% (357) originated from people who identified themselves as community members who were members of advocacy groups, grandparents, graduates, interested residents, among others; and 9.0% (225) originated from people who identified themselves as current students in BPSS. Geographically, testifiers’ reported home locations fell in only 32% (227) of all planning polygons. Of these polygons, approximately 52% (118) were impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. Notably, some 53% (1,322) of all submitted testimony originated from people who identified themselves as residing in just 2.4% (17) of all the planning polygons. Each of these 17 polygons was impacted by at least one proposed school transfer, and the dominant racial and ethnic groups reported by students in these polygons were white and Asian.</p>
Research Question 2 What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?	<p>Statement of Finding 2: Explicitly, two different narratives arose. One, a dominant narrative, opposed the proposal saying it would result in negative consequences for students, families, schools, and neighborhoods. Participants in the dominant narrative also characterized the processes used in developing the proposal as illegitimate. A counternarrative, on the other hand, explicitly supported the proposal by emphasizing prospective benefits for all members of the community while acknowledging the challenges that faced the full community.</p> <p>Statement of Finding 3: Implicitly, participants in the dominant narrative leveraged social capital to amplify their statements of opposition. Tactics included citing professional credentials, expertise, and experience and applying templated letters and petitions that were distributed within community networks. Testifiers also told stories that included sensitive information about their children to draw attention to their views.</p>
Research Question 3 How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?	<p>Statement of Finding 4: The concepts of race, opportunity, and merit appeared differently in the dominant and counternarratives. The dominant narrative expressed support for equity in general, but testifiers seldom referenced race or racial equity specifically. People who participated in the dominant narrative cited family dysfunction, deficient role models, and low aspirations as primary hurdles to success for students impacted by poverty. They advocated for increased resource allocation in lieu of school reassignment. Participants in the counternarrative, however, explicitly cited the lingering effects of deeply embedded, systemic racism as rationale for the Board of Education to approve the new school boundaries.</p>

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

This chapter synthesizes the study's findings to situate the project within the practice of equity-focused leadership and future research. Preceding chapters overviewed the study, summarized relevant literature, described research methodology, and presented analysis and findings. Chapter 5 opens with a restatement of the problem, purpose, and conceptual framework that shaped the study. I then present a discussion of findings organized around the distinct community narratives that arose in Bowmantown, where I weave together the findings from the sub research questions to respond to the central research question more fully. The discussion is followed by sections including implications for practice, implications for research, and a conclusion.

Restatement of the Problem

America's neighborhoods and schools remain racially homogenous well into the 21st century. Though numerous historical factors underlie and perpetuate segregated housing patterns that, in turn, impact school enrollments, they too frequently go unacknowledged (Irving, 2014; Rothstein, 2017; Wilkerson, 2020). This profound and misunderstood racial isolation impacts our understanding of the world more widely. We naturalize these patterns of isolation and construct alternative explanations to rationalize differential life outcomes correlated to race. Race dominates our lives despite our tendency to avoid such admission.

Clear evidence indicates that schools and classrooms where racial heterogeneity dominates offer both academic and nonacademic benefits for students. Yet, when faced with conditions that will possibly reify this condition, white parents tend to resist. Many are unready to relinquish white learning spaces. This stubborn refusal serves to reinforce the racial hierarchization as students may naturalize the segregated learning conditions. The cycle

perpetuates. Thus, schools, situated at a meta social level and reflecting both the values of the larger society and those of the people they serve are important strategic levers to disrupt racialized America.

Purpose

My research project examined a contemporary case of a community's response to a race-neutral, educational equity initiative that would reassign students' school attendance and, in some cases, increase the racial heterogeneity of school environments. The redistricting proposal focused on achieving optimal enrollment levels in schools and reducing concentrated enrollments of students impacted by poverty in some schools. Significant resistance from some sectors of the community arose. I examined this response to understand who participated and what they said. The resultant understanding provides insight to educational and other organizational leaders seeking to enhance equity.

Conceptual Framework

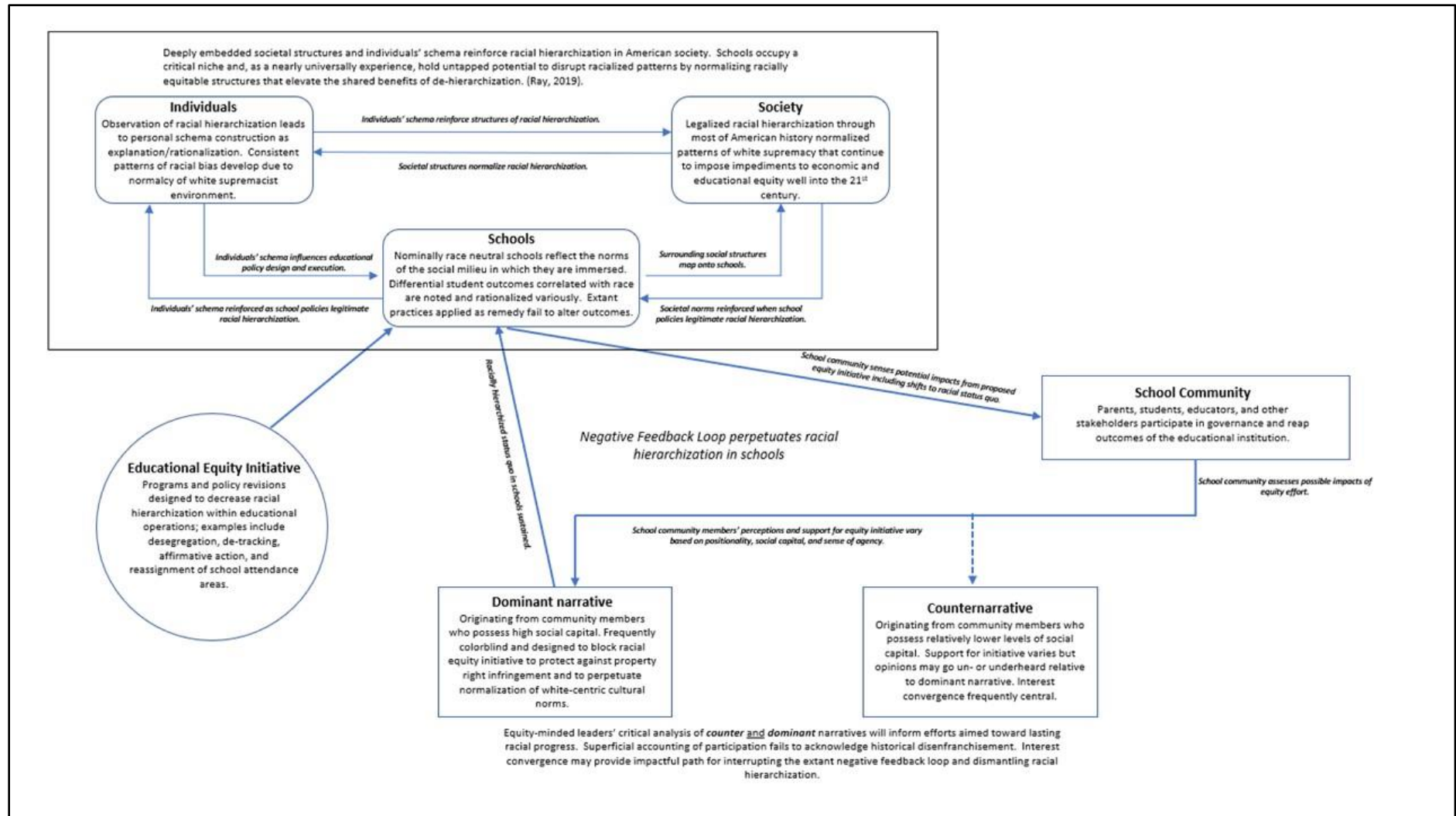
Before discussing the findings of the research, it is important to revisit my conceptual framework to contextualize the findings and their significance. For ease of reference, Figure 3 displays my conceptual framework, initially presented in Chapter 1.

The framework centers on a negative feedback loop that perpetuates racial homogeneity in schools. I contend that schools' positioning at the meta-level means they can be vital instruments in disrupting racial hierarchization more widely, but the resistance by parents and other community members to educational initiatives that might diminish racial isolation in schools continue to attract insurmountable resistance. The dominant narrative that powers the negative feedback can be explained through application of Critical Race Theory (CRT) principles including normalization of whiteness, colorblindness, and high social capital which

motivate people to resist. The conceptual framework also offers a potential alternative path forged through a counternarrative. Yet, the counternarrative may lack sufficient amplitude to draw attention from leaders as a viable and impactful alternative. My research examined both the dominant and counternarratives arising in Bowmantown when residents were faced with a comprehensive redistricting proposal in the high performing school system.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework



Discussion of Findings

The central research question for this study asked: How did the community respond to a school system's race-neutral proposal to enhance educational equity through comprehensive redistricting of school attendance areas? The sub research questions were:

R1: Who were the community members who publicly voiced their views on the proposed redistricting plan?

R2: What were the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?

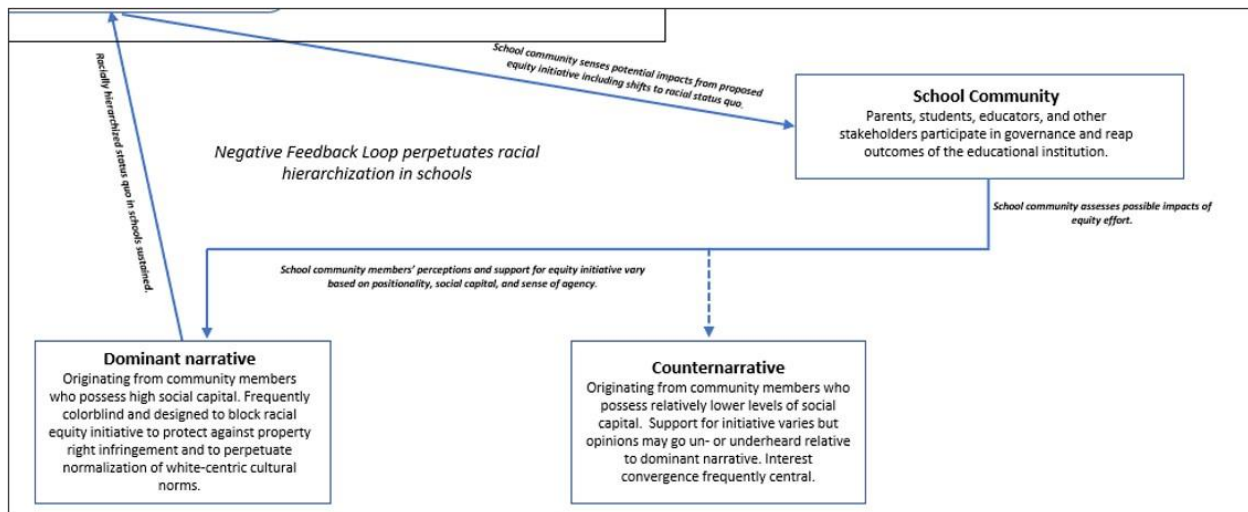
R3: How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?

Two narratives arose in the community's response. The first was a dominant narrative communicated by the majority of respondents and broadly classified as oppositional to the proposal. The second was a counternarrative communicated by a relatively small number of respondents and broadly classified as supportive of the proposal. In the following sections, I discuss both narratives in turn. Within the discussion, I situate the findings within the reviewed literature and alongside extended analysis.

Table 20 includes the complete set of findings. Additionally, Figure 4 displays the community response feedback loop at the heart of and excerpted from my conceptual framework.

Figure 4

Feedback Loop of Community Response



The Dominant Narrative

The dominant narrative arose in approximately 94% of testimonies and explicitly opposed the proposal. A few themes appeared to predominate this narrative though not all people who voiced opposition necessarily espoused the same rationale. Thus, I will sharpen the focus on the origin and nature of both the participants and messaging of this narrative throughout this section.

The Epicenter

The effects of an earthquake are typically widespread; yet the energy emanates from a discrete location in the earth's crust—the epicenter. An examination of testimony associated with the dominant narrative in Bowmantown reveals a similar phenomenon. Significant activity in only a limited geographic area had great effect in the community.

Finding one revealed that over half of all testimony submitted in response to the redistricting proposal erupted from a mere 2.4% (17) of the over 700 polygons, or designated

planning areas, in Bowmantown Public School System (BPSS). Each of these polygons was directly impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. To examine these areas of activity more fully, I sorted the polygons, and their respective participation information, by the proposed school transfers to determine if any patterns arose. This alternative format, shown in Table 21, revealed that two school transfers stood out compared to others. These were the proposed transfer of students from MS54 to MS02 and the proposed transfer of students from HS09 to HS41. The proposed middle school transfer garnered 17.1% (429) of all submitted testimony. The proposed high school transfer of students was associated with 24.8% (621) of all testimony. In aggregate, the testimonies connected to these proposed transfers exclusively opposed the moves and represented 41.9% (1,050) of all testimony filed in the six-week period between the time the Superintendent released the proposal until the school board began its public deliberations.

Table 21

Proposed School Transfers and Testimony Submissions for Selected Polygons

Proposed School Transfer	Included Polygons	Submitted Testimonies	Percent of Total	Testimonies in Support	Testimonies in Opposition
ES139=>ES62	1256	173	7.0%	0	173
ES273=>ES47	64, 129,	108	4.3%	1	107
ES45=>ES56	159	30	1.2%	1	29
ES26=>ES213	232	38	1.5%	0	38
MS54=>MS02	28, 186, 1028, 1185, 1186, 2028	429	17.1%	0	429
MS91=>MS62	159	30	1.2%	1	29
MS03=>MS75	232	38	1.5%	0	38
HS56=>HS09	64, 129,	108	4.3%	1	107
HS55=>HS65	159,	30	1.2%	1	29
HS09=>HS41	176, 183, 1183, 1185, 1200, 2176, 3176	621	24.8%	0	621
HS65=>HS76	232	38	1.5%	0	38

This alternative presentation reveals another intriguing pattern among the home locations for participants in the dominant narrative. The polygons at the epicenter of activity are, in fact, clustered in very close geographic proximity to one another. The polygon naming system employed by BPSS planning staff was described in detail in chapter 3. It is based on an original set of 300 polygons numbered sequentially and designated about 20 years ago. Subsequent population growth resulted in subdividing these original polygons. The contemporary set of polygons provides insight into growth patterns since subdivided polygons share a common base polygon number. With this in mind, I sorted the polygons associated with the proposed MS54 and HS09 transfers. Table 22 shows this alternative display.

For the proposed transfer of students from MS54 to MS02, five of the six polygons show historical relatedness. Polygons 28, 1028, and 2028 were derived through historical subdivision of the originally designated polygon 28 and account for 6.1% (152) of all testimony. Polygons 186 and 1186 were derived through historical subdivision of the originally designated polygon 186 and account for 9.0% (200) of all testimony.

For the proposed transfer from HS09 to HS41, five polygons show historical relatedness. Polygons 176, 2176, and 3176 were derived through historical subdivision of the originally designated polygon 176 and account for 16.6% (417) of all testimony. Polygons 183 and 1183 were derived through historical subdivision of the originally designated polygon 183 and account for 2.1% of all testimony.

It is also notable that polygon 1185 was included in both of the proposed school transfers. Residents of 1185 submitted a total of 77 testimonies in opposition to the proposal. Views on the

two proposed transfers are not distinguished in this sum of testimony. The alternative display helps to clarify a literal geographic epicenter for much of the dominant narrative.

Table 22

Testimonies by Historically Related Polygons and Proposed School Transfers

School Transfer	Reported Home Polygons			Submitted Testimonies	Percent of Total
MS54=> MS02	28	1028	2028	152	6.1%
	186	1186		200	9.0%
	1185			77	3.1%
HS09=>HS41	176	2176	3176	417	16.6%
	183	1183		52	2.1%
	1185			77	3.1%
	1200			75	3.0%

Note: Polygon 1185 was included in both proposed school transfers. The number of reported testimonies for polygon 1185 is a sum of all testimonies submitted by people identifying themselves as residents of the polygon. Individuals' stances on the two transfers are not differentiated.

Detailed contouring of the geographical relatedness among participants in community discourse related to school redistricting on the scale of the BPSS case is novel. Efforts to analyze parental reactions towards redistricting in the literature either focused to small scale redistricting or examined response absent specific geographical information (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Lareau et al., 2018; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016; Wells et al., 2017). The BPSS case stands apart in that reassignment of students swept across the entire district and included proposed transfer of nearly 12% of all students. Though response arose from many corners of the system, a distinct concentration of energy is evident.

Inconvenient and Unfair

Messaging included in the dominant narrative explicitly opposed the proposal. Rationale showed variation among individuals, but distinct themes related to negative circumstances for impacted students, families, and the community prevailed. Seldom was there reference to poorer educational opportunities due to the proposed transfers. Testifiers did not seem to believe schools differed in quality. They acknowledged differential performance in schools in terms of student

performance on measures such as state assessments, but they did not explicitly state their own children would receive a substandard education if the proposal were to be approved. Instead, they argued the prospective changes would be unsafe and inconvenient. Factors such as physical and mental health, time, dreams, memories, and teacher recommendations were cited to be interrupted by the proposed transfers. Testifiers spoke in terms of loss of property. Words such as “steal” or “take away” arose. School assignment was seen as a commodity paid for through high mortgage rates, hard work, long commutes, and hefty tax payments.

Belief that the processes used to develop the proposal were unfair also arose in the dominant narrative. Charges of corruption and undemocratic representation were raised. Testifiers also leveraged storytelling to elevate their messaging. They revealed sensitive information about individual needs and experiences that included detailed description of suicide ideation to elicit empathy for their perspectives. Their tales individualized and humanized their resistance.

Arguments based in meritocracy, property, and storytelling were not unprecedented or unexpected (Lareau et al., 2018; Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016; Zirkel & Pollack, 2016). Parents, especially those with professional credentials, recognize the value of an exclusive education (Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Wells et al., 2017). They will seek out classes and schools that carry panache. They view exclusivity in schools as a positive sign (Wells et al., 2017).

Race

Race was very seldom explicitly referenced in the dominant narrative. Yet, the circumstances of the proposed school transfers alongside discursive analysis of testimonies suggests race was a significant factor in the community’s response.

As noted earlier in the discussion, two prospective school transfers attracted a disproportionate level of attention from community members. These were the transfer of students from MS54 to MS02 and from HS09 to HS41. An examination of the student enrollment demographics in these schools reveals notable distinctions. Table 23 displays the student racial and ethnic demographics reported by BPSS for MS54 and HS09 in 2019. Table 24 displays this information for MS02 and HS41.

Both MS54 and HS09 enrolled majority student populations identifying as white and Asian in 2019. MS02 and HS41, on the other hand, enrolled a majority of students who identified as Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino in 2019. Students who might transfer between the sets of schools would likely find themselves in learning environments of higher racial heterogeneity.

Table 23

Student Demographics in MS54 and HS09 in 2019

School	School Year 2019				
	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White
MS54	39%	6%	<5%	5%	46%
HS09	33%	6%	4%	7%	50%

Table 24

Student Demographics in MS02 and HS41 in 2019

School	School Year 2019				
	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White
MS02	9%	49%	15%	7%	21%
HS41	7%	44%	15%	7%	27%

The racial and ethnic homogeneity of the schools is not surprising. BPSS assigns students to schools in neighborhood cohorts. Examination of reported student demographics in the

neighborhoods at the epicenter of the dominant narrative exemplify this residential, racial homogeneity. Table 25 displays the racial and ethnic demographic information for students reported to reside in these polygons. The students in these neighborhoods identify predominantly as white and Asian. The number of students at each level identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, or two or more races was suppressed by BPSS since there were fewer than 10 students in each group.

Table 25

Racial and Ethnic Demographics by School Level for Selected Polygons

Polygon	2018-19 Enrolled Students (sum of all levels)	Asian			Black/African American			Hispanic/Latino			Two or More Races			White		
<i>School Levels</i>		<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>ES</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>HS</i>
28	129	21	13	21	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13	26
176	210	51	31	43	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12	*	*
183	71	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	16	12	*
186	106	19	22	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	*	20
1028	176	32	10	25	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13	23	45
1183	89	*	*	10	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	16	12	15
1185	70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12	11	10
1186	202	53	35	19	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	26	23	25
1200	81	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	19	*	16
2028	63	*	*	10	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	11
2176	43	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12
3176	122	25	24	21	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13

Racial and ethnic isolation in neighborhoods and schools is common (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Irving, 2014; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016; Siegel-Hawley, 2013; Wells et al., 2017). Americans espouse support and desire for diversity, but the reality evident through the patterns of our lives indicates otherwise (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). These contrasting demographics were seldom mentioned in testimony. This is also unsurprising. Americans tend away from talk about race (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003). Thus, though circumstantial, the evidence suggests race played a role in the community's dominant narrative in opposition to the Superintendent's redistricting proposal.

The Counternarrative

A counternarrative articulating at least tempered support for the redistricting proposal arose from approximately 6% of community participants. The following sections provide contextualization and further analysis of this lower amplitude messaging.

Geographical Dispersion

In contrast to the dominant narrative, participants in the counternarrative did not show geographical concentration. In fact, the distribution across a wide number of neighborhoods in Bowmantown is remarkable. Statements of support arose from residents identifying as residents in 47 polygons, testimonies were singular or in very small clusters. The largest number of supporting statements attributable to single polygon is seven from polygon 127.

Tempered Support

Though the counternarrative comprised a smaller and quieter component to the community discourse, its presence did not go unnoticed. Participants in the counternarrative offered words of support for the initiative, but people were not naïve. They recognized aloud that the changes, if implemented, would place burdens on everyone. Travel patterns would change; people would find themselves forging new relationships. Yet, testifiers emphasized, through stories of experience as well as citation of empirical research, that benefits would derive from increasing diversity in schools and classrooms. Supporters, unsurprisingly, applied interest convergence as a rhetorical tool in their messages. Interest convergence is a hallmark strategy recognized by Critical Race Theorists as a method to reify racial equity (Bell, 1992, 1980; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Race

Explicit reference to racial equity and the role race plays in Americans' lives was more evident in the counternarrative when compared to the dominant. Testimony pointed to historical practices that resulted in segregated housing patterns. Individuals and groups cited recurrent and systemic practices that continued to perpetuate racial discrimination in education and the economy.

Application of a CRT lens predicts this centering of systemic racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). CRT exposes the normalization and commoditization of the racial category "white" in American society. Everyday practices advantage people who identify in this group over people who identify in other groups regularly. Typically, the advantaging goes unnoticed by those who reap it. It is painfully evident to those who do not (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Rosiek & Kinslow, 2016). What is surprising is the explicit articulation and foregrounding of race. In schools, when racial inequity is detected by students identifying as Black, they and, by extension their families, are hesitant to speak out due to concern over being seen as irrational (Chapman, 2013; Lareau et al., 2018; Pollack & Zirkel, 2013; Siegel-Hawley, 2013). The silence only serves to tilt the uneven racial playing field of America further.

The Outcome

This project centered on analyzing and understanding the community response during the finite, six-week period from late August to mid-October of 2019. I purposefully did not include community statements submitted after school board deliberations opened since the deliberations introduced modifications and brought community comment specific to the swiftly changing landscape. Yet, an examination of the outcome following the Board's action in November is important to contextualize and more fully understand the community response. The following

section provides an overview of the outcome with a particular emphasis on the neighborhoods and schools where community outcry was greatest.

In November 2019, the school board rendered its final approval of redistricting in Bowmantown. In the end, approximately 5,000 students across the large district were assigned to attend different schools in the 2020 school year. Within the 17 polygons where over half of all testimonies originated, some proposed school transfers proceeded. Others were canceled or modified. Table 26 summarizes both the proposed and approved school transfers for each of these neighborhoods. In the Superintendent’s proposal, there were twenty-five school transfers impacting these neighborhoods. The school board voted to approve a total of seven transfers. Of these seven, only four were consistent with the Superintendent’s proposed transfers. There were zero transfers of students residing in these neighborhoods to either MS02 or HS41. Table 26 displays this information.

Table 26

Proposed and Approved School Assignment Changes for Selected Neighborhoods

Polygon	Proposed Transfers			Approved Transfers		
	ES From=>To	MS From=>To	HS From=> To	ES From=>To	MS From=>To	HS From=> To
28	ES273=>ES47	MS54=>MS02		No Change	No Change	
64	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS59
129	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS59
159	ES45=>ES56	MS91=>MS62	HS55=>HS65	ES45=>ES56	MS91=>MS 62	No change
176			HS09=>HS41			No change
183			HS09=>HS41			No change
186	ES26=>ES213	MS54=>MS02		No change	No change	
232		MS03=>MS75	HS65=>HS76		No change	No change
1028		MS54=>MS02			No change	
1183			HS09=>HS41			HS09=>HS76
1185		MS54=>MS02	HS09=>HS41		No change	No change
1186		MS54=>MS02			No change	
1200			HS09=>HS41	No change		No change
1256	ES139=>ES62					
2028		MS54=>MS02			No change	
2176			HS09=>HS41			No change
3176	ES273=>ES47		HS09=>HS41	No change		No change

Note: Information for polygons proposed for transfer to MS02 and MS41 are shown in bold font.

An additional consequence of the Board's decision centers on the resultant racial and ethnic makeup of schools. An examination of student demographics as reported by BPSS in 2021 for the four schools garnering the greatest community attention in the fall of 2019 deserves consideration. Table 27 displays the demographic composition by student racial and ethnic groups in MS54 and HS09 in 2019 and 2021. Table 28 displays the demographic composition by student racial and ethnic groups in MS02 and HS41 in 2019 and 2021.

In MS54, the percentage of students identifying as Asian increased by 8% between 2019 and 2021. The percentage of students identifying as Black also increased, but by only 5%. The school saw a 12% decrease in students identifying as white across the two years. Essentially no change in the percentage of students identifying in the group Two or more races occurred.

At the high school level, HS09 showed an increase in the percentage of students identifying as Asian between 2019 and 2021. There was also a 4% increase in the enrollment of students identifying as Black/African American, and a 2% increase in students identifying as Hispanic/Latino. There were decreases in the percentages of students identifying as two or more races (2% decrease) and white (9% decrease).

In MS02, the proportion of overall enrollment with respect to student groups remained relatively stable from 2019 to 2021. The greatest change was a decrease in white student enrollment by 4%. Asian student enrollment decreased by 2%, and Black student enrollment decreased by 1%. Enrollment of students identifying as Hispanic/Latino and Two or more races increased by 4% and 2% respectively.

In HS41, the percentage of students identifying as Asian remained constant. The percentage of students identifying as Black/African American increased by 2%. The percentage

of students in the Hispanic/Latino and two or more race groups remained essentially constant. The percentage of students identifying as white decreased 3%.

As in 2019, the majority of students in MS54 and HS09 identified in the white and Asian student groups in 2021. MS54 enrollment was 85% white and Asian in 2019. Its enrollment of white and Asian students decreased by 4% to be 81% in 2021. HS09 enrolled students identifying as white and Asian at 83% in 2019. The enrollment of students in these groups decreased slightly to 79% in 2021.

Enrollment of students in these demographic groups was very different in MS02 and HS41. Students identifying in the white and Asian groups stood at 30% in MS02 in 2019. This decreased by 6% to stand at 24% of the enrollment in 2021. In HS41, the percentage of students identifying in the white and Asian groups stayed constant at 34% between 2019 and 2021. In short, the racial and ethnic diversities of these four schools remained relatively unchanged. *Status quo* remained.

Table 27*Enrollment by Student Groups in MS54 and HS09 in 2019 and 2021*

School	School Year 2019					School Year 2021				
	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White
MS54	39%	6%	<5%	5%	46%	47%	11%	<5%	<5%	34%
HS09	33%	6%	4%	7%	50%	38%	10%	6%	5%	41%

Table 28*Enrollment by Student Groups in MS02 and HS41 in 2019 and 2021*

School	School Year 2019					School Year 2021				
	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or more races	White
MS02	9%	49%	15%	7%	21%	7%	48%	19%	9%	17%
HS41	7%	44%	15%	7%	27%	7%	46%	16%	7%	24%

Implications for Practice

The case of Bowmantown's comprehensive redistricting is far too complex to consider exhaustively in a single study. Drilling deeply into discrete aspects, however, provides important insight for equity centered and race conscious leaders. The following section examines implications for practice based upon the areas I probed.

The Silent Narrative

Though the activity emanating from the community related to the Superintendent's redistricting proposal was intense during fall of 2019, it must be contextualized within the sweeping nature of the proposal and the size of the Bowmantown community. Bowmantown is home to some 323,000 people. Its schools serve upwards of 50,000 students. The proposal suggested over 7,000 student transfers. Though the 2,508 testimonies submitted in response from community members were impassioned, a third and as yet unacknowledged narrative must be considered. This third narrative is the silent narrative. It is the narrative in which the vast majority of Bowmantown residents participated. It is undoubtedly a multi-pronged narrative, and it must not be ignored. In fact, its silence causes it to resonate loudly.

Throughout my research effort, I periodically found myself interacting with community members who may or may not have filed testimony. At one point, I had a profound though singular experience to meet "Mia," a young adult who graduated from HS41 in recent years. "Mia" spoke highly of her educational experience in BPSS and expressed ambitious plans for further education in coming years. I asked "Mia" whether she had felt any impact from the redistricting and whether she had an opinion about the manner in which the process played out. "Mia" lived with her mother and younger siblings and fulfilled a number of familial responsibilities regarding the care of the younger children. For example, she provided

transportation and after school supervision. She also helped supervise a younger cousin who, due to the redistricting, no longer attended the same school as “Mia’s” siblings.

“Mia” described how her mother and she coordinated schedules to ensure the younger children were properly supervised. Sometimes, though, when “Mia” looked after her cousin, she encountered challenges with the differential dismissal times of the two schools. She recognized how fortunate her family was to have flexibility among the adults to care for the younger children in the new context. This was a luxury she recognized did not ring true with everyone in the community.

“Mia” confirmed that neither she nor her mother participated in the public comment phase during the fall of 2019, but they followed the developments closely. In our conversation, we wondered why some community members may not have participated. She cited two possible reasons: perceived disenfranchisement and uncertainty regarding the processes. Probing more deeply into these reasons exceeded the scope of the project, but these ideas continue to cause me pause.

As leaders, we must be certain that when we seek input from those we serve, we genuinely open ourselves to hear them. Avenues for participation are like wide boulevards to many people. Those who hold capital may find themselves well-positioned to gather information, network, and deliver their input efficiently and effectively. This was true for many of the community participants in Bowmantown. Other people, however, may find these avenues for participation uneven, narrow, or even impassable. The fact that they cannot easily navigate the path does not negate the importance of their participation. It does, however, mean that as leaders, we must commit to meeting them on this proverbial road. It means we must ensure alternative and welcoming paths are open, accessible, and known.

My study revealed that BPSS opened several communication avenues for community members. These included surveys that preceded the proposal as well as acceptance of written and oral comment in response to the proposal. I cannot help but question which strategies could be enhanced to make these avenues more accessible and inviting so that community members like “Mia” are not continually left reacting but can participate to steer the decisions for the community. It might be easiest to assume the silence from the vast majority of Bowmantown residents indicated acquiescence or apathy. Yet, “Mia’s” comments suggest something quite different.

Race

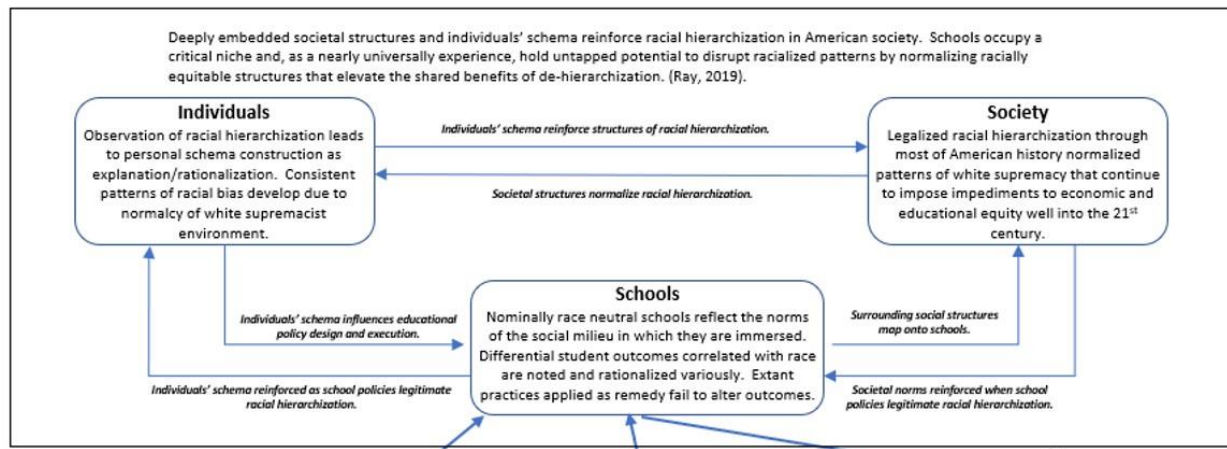
Despite popular claims, America is not post-racial (Anderson, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Kendi, 2019). Though many factors influence an individual’s life trajectory, deeply embedded structures in American society have established and perpetuate a hierarchy based on skin color. As described earlier in this chapter, these structures have caused and continue to cause differential life experiences for Black and white America. Each of us develops explanatory schema in response to our life experiences. When it comes to the cognitive dissonance of race, many of us grow comfortable accepting the white supremacist conditions around us. We become conditioned to white supremacy. We fail to recognize needed action to disassemble or disrupt the racialized structures that seeded our beliefs in the first place. Our individual perspectives are formed by the social structures. Our individual perspectives then reinforce those structures.

Public schools occupy an important position between the individual and society with the prospect to interrupt the cycle of racism. Yet, schools are not empowered to interrupt this cycle (Ancheta, 2008; Monroe, 2008). Events of 2021 have further complicated the issue. Calls to explicitly separate the imperative of racial equity from the public school experience through the

masking of structural racism and the whitewashing of history have risen with a vengeance. Teachers and principals find themselves regularly under fire for supporting racial justice efforts (Schwartz, 2021). Nonetheless, it remains incumbent upon educational leaders to understand the position schools occupy and be ready to act. Afterall, public education is a nearly universal experience; the world one comes to know through education has lasting significance. If that experience reifies racial equity for students, evidence shows those students develop higher levels of critical thinking, act with greater empathy, and prioritize social justice. Conversely, if students experience schools where racial hierarchization is normalized, students may fail to acquire the sensitivity to social justice needed to break the juggernaut of white supremacy continuing to permeate American society. Thus, purposeful design of racially equitable schools offers people from all walks of life access to experiences that can erode and potentially eradicate patterns of racial hierarchization. In other words, schools have the potential to disrupt the cycle of racial hierarchy in American by opening everyone's eyes to structural origins of racial hierarchy and the benefits of its elimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Juvonen et al., 2006, 2018; Kahlenberg et al., 2019a, 2019b). Figure 5, excerpted from my conceptual framework, depicts this cycle.

Figure 5

Schools as Meta-Level Mediators of Racial Hierarchization



Systemic racism is deeply complex. It is a tangle of tightly knotted strands. Dismantling such a complex web requires one to work at numerous strands simultaneously. Dismantling may also mean that some strands grow tighter before they are loosened. As leaders, we must be ready for this tightening. We must also encourage concerted and courageous effort towards the untangling.

Recommendations for Future Research

The issues evident in the Bowmantown redistricting effort are ripe for future investigation. My research only scratched the surface by offering description of who participated and what they said at the time. Given the passage of time and the attention paid to race in America since the testimonies were filed in 2019, an in depth follow up with individuals who submitted testimony would be rich. The latent messaging behind the testimonies is challenging to discern. Interviews to probe people's thinking at the time of filing would greatly clarify the role race may have played. Additionally, investigation into whether people's ideas have changed in the interim may prove insightful to identify trends and opportunities to break the racialization cycle in America.

School system leaders' perceptions and understandings also provide an area for deeper examination. The volume of community input was high. Based on analysis of the outcome related to MS54 and HS09, it appears public input impacted decision making. Understanding how the leaders made sense of what they heard and saw is both interesting and potentially impactful. How did they discern the patterns of participation and narrative? Such understanding could offer insight into improving processes to enhance participation and transparency.

A third area of research lies in understanding the consequences of the case. Examination of educational outcomes for schools and student groups may reveal patterns influenced by school transfers. Viewing these through the lens of racial heterogeneity could add substantially to the body of research regarding diversity and student educational experiences.

Lastly, the silent narrative is an area we must probe. Whether nonparticipation resulted from perceived disenfranchisement, ignorance regarding processes, or apathy matters. Each of these rationales brings its own set of questions and solutions. None can be responsibly ignored.

Conclusion

The significance of this study that examined the community's response to an equity-centered education initiative is far reaching. The data demonstrated that our society has much left to do before we can call ourselves post-racial. Americans live in racial isolation. That isolation shapes our perceptions of "normal." Our expressed commitment to equity is important, but we must "walk this talk." Racially equitable leadership requires courage.

The story about school redistricting in Bowmantown is not a story that pits "good" people against "bad" people. It should not be a story that vilifies. Nor should it be a story that goes without critique. The response of community members in Bowmantown are far from unique.

They have happened before, and they will happen again if not probed for understanding. Failed acknowledgement only serves to perpetuate the cycle.

Elizabeth Warren, Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, espouses need for “big structural changes” in America to make circumstances more equitable for all Americans (Warren, 2021). She argues that absent profound alterations to policies and practices in America, people’s convictions, no matter how strong or clear, will be nothing more than rhetoric. The comprehensive overhaul of school assignments was, I believe, a good example of an attempt at “big structural change” for Bowmantown. The proposal held potential to break established patterns of homogeneous groupings of young people. It offered opportunity for students and families to build relationships with people they might not encounter otherwise. However, structural change, regardless of the perceived or potential benefits, will not materialize without significant effort.

Leaders must be simultaneously strategic and compassionate. We must ready both ourselves and those we lead for change. We must anticipate and prepare for resistance. We cannot make assumptions. The literature is clear. Exposing students to people of varying life experiences provides benefit for all. Our ideas are shaped by our environment and our experiences. The case of redistricting in Bowmantown offers important insights for educational leaders who desire to nurture environments and provide experiences that open young people’s eyes to different possibilities than those they already know.

Race in America is holding us prisoner. I am reminded of the opening scene to the 1975 comedic caper *The Return of the Pink Panther*. The “Pink Panther” diamond is heavily protected behind a protective barrier comprised of crisscrossed, unseen laser beams. An obstruction to break the beams would alert the guards. To navigate the maze, the burglar applies a light aerosol

to the space surrounding the diamond's display case. The laser light comes into view. The previously invisible barrier becomes visible.

Race in America feels like this invisible barrier. We know it is present. We know it hems us into certain actions and limited paths. Some of us, who find our paths clear, discourage against the proverbial application of the aerosol. Perhaps we fear that making pathways navigable to all will make our pathways less so. McGhee (2021) eloquently warns against this zero sum mindset.

The Bowmantown redistricting case was not about race, and yet, it was. Little in America is independent from race. The community response in Bowmantown fulfills the role of the burglar's aerosol. We must see beams. We must help others see the beams. We must free ourselves from the virtual shackles due to the beams.

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Appendix A Participants

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
1	OS-A-001	65	Oppose
2	OS-A-002	1159	Oppose
3	OS-A-003	2154	Oppose
4	OP-A-001	2056	Support
5	OP-A-002	2056	Support
6	OP-A-003	3056	Support
7	OP-A-004	151	Oppose
8	OO-A-001	65	Oppose
9	OO-A-002	65	Oppose
10	OP-A-005	159	Oppose
11	OP-A-006	159	Oppose
12	OP-A-007	1113	Support
13	OP-A-008	undisclosed	Oppose
14	OO-A-003	undisclosed	Oppose
15	OP-A-009	1113	Support
16	OP-A-010	undisclosed	Support
17	OO-A-004	undisclosed	Support
18	OP-A-011	2113	Support
19	OP-A-012	undisclosed	Support
20	OP-A-013	undisclosed	Support
21	OP-A-014	1159	Oppose
22	OP-A-015	undisclosed	Support
23	OO-A-005	151	Support
24	OP-A-016	1087	Support
25	OP-A-017	2074	Oppose
26	OO-A-006	undisclosed	Support
27	OP-A-018	1113	Support
28	OP-A-019	1159	Support
29	OP-A-020	2040	Support
30	OP-A-021	undisclosed	Support
31	OP-A-022	151	Oppose
32	OS-B-001	1268	Support
33	OS-B-002	127	Support
34	OP-B-001	1129	Oppose
35	OP-B-002	1133	Oppose
36	OP-B-003	1146	Oppose
37	OP-B-004	16	Oppose
38	OP-B-005	129	Oppose
39	OP-B-006	25	Oppose
40	OO-B-001	1144	Support
41	OO-B-002	2137	Support
42	OO-B-003	undisclosed	Support
43	OO-B-004	3143	Support
44	OO-B-005	177	Support
45	OP-B-007	64	Support
46	OP-B-008	1064	Oppose
47	OP-B-009	undisclosed	Oppose
48	OP-B-010	79	Oppose

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
49	OP-B-011	48	Support
50	OP-B-012	undisclosed	Support
51	OP-B-013	15	Oppose
52	OP-B-014	2146	Support
53	OP-B-015	undisclosed	Support
54	OO-B-006	undisclosed	Support
55	OP-B-016	1268	Support
56	OP-B-017	1266	Support
57	OP-B-018	2131	Oppose
58	OO-B-007	undisclosed	Oppose
59	OP-B-019	131	Support
60	OP-B-020	133	Support
61	OS-C-001	1256	Oppose
62	OS-C-002	1256	Oppose
63	OS-C-003	232	Oppose
64	OS-C-004	176	Oppose
65	OS-C-005	3176	Oppose
66	OS-C-006	1186	Oppose
67	OS-C-007	3176	Oppose
68	OS-C-008	176	Oppose
69	OS-C-009	1186	Oppose
70	OS-C-010	232	Oppose
71	OS-C-011	232	Oppose
72	OS-C-012	176	Oppose
73	OS-C-013	1181	Oppose
74	OS-C-014	2183	Oppose
75	OS-C-015	undisclosed	Oppose
76	OS-C-016	1028	Oppose
77	OS-C-017	1183	Oppose
78	OS-C-018	undisclosed	Support
79	OO-C-001	1186	Oppose
80	OO-D-001	1028	Oppose
81	OP-D-001	2166	Oppose
82	OP-D-002	1185	Oppose
83	OP-D-003	179/1179	Oppose
84	OP-D-004	185	Oppose
85	OP-D-005	232	Oppose
86	OP-D-006	232	Oppose
87	OP-D-007	232	Oppose
88	OP-D-008	183	Oppose
89	OP-D-009	232	Oppose
90	OP-D-010	1199	Oppose
91	OP-D-011	1199	Oppose
92	OP-D-012	1200	Oppose
93	OP-D-013	1186	Oppose
94	OP-D-014	176	Oppose
95	OP-D-015	1200	Oppose
96	OP-D-016	28	Oppose
97	OP-E-001	1259	Oppose
98	OP-E-002	176	Oppose
99	OP-E-003	1186	Oppose
100	OP-E-004	176	Oppose

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
101	OP-E-005	2205	Oppose
102	OP-E-006	1157	Oppose
103	OP-E-007	3176	Oppose
104	OP-E-008	232	Oppose
105	OP-E-009	168	Oppose
106	OP-E-010	1256	Oppose
107	OP-E-011	1186	Oppose
108	OO-E-001	176	Oppose
109	OP-E-012	1192	Support
110	OP-E-013	1256	Oppose
111	OP-E-014	undisclosed	Oppose
112	OP-E-015	176	Oppose
113	OP-F-001	undisclosed	Oppose
114	OP-F-002	304	Oppose
115	OP-F-003	304	Oppose
116	OP-F-004	176	Oppose
117	OP-F-005	183	Oppose
118	OP-F-006	176	Oppose
119	OP-F-007	1028	Oppose
120	OP-F-008	2183	Oppose
121	OO-F-001	157	Oppose
122	OP-F-009	181	Oppose
123	OP-F-010	181	Oppose
124	OP-F-011	259	Support
125	OP-F-012	232	Oppose
126	OP-F-013	1157	Oppose
127	OP-F-014	1028	Oppose
128	OP-F-015	1194	Oppose
129	OP-F-016	181	Oppose
130	OP-F-017	2183	Oppose
131	OP-F-018	7169	Oppose
132	OP-G-001	224	Oppose
133	OP-G-002	180	Oppose
134	OP-G-003	undisclosed	Support
135	OP-G-004	undisclosed	Support
136	OP-G-005	undisclosed	Support
137	OP-G-006	176	Oppose
138	OP-G-007	1186	Oppose
139	OP-G-008	176	Oppose
140	OP-G-009	3176	Oppose
141	OP-G-010	1185	Oppose
142	OP-G-011	1185	Oppose
143	OP-G-012	1183	Oppose
144	OP-G-013	3176	Oppose
145	WP-A-001	undisclosed	Support
146	WP-A-002	undisclosed	Support
147	WP-A-003	undisclosed	Support
148	WO-A-001	undisclosed	Support
149	WP-A-004	undisclosed	Support
150	WO-A-002	2176	Oppose
151	WO-A-003	1028	Oppose
152	WO-B-001	undisclosed	Support

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
153	WP-B-001	176	Oppose
154	WO-B-002	undisclosed	Support
155	WP-B-002	176	Oppose
156	WP-B-003	176	Oppose
157	WO-B-003	undisclosed	Oppose
158	WP-D-001	28	Oppose
159	WP-D-002	64	Oppose
160	WP-D-003	1066	Oppose
161	WS-D-001	undisclosed	Oppose
162	WP-D-004	1186	Oppose
163	WP-E-001	1028	Oppose
164	WP-E-002	176	Oppose
165	WS-E-001	176	Oppose
166	WP-E-003	186	Oppose
167	WP-E-004	1183	Oppose
168	WP-E-005	176	Oppose
169	WS-E-002	186	Oppose
170	WP-E-006	176	Oppose
171	WS-E-003	176	Oppose
172	WP-E-007	176	Oppose
173	WP-E-008	176	Oppose
174	WP-E-009	176	Oppose
175	WS-E-004	176	Oppose
176	WP-E-010	176	Oppose
177	WS-E-004	176	Oppose
178	WP-E-011	176	Oppose
179	WP-E-012	1176	Oppose
180	WP-E-013	176	Oppose
181	WS-F-001	176	Oppose
182	WP-F-001	176	Oppose
183	WP-F-002	undisclosed	Support
184	WP-F-003	176	Oppose
185	WP-F-004	1185	Oppose
186	WP-F-005	183	Oppose
187	WP-F-006	187	Oppose
188	WP-F-007	176	Oppose
189	WP-F-008	176	Oppose
190	WP-F-009	176	Oppose
191	WO-F-001	176	Oppose
192	WP-F-010	176	Oppose
193	WP-F-011	176	Oppose
194	WP-F-012	64	Oppose
195	WP-F-013	176	Oppose
196	WS-F-002	undisclosed	Oppose
197	WP-G-001	176	Oppose
198	WP-G-002	1256	Oppose
199	WO-G-001	undisclosed	Support
200	WP-G-003	176	Oppose
201	WP-G-004	176	Oppose
202	WP-H-001	186	Oppose
203	WP-I-001	undisclosed	Support
204	WS-I-001	1185	Oppose

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
205	WO-J-001	undisclosed	Oppose
206	WP-J-001	1200	Oppose
207	WP-J-002	1200	Oppose
208	WP-J-003	129	Oppose
209	WO-J-002	undisclosed	Support
210	WO-J-003	undisclosed	Oppose
211	WP-K-001	176	Oppose
212	WO-K-001	1129	Oppose
213	WO-K-002	undisclosed	Support
214	WP-K-002	2028	Oppose
215	WP-K-003	1183	Oppose
216	WO-K-003	undisclosed	Oppose
217	WO-K-004	undisclosed	Oppose
218	WO-K-005	undisclosed	Oppose
219	WP-L-001	28	Oppose
220	WO-L-001	2174	Support
221	WP-L-002	2150	Support
222	WP-L-003	3176	Oppose
223	WP-L-004	159	Support
224	WO-L-002	148	Support
225	WP-L-005	186	Oppose
226	WP-L-006	undisclosed	Support
227	WP-L-007	1058	Oppose
228	WP-M-001	1256	Oppose
229	WP-M-002	3176	Oppose
230	WO-M-001	undisclosed	Support
231	WP-M-003	1019	Oppose
232	WO-M-002	2131	Oppose
233	WP-M-004	undisclosed	Support
234	WP-N-001	1200	Oppose
235	WO-N-001	undisclosed	Support
236	WP-N-002	2028	Oppose
237	WO-N-002	149	Support
238	WP-N-003	1183	Oppose
239	WO-N-003	undisclosed	Support
240	WP-O-001	1068	Support
241	WP-O-002	64	Oppose
242	WP-P-001	1200	Oppose
243	WP-P-002	undisclosed	Oppose
244	WP-P-003	1187	Oppose
245	WO-P-001	undisclosed	Oppose
246	WP-Q-001	2148	Support
247	WP-Q-002	undisclosed	Oppose
248	WO-Q-001	undisclosed	Oppose
249	WP-Q-003	1185	Oppose
250	WO-Q-002	undisclosed	Support
251	WO-Q-003	143	Support
252	WP-R-001	1181	Oppose
253	WO-R-001	undisclosed	Support
254	WO-R-002	undisclosed	Oppose
255	WP-S-001	25	Oppose
256	WP-S-002	3113	Support

Participant number	Pseudonym	Polygon	Stance
257	WP-S-003	3176	Oppose
258	WP-S-004	undisclosed	Support
259	WO-T-001	undisclosed	Oppose
260	WP-T-001	140	Support
261	WO-T-002	undisclosed	Support
262	WP-T-002	1079	Support
263	WP-T-003	1033	Support
264	WO-T-003	1113	Support
265	WP-T-004	180	Oppose
266	WP-T-005	1259	Support
267	WS-T-001	176	Oppose
268	WO-T-004	118	Support
269	WP-T-006	2002	Support
270	WP-T-007	undisclosed	Support
271	WP-T-008	1035	Support
272	WP-T-009	2143	Support
273	WP-T-010	undisclosed	Support
274	WP-T-011	150	Support
275	WP-T-012	1137	Support
276	WP-U-001	undisclosed	Support
277	WP-U-002	undisclosed	Support
278	WS-U-001	1199	Oppose
279	WP-U-003	1185	Oppose
280	WO-U-001	141	Support
281	WO-U-002	undisclosed	Support
282	WP-U-004	3131	Support
283	WP-U-005	17	Support
284	WP-U-006	undisclosed	Support
285	WO-U-003	undisclosed	Support
286	WP-U-007	2069	Support
287	WS-U-002	176	Oppose
288	WP-U-008	176	Oppose
289	WO-U-004	undisclosed	Support
290	WO-U-005	undisclosed	Support
291	WO-U-006	undisclosed	Support
292	WP-U-009	139	Support
293	WO-U-007	undisclosed	Support
294	WO-U-008	undisclosed	Support
295	WO-U-009	undisclosed	Support
296	WO-U-010	1056	Support
297	WP-U-010	undisclosed	Support
298	WS-V-001	1186	Oppose
299	WP-V-001	308	Support
300	WP-V-002	1100	Oppose
301	WO-V-001	undisclosed	Oppose
302	WO-V-002	undisclosed	Support

Appendix B

Three Tier Code Map for Research Question 1

RQ1: Who are the community members who publicly voiced their opinions on the proposed redistricting plan?		
Surface Analysis (Frequency)	Thematic Categorization	Interpretation
Polygon Number (2058)	Home location	Testifiers indicated homes located in 227 distinct polygons. Over half of all testimonies originated from 17 polygons.
Parent (1926) Student (225) Advocacy Group/Other (357)	Role within the school community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents • Students • Other 	Parents submitted the bulk of the testimonies. Community members (advocacy, grandparents, graduates, etc.) comprised the second largest categories. Students currently enrolled in schools comprised the third category.
School system-provided enrollment, demographic, and school assignment data by polygon	Projected enrollments and reported demographics of students at each level of school within neighborhoods.	118 polygons represented in testimony were impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. Each of the 17 most active polygons was impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. Demographic data in most active polygons show families/students report race/ethnicity as white and Asian.
<p>Statement of Finding: <i>In the over 2,500 testimonies filed between late August and mid-October 2019, 77% (1,926) originated from people who identified as parents; 14.2% (357) originated from people who identified themselves as community members who were members of advocacy groups, grandparents, graduates, interested residents, among others; and 9.0% (225) originated from people who identified themselves as current students in BPSS. Geographically, testifiers' reported home locations fell in only 32% (227) of all planning polygons. Of these polygons, approximately 52% (118) were impacted by at least one proposed school transfer. Notably, some 53% (1,322) of <u>all</u> submitted testimony originated from people who identified themselves as residing in just 2.4% (17) of all the planning polygons. Each of these 17 polygons was impacted by at least one proposed school transfer, and the dominant racial and ethnic groups reported by students in these polygons were white and Asian.</i></p>		

Appendix C
Testimonial Submissions and Proposed School Transfers by Polygon

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer From=>To	Proposed Middle School Transfer From=>To	Proposed High School Transfer From=>To
5	1	0	0	1	0.04			
6	2	0	1	1	0.08			
9	1	0	1	0	0.04			
10	3	0	3	0	0.12			
11	2	0	2	0	0.08			
13	2	0	2	0	0.08		MS48=>MS11	
14	6	0	5	1	0.24		MS48=>MS11	
15	11	1	10	0	0.44		MS48=>MS11	
16	20	3	15	2	0.80	ES115=>ES125		
17	1	0	1	0	0.04			
25	8	0	8	0	0.32	ES227=>ES125	MS73=>MS13	
28	44	3	39	2	1.75		MS54=>MS02	
36	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES196=>ES65	MS62=>MS13	
38	1	0	1	0	0.04			
47	1	0	1	0	0.04			
48	3	0	3	0	0.12		MS11=>MS48	HS97=>HS56
52	2	0	2	0	0.08			HS40=>HS56
64	72	1	69	2	2.87	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
65	22	3	15	4	0.88	ES151=>ES144		
66	3	0	2	1	0.12	ES117=>ES47		
79	4	0	4	0	0.16			HS14=>HS40
80	5	0	5	0	0.20			HS14=>HS40
85	1	0	1	0	0.04			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer	Proposed Middle School Transfer	Proposed High School Transfer
						From=>To	From=>To	From=>To
86	4	1	3	0	0.16			HS98=>HS14
93	1	0	1	0	0.04			
95	1	0	1	0	0.04			
98	4	0	4	0	0.16	ES72=>ES33		
100	1	0	0	1	0.04	ES72=>ES33		
101	2	0	2	0	0.08	ES55=>ES22		
109	4	0	3	1	0.16			
115	4	0	4	0	0.16			
118	1	0	0	1	0.04			HS56=>HS09
124	2	0	2	0	0.08			
125	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS59=>HS09
127	16	3	12	1	0.64			HS56=>HS09
128	4	0	4	0	0.16			HS56=>HS09
129	36	4	30	2	1.43	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
131	2	0	2	0	0.08			
133	1	0	1	0	0.04			
134	1	0	0	1	0.04	ES117=>ES47		
135	3	0	2	1	0.12	ES47=>ES82	MS02=>MS54	HS41=>HS09
137	1	0	1	0	0.04			
139	1	0	1	0	0.04			
140	1	0	1	0	0.04			
141	2	0	0	2	0.08			
143	1	0	1	0	0.04		MS02=>MS15	
144	2	0	1	1	0.08	ES123=>ES11	MS02=>MS15	
148	1	0	0	1	0.04			
149	1	0	0	1	0.04			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer From=>To	Proposed Middle School Transfer From=>To	Proposed High School Transfer From=>To
150	2	0	2	0	0.08			
151	8	0	7	1	0.32	ES151=>ES144		
154	2	0	1	1	0.08			
157	6	0	5	1	0.24	ES56=>ES291		
159	30	10	20	0	1.20	ES45=>ES56	MS91=>MS62	HS55=>HS65
162	2	0	0	2	0.08			
166	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES283=>ES269		
168	16	0	13	3	0.64		MS03=>MS62	
174	2	0	0	2	0.08		MS02=>MS54	HS41=>HS09
176	238	31	190	17	9.49			HS09=>HS41
177	1	0	0	1	0.04			
178	6	0	6	0	0.24	ES26=>ES291		
179	10	0	10	0	0.40	ES26=>ES291		
180	6	0	6	0	0.24			HS09=>HS76
181	18	4	13	1	0.72			HS09=>HS41
182	3	0	3	0	0.12			HS09=>HS76
183	25	2	21	2	1.00			HS09=>HS41
184	1	0	1	0	0.04			
185	16	1	14	1	0.64		MS54=>MS02	
186	49	5	42	2	1.95		MS54=>MS02	
187	9	0	9	0	0.36			
188	11	0	11	0	0.44			
189	4	1	3	0	0.16			
194	1	0	0	1	0.04			
195	1	0	1	0	0.04			
197	3	0	1	2	0.12			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer From=>To	Proposed Middle School Transfer From=>To	Proposed High School Transfer From=>To
198	2	0	0	2	0.08			
200	4	0	4	0	0.16			HS09=>HS76
201	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS09=>HS76
203	2	1	1	0	0.08			HS09=>HS76
209	2	0	2	0	0.08	ES291=>ES213		
210	2	0	2	0	0.08	ES291=>ES213		
214	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS91=>HS65
220	1	1	0	0	0.04			
223	3	0	3	0	0.12			
224	2	0	2	0	0.08			
225	1	0	1	0	0.04			
229	2	0	2	0	0.08			
231	2	0	2	0	0.08	ES26=>ES213	MS03=>MS75	HS65=>HS76
232	38	13	25	0	1.51	ES26=>ES213	MS03=>MS75	HS65=>HS76
256	3	0	3	0	0.12	ES139=>ES62		
259	9	1	7	1	0.36			
271	1	0	1	0	0.04			
294	1	0	1	0	0.04			
295	7	0	3	4	0.28			
296	1	0	1	0	0.04			
304	11	0	10	1	0.44			
308	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS55=>HS91
311	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1003	1	0	0	1	0.04			
1005	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1009	1	0	1	0	0.04			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer	Proposed Middle School Transfer	Proposed High School Transfer
						From=>To	From=>To	From=>To
1010	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1011	2	1	1	0	0.08			
1016	3	0	3	0	0.12	ES115=>ES125		
1019	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1026	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1028	81	9	66	6	3.23		MS54=>MS02	
1033	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES65=>ES269		HS14=>HS97
1034	1	1	0	0	0.04			
1035	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS14=>HS40
1056	1	0	0	1	0.04		MS74=>MS11	
1057	3	0	3	0	0.12		MS48=>MS11	
1058	4	0	4	0	0.16			HS40=>HS56
1059	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES144=>ES234		
1064	24	1	17	6	0.96	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
1065	6	0	6	0	0.24	ES151=>ES144		
1066	7	1	6	0	0.28	ES117=>ES47		
1068	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1079	4	0	3	1	0.16			
1080	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS14=>HS40
1083	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1085	2	0	2	0	0.08			
1087	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS98=>HS14
1100	3	0	3	0	0.12	ES72=>ES33		
1104	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1105	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES32=>ES55		
1112	1	0	1	0	0.04			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer From=>To	Proposed Middle School Transfer From=>To	Proposed High School Transfer From=>To
1113	5	0	4	1	0.20			
1123	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS56=>HS09
1129	13	0	12	1	0.52	ES273=>ES47		HS56=>HS09
1133	2	1	1	0	0.08			
1137	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1144	2	0	0	2	0.08	ES123=>ES11	MS02=>MS15	
1146	4	0	4	0	0.16	ES05=>ES151	MS15=>MS74	HS41=>HS40
1150	3	0	2	1	0.12			
1151	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1153	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1157	19	0	19	0	0.76	ES56=>ES291		
1159	22	4	18	0	0.88	ES45=>ES56	MS91=>MS62	HS55=>HS65
1166	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES283=>ES269		
1168	3	0	3	0	0.12		MS03=>MS62	
1170	2	0	2	0	0.08			
1176	3	0	3	0	0.12			HS09=>HS76
1178	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES26=>ES291		
1179	10	2	8	0	0.40	ES26=>ES291		
1180	5	1	4	0	0.20			HS09=>HS76
1181	10	2	8	0	0.40			HS09=>HS41
1183	27	1	22	4	1.08			HS09=>HS41
1185	77	8	63	6	3.07		MS54=>MS02	HS09=>HS41
1186	151	19	121	11	6.02		MS54=>MS02	
1187	7	0	7	0	0.28			
1188	10	0	9	1	0.40			
1189	7	0	7	0	0.28			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer	Proposed Middle School Transfer	Proposed High School Transfer
						From=>To	From=>To	From=>To
1190	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS56=>HS09
1192	3	0	3	0	0.12	ES273=>ES250		
1194	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1195	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1196	1	0	1	0	0.04			
1199	23	5	17	1	0.92			HS09=>HS76
1200	75	7	64	4	2.99			HS09=>HS41
1201	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS09=>HS76
1202	3	0	3	0	0.12			HS09=>HS76
1204	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES05=>ES11		
1205	2	0	2	0	0.08			
1207	2	0	1	1	0.08			
1231	6	0	6	0	0.24	ES26=>ES213	MS03=>MS75	HS65=>HS76
1256	173	4	154	15	6.90	ES139=>ES62		
1259	19	0	18	1	0.76			
1263	2	0	2	0	0.08			
1266	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES65=>ES123		
1268	2	1	1	0	0.08	ES11=>ES123	MS15=>MS02	
1269	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES133=>ES72		
1296	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS56=>HS09
1299	3	0	3	0	0.12			HS98=>HS14
2002	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2005	1	0	0	1	0.04			
2010	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2011	8	0	8	0	0.32			
2019	1	0	1	0	0.04			

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer From=>To	Proposed Middle School Transfer From=>To	Proposed High School Transfer From=>To
2028	27	0	24	3	1.08		MS54=>MS02	
2034	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2040	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2051	2	0	2	0	0.08			
2056	3	0	3	0	0.12		MS74=>MS11	
2057	1	0	1	0	0.04		MS48=>MS11	HS97=>HS56
2065	2	0	1	1	0.08	ES151=>ES144		
2069	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES33=>ES72		
2074	3	0	3	0	0.12	ES72=>ES33		
2101	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2111	3	0	3	0	0.12		MS25=>MS74	HS41=>HS40
2113	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2114	2	0	2	0	0.08			HS59=>HS09
2131	3	0	2	1	0.12			
2134	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES117=>ES47		
2137	2	0	0	2	0.08			
2143	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2146	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2147	2	0	1	1	0.08			
2148	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2150	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2154	3	1	2	0	0.12			HS91=>HS65
2166	5	0	4	1	0.20	ES283=>ES269		
2174	1	0	0	1	0.04	ES47=>ES82	MS02=>MS54	HS41=>HS09
2176	29	2	19	8	1.16			HS09=>HS41
2182	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS09=>HS76

Polygon	Total Submissions	Student Submissions	Parent Submissions	Other Submissions	Percent of total	Proposed Elementary School Transfer	Proposed Middle School Transfer	Proposed High School Transfer
						From=>To	From=>To	From=>To
2183	14	3	7	4	0.56			HS09=>HS41
2184	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2198	2	0	1	1	0.08			
2205	4	0	4	0	0.16	ES250=>ES213		
2228	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2231	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2233	1	0	1	0	0.04			
2618	1	0	0	1	0.04			
3034	4	0	4	0	0.16			
3056	1	0	1	0	0.04	ES144=>ES234	MS74=>MS11	
3087	2	0	1	1	0.08			HS98=>HS14
3113	1	0	1	0	0.04			
3131	1	0	1	0	0.04			
3143	1	0	0	1	0.04			
3146	1	0	1	0	0.04			
3150	1	0	1	0	0.04			
3169	1	0	1	0	0.04			
3176	150	33	108	9	5.98			HS09=>HS41
3182	1	0	1	0	0.04			HS09=>HS76
3223	1	0	1	0	0.04			
4087	5	0	3	2	0.20			HS98=>HS14
7169	1	0	1	0	0.04			

Appendix D
Testimonial Submissions by Polygon, Role of Testifier, and Stance Toward the Proposal

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
6	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
9	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
10	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
11	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
13	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
14	6	0	0	5	0	1	0
15	11	1	0	10	0	0	0
16	20	3	0	15	0	2	0
17	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
25	8	0	0	8	0	0	0
28	44	3	0	39	0	2	0
36	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
38	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
47	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
48	3	0	0	2	1	0	0
52	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
64	72	1	0	68	1	2	0
65	22	3	0	15	0	4	0
66	3	0	0	2	0	1	0
79	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
80	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
85	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
86	4	1	0	3	0	0	0
93	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
95	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
98	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
100	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
101	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
109	4	0	0	3	0	1	0
115	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
118	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
124	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
125	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
127	16	1	2	8	4	0	1
128	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
129	36	4	0	30	0	2	0
131	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
133	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
134	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
135	3	0	0	2	0	1	0
137	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
139	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
140	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
141	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
143	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
144	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
148	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
149	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
150	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
151	8	0	0	7	0	1	0
154	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
157	6	0	0	5	0	1	0
159	30	10	0	19	1	0	0
162	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
166	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
168	16	0	0	13	0	3	0
174	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
176	238	31	0	190	0	17	0
177	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
178	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
179	10	0	0	10	0	0	0
180	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
181	18	4	0	13	0	1	0
182	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
183	25	2	0	21	0	2	0
184	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
185	16	1	0	14	0	1	0
186	49	5	0	42	0	2	0
187	9	0	0	9	0	0	0
188	11	0	0	11	0	0	0
189	4	1	0	3	0	0	0
194	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
195	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
197	3	0	0	1	0	2	0
198	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
200	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
201	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
203	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
209	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
210	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
214	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
220	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
223	3	0	0	3	0	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
224	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
225	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
229	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
231	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
232	38	13	0	25	0	0	0
256	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
259	9	1	0	5	2	1	0
271	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
294	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
295	7	0	0	3	0	4	0
296	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
304	11	0	0	10	0	1	0
308	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
311	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1003	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
1005	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1009	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1010	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1011	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
1016	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1019	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1026	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1028	81	9	0	66	0	6	0
1033	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1034	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1035	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1056	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
1057	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1058	4	0	0	4	0	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
1059	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1064	24	1	0	17	0	6	0
1065	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
1066	7	1	0	6	0	0	0
1068	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1079	4	0	0	2	1	1	0
1080	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1083	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1085	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
1087	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1100	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1104	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1105	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1112	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1113	5	0	0	0	4	0	1
1123	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1129	13	0	0	12	0	1	0
1133	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
1137	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1144	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
1146	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
1150	3	0	0	2	0	1	0
1151	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1153	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1157	19	0	0	19	0	0	0
1159	22	4	0	17	1	0	0
1166	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1168	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1170	2	0	0	2	0	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
1176	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1178	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1179	10	2	0	8	0	0	0
1180	5	1	0	4	0	0	0
1181	10	2	0	8	0	0	0
1183	27	1	0	22	0	4	0
1185	77	8	0	63	0	6	0
1186	151	19	0	121	0	11	0
1187	7	0	0	7	0	0	0
1188	10	0	0	9	0	1	0
1189	7	0	0	7	0	0	0
1190	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1192	3	0	0	2	1	0	0
1194	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1195	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1196	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1199	23	5	0	17	0	1	0
1200	75	7	0	64	0	4	0
1201	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1202	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
1204	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1205	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
1207	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
1231	6	0	0	6	0	0	0
1256	173	4	0	154	0	15	0
1259	19	0	0	18	0	1	0
1263	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
1266	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
1268	2	0	1	0	1	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
1269	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1296	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1299	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
2002	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2005	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
2010	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2011	8	0	0	8	0	0	0
2019	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2028	27	0	0	24	0	3	0
2034	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2040	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2051	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
2056	3	0	0	2	1	0	0
2057	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2065	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
2069	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2074	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
2101	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2111	3	0	0	3	0	0	0
2113	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2114	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
2131	3	0	0	2	0	1	0
2134	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2137	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2143	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2146	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2147	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
2148	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2150	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

Polygon	Submissions	Students		Parents		Other	
		Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support	Opposition	Support
2154	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
2166	5	0	0	4	0	1	0
2174	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2176	29	2	0	19	0	8	0
2182	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2183	14	3	0	7	0	4	0
2184	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
2198	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
2205	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
2228	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2231	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2233	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2618	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
3034	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
3056	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
3087	2	0	0	1	0	1	0
3113	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
3131	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
3143	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
3146	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3150	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3169	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3176	150	33	0	108	0	9	0
3182	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
3223	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
4087	5	0	0	3	0	2	0
7169	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

Appendix E
Testimonies Included in Idea Analysis QCA by Polygon, Testifier Role, and Mode

Polygon	Parent		Student		Other		Total Testimonies Analyzed
	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	
15		1					1
16		1					1
17	1						1
25	1	1					2
28	2	1					3
48		1					1
64	3	1					4
65				1		2	3
79		1					1
118					1		1
127				1			1
129	1	1					2
131		1					1
133		1					1
139	1						1
140	1						1
141					1		1
143					1		1
148					1		1
149					1		1
150	1						1
151		2				1	3
157						1	1
159	1	2					3
168		1					1
176	25	8	7	3	1	1	45
177						1	1
179		1					1
180	1	1					2
181		3					3
183	1	2					3
185		1					1
186	3		1				4
187	1						1

Polygon	Parent		Student		Other		Total Testimonies Analyzed
	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	
224		1					1
232		6		3			9
259		1					1
304		2					2
308	1						1
1019	1						1
1028	1	2		1	1	1	6
1033	1						1
1035	1						1
1056					1		1
1058	1						1
1064		1					1
1066	1						1
1068	1						1
1079	1						1
1087		1					1
1100	1						1
1113		3			1		4
1129		1			1		2
1133		1					1
1137	1						1
1144						1	1
1146		1					1
1157		2					2
1159		1		1			2
1159		1					1
1176	1						1
1181	1			1			2
1183	3	1		1			5
1185	3	3	1				7
1186	1	4	1	2		1	9
1187	1						1
1192		1					1
1194		1					1
1199		2	1				3
1200	4	2					6
1256	2	2		2			6

Polygon	Parent		Student		Other		Total Testimonies Analyzed
	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	Written	Oral	
1259	1	1					2
1266		1					1
1268		1		1			2
2002	1						1
2028	2						2
2040		1					1
2056		2					2
2069	1						1
2074		1					1
2113		1					1
2131		1			1		2
2137						1	1
2143	1						1
2146		1					1
2148	1						1
2150	1						1
2154				1			1
2166		1					1
2174					1		1
2176					1		1
2183		2		1			3
2205		1					1
3056		1					1
3113	1						1
3131	1						1
3143						1	1
3176	3	3		2			8
7169		1					1
Undisclosed (Support)	15	10		1	21	4	51
Undisclosed (Opposed)	2	4	2	1	11	2	22
	100	104	13	23	45	17	302

Note: Bold font indicates testimonies in support of proposal.

Note: Polygon 1159 appears twice to distinguish between supporting and opposing testimonies.

Appendix F

Three Tier Code Map for Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the explicit and implicit narratives publicly voiced by community members during the proposal period?			
	Codes from Surface Analysis (Frequency of Occurrence)	Thematic Categorization	Interpretation
Explicit Narrative	Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents (77) Other (63) Students (4) Oppose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents (1849) Other (292) Students (221) 	99.9% of testimonies expressed a stance. 94% opposed.	Opposition was expressed overwhelmingly in the testimonies.
	Emotional Stress (32) Stress (4) Mental Health (15) Sleep interruption (36) Stability (5) Friendships (1) Young Child (1) Social Inconvenience (30) Isolation (10) Extracurriculars (37) College Admissions (3)	Physical and mental health (92) Social ties (42) Extracurricular activities (37) Educational opportunity (3)	People who provided testimony in opposition to the proposal expressed a belief that the proposal would lead to negative consequences for individual <i>students</i> such as decreased physical and emotional well-being, access to educational services, access to extracurricular activities, and opportunity for academic advancement both within the current school system and the future.
	Burdensome (7) Transportation (131) Women Caregivers (1) Working Parents (9) Meritocracy (19) Family Tradition (5) Time (2) Infringement Rights (1) Parent involvement (17)	Burdensome (148) Property violation (27) Parent involvement (17)	People who provided testimony in opposition to the proposal expressed belief that the proposal, if approved, would result in negative consequences for <i>families</i> . These consequences included increased burden, perceived losses in commodities such as time, traditions, and materials, and decreased opportunities for parental involvement in schools.

Explicit Narrative	<p>Tear Apart (2) Neighborhood Perks (11) Community Cohesion (16) Community good (20) Neighborhood Integrity (18)</p> <p>Reputation (43) Disenrollment Threat (3) Academic Performance (14) Lowering standards (2) HS09 School Performance (9)</p> <p>Budgetary (45) Real Estate (21)</p> <p>Hostile Environment (1) Peace (1) Violence (1)</p> <p>Environmental (14)</p>	<p>Neighborhoods (67)</p> <p>Reputation (71)</p> <p>Economy (66)</p> <p>Safety (3)</p> <p>Environmental (14)</p>	<p>People who provided testimony in opposition to the proposal expressed belief that the proposal would result in negative consequences for <i>schools</i>, the <i>school system</i>, and the <i>community</i> through loss of social cohesion, diminishment of reputation, decrease in real estate values, and safety.</p>
Explicit Narrative	<p>Lack of transparency (10) Attendance Area Committee (1) Personal Attacks (7) Unheard (4) All voices (7)</p> <p>Political Gain (14) Board Member Privilege (2) Lack trust of school officials (14) Trust (1)</p> <p>Double Moves (3) Gerrymandering (1) Policy (12) Flawed development (82) Too large Scale (1) Timing (1) New High School (14)</p> <p>Social Engineering (9) Experimental (10)</p>	<p>Exclusivity and opacity (29)</p> <p>Corruption (31)</p> <p>Policy inconsistencies (114)</p> <p>Experimental/Unfounded (19)</p>	<p>People who provided testimony in opposition to the proposal expressed belief that the <i>processes</i> used to develop the proposal were flawed due to a lack of evidence, opacity, corruption, and inconsistency with policy.</p>

Explicit Narrative	Zoning (10) Utilization (2) County Government (29) Development (7) Affordable Housing (1)	County government (41) Real estate development (8)	People who provided testimony in opposition to the proposal expressed belief that the identified problem of concentration of students impacted by poverty in some schools was due to <i>past decisions</i> that were outside of the school board's purview.
Implicit Narrative	Templated Letter Example (300) Petition (19)	Templated letters (300) Petitions (19)	People who testified against the proposal were organized within networks in the community. They provided individual testimonies that were often carbon copies.
	Testifier Expertise (81) Additional Analysis (23) Attachments (6) Research Citation (11) Previous Experience Rezoning (7) Immigration (1) Sacrifice for Neighborhood (1) Sensitive Information (11)	Professional expertise (121) Stories of personal experiences (8) Special circumstances (12)	People who testified sought to establish legitimacy by highlighting their professional expertise and their personal experiences through introduction of novel data sets, data representation, or personal stories.
Counter Narrative	Support (155) Can't Please All (17) First Step (12) Support for BOE (9) Difficulty (process) (1) Inadequate (2) Shared responsibility (21) Positives to change (1) Benefits (1) High Quality Schools (3) Morality (4) National Impact (5)	Statements of support (44 coded) Challenges (41) Collective responsibility (21) Positive outcomes (5) Historical redress (9)	A small number of people who provided public testimony expressed support for the proposal as a first step to enhancing equity and improving educational outcomes for all students.

Statement of Finding 2

Explicitly, two different narratives arose. One, a dominant narrative, opposed the proposal saying it would result in negative consequences for students, families, schools, and neighborhoods. Participants in the dominant narrative also characterized the processes used in developing the proposal as illegitimate. A counternarrative, on the other hand, explicitly supported the proposal by emphasizing prospective benefits for all members of the community while acknowledging the challenges that faced the full community.

Statement of Finding 3

Implicitly, participants in the dominant narrative leveraged social capital to amplify their statements of opposition. Tactics included citing professional credentials, expertise, and experience and applying templated letters and petitions that were distributed within community networks. Testifiers also told stories that included sensitive information about their children to draw attention to their views.

Appendix G

Sample Templated Letters (Redacted)

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2019 10:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [External] Proposed Redistricting

Dear Board of Education Members,

We are writing on behalf of residents of Polygon 176 who are concerned about the proposed impact of [REDACTED] Presentation of the Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019. As noted in the Executive Summary on Page 4, this proposal was developed with three primary goals as excerpted below:
The driving priorities for this process:

1. Balance capacity utilization among schools throughout [REDACTED] cost effectively.
2. Advance equity by addressing the distribution of students participating in the Free and Reduced price meals program (FARMS) across schools to the extent feasible.
3. Plan ahead for the High School [REDACTED] redistricting by minimizing double moves as much as possible.

We have also studied and respect the published policies which the Board of Education utilizes in making decisions with regard to school attendance areas, specifically Policy [REDACTED]:

Unfortunately, the Presentation of Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019 is **not** consistent with the guidelines of Policy [REDACTED] and does **not** achieve the three primary goals as stated in [REDACTED] letter. Please consider the following facts.

School Attendance Area:

School Attendance area and geographic proximity is a consideration of Policy [REDACTED]. The proposed redistricting of Polygon 176 would more than double the distance students travel to get to school.

- Using Google Maps, [REDACTED] Polygon 176 is 2.1 Miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] Polygon 176 is 2.8 miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED].
- Using WAZE, the commute time from Polygon 176 to [REDACTED] School would be 3x as long as the commute to [REDACTED] High School.
- In addition, many of the students from Polygon 176 would have to drive through [REDACTED] High School bus and car traffic, en-route to [REDACTED] High School under the August 20, 2019 proposal.

Capacity Utilization:

Policy [REDACTED] identifies three key aspects to school capacity which are (1) Projections [item P], (2) Target Utilization [item S] which is defined as enrollment between 90% and 110% utilization of program capacity and (3) Utilization [item T].

The 2019 Feasibility Study [REDACTED] notes the following findings:

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@hotmail.com >
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2019 7:40 PM
To: [REDACTED] Redistricting
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED] (external) Oppose to [REDACTED] redistricting proposal

Dear [REDACTED] and Board of Education,

I am writing as a concerned [REDACTED] County resident (Polygon 3176) and parent about the proposed impact of [REDACTED] Presentation of the Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019. From the proposal, I see that the proposed redistricting plan will dramatically interrupt [REDACTED] county students on their psychological development, physical development, and safety. So I want to share with you my concerns.

As noted in the Executive Summary on Page 4, this proposal was developed with three primary goals as excerpted below:

The driving priorities for this process:

1. Balance capacity utilization among schools throughout [REDACTED] cost effectively.
2. Advance equity by addressing the distribution of students participating in the Free and Reduced price meals program (FARMS) across schools to the extent feasible.
3. Plan ahead for the High School [REDACTED] redistricting by minimizing double moves as much as possible.

I have also studied and respect the published policies which the Board of Education utilizes in making decisions with regard to school attendance areas, specifically Policy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Unfortunately, the Presentation of Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019 is not consistent with the guidelines of Policy [REDACTED] and does not achieve the three primary goals as stated in [REDACTED] letter. Please consider the following facts.

School Attendance Area:

School Attendance area and geographic proximity is a consideration of Policy [REDACTED]. The proposed redistricting of Polygon 3176 would more than double the distance students travel to get to school.

1. Using Google Maps, [REDACTED] / Polygon 176 is 2.1 Miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Polygon 3176 is 5.8 miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED].
2. Using WAZE, the commute time from Polygon 3176 to [REDACTED] High School would be 3x as long as the commute to [REDACTED] High School.
3. Due to the increased commute distance and time to [REDACTED] High School, this large scale school redistricting will reduce parent's engagement in the school programs and against BOE's commitment to promote family and community involvement [REDACTED]. It will also reduce student's participation in after school activities.
4. Due to the increased commute distance and time to [REDACTED] High School, hardworking parents can only be able to provide much less transportation assistance when their students

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2019 4:18 PM
To: [REDACTED] Redistricting
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED] External Oppose to Superintendent [REDACTED] redistricting proposal

Dear [REDACTED] and Board of Education,

I am writing as a concerned [REDACTED] County resident (Polygon 3176) and parent about the proposed impact of [REDACTED] Presentation of the Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019. From the proposal, I see that the proposed redistricting plan will dramatically interrupt [REDACTED] students on their psychological development, physical development, and safety. So I want to share with you my concerns.

As noted in the Executive Summary on Page 4, this proposal was developed with three primary goals as excerpted below:

The driving priorities for this process:

1. Balance capacity utilization among schools throughout [REDACTED] cost effectively.
2. Advance equity by addressing the distribution of students participating in the Free and Reduced price meals program (FARMs) across schools to the extent feasible.
3. Plan ahead for the High School [REDACTED] redistricting by minimizing double moves as much as possible.

I have also studied and respect the published policies which the Board of Education utilizes in making decisions with regard to school attendance areas, specifically Policy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Unfortunately, the Presentation of Attendance Area Adjustment Plan, dated August 20, 2019 is not consistent with the guidelines of Policy [REDACTED] and does not achieve the three primary goals as stated in Dr [REDACTED] letter. Please consider the following facts.

School Attendance Area:

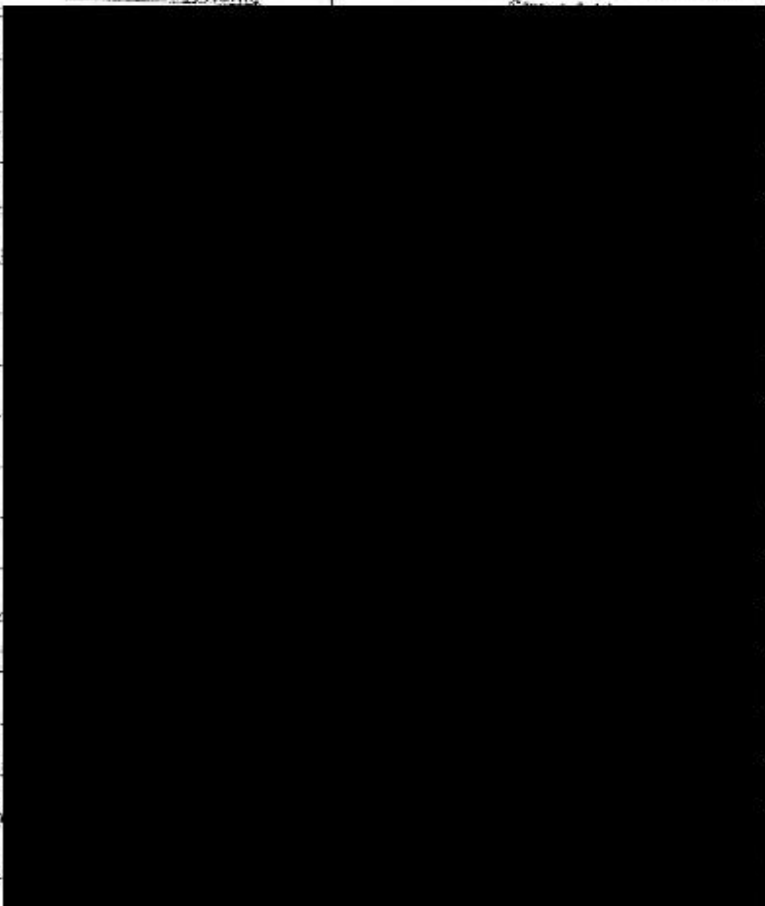
School Attendance area and geographic proximity is a consideration of Policy [REDACTED]. The proposed redistricting of Polygon 3176 would more than double the distance students travel to get to school.

1. Using Google Maps, [REDACTED] / Polygon 176 is 2.1 Miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] / Polygon 3176 is 5.8 miles from [REDACTED] High School [REDACTED].
2. Using WAZE, the commute time from Polygon 3176 to [REDACTED] High School would be 3x as long as the commute to [REDACTED] High School.
3. Due to the increased commute distance and time to [REDACTED] High School, this large scale school redistricting will reduce parent's engagement in the school programs and against BOE's commitment to promote family and community involvement [REDACTED]. It will also reduce student's participation in after school activities.
4. Due to the increased commute distance and time to [REDACTED] High School, hardworking parents can only be able to provide much less transportation assistance when their students needed for school activities. Therefore, this proposal will force MORE junior and senior

3

e, the undersigned members of [redacted] United, formally request that you:

1. Keep our four polygons (63, 1064, 129, and 1129) together in redistricting. We are one contiguous neighborhood. Dividing 1 or more polygons away from the group of 4 would fracture our 25 year old, close-knit, and established community.
2. Uphold Policy IV.B in regards to Community Stability by keeping our four neighborhood polygons in either of our community schools ([redacted] Elementary). This is the only way to maintain our *community stability* as defined by Policy IV.B as the "geographical place and neighborhood in which a student lives", while maintaining strong feeds from one school level to the next, and the contiguous nature of our neighborhood with the rest of [redacted] and/or [redacted] neighborhoods. We are geographically isolated from the [redacted] Elementary community!

	First and Last Name	Polygon #
35		
36		1129
37		1129
38		1129
39		1129
40		1129
41		1129
42		1129
43		1129
44		1129
45		1129
46		1129
47		1129
48		1129
49		1129
50	1129	
51	1129	

Appendix I

Three Tier Code Map for Research Question 3

RQ3: How were the concepts of race, opportunity, and merit perceived by the community during the redistricting process?		
Surface Analysis (Frequency)	Thematic Categorization	Interpretation
Equity (58)	Equity (58)	Testifiers express support for equity in general. Claimed equity already achieved in schools and neighborhoods.
Colorblind (10)	Minimization of race (14)	
SES (4)		Little direct reference to race in the dominant narrative. There was evidence of overtly racist tropes.
Home Supports Necessary (3)	Culture (35)	Differential educational outcomes attributed to cultural factors such as lack of resources and dysfunctional families. Suggestions to send more resources and provide mentoring.
In home supports (1)		
Urbanized Behaviors (1)		
Setting Standard/Normalization (3)		
Magnet programs (10)		
More resources (1)		
Send resources (16)		
Systemic Racism (7)	Systemic racism (25)	The counternarrative included explicit reference to race including deeply embedded historical racism that resulted in <i>de facto</i> segregation and differential opportunity for students of color.
Segregation (10)		
Historical (8)		
Statement of Finding: The concepts of race, opportunity, and merit appeared differently in the dominant and counternarratives. The dominant narrative expressed support for equity in general, but testifiers seldom referenced race or racial equity specifically. People who participated in the dominant narrative cited family dysfunction, deficient role models, and low aspirations as primary hurdles to success for students impacted by poverty. They advocated for increased resource allocation in lieu of school reassignment. Participants in the counternarrative, however, explicitly cited the lingering effects of deeply embedded, systemic racism as rationale for the Board of Education to approve the new school boundaries.		