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***Original title: African American Teachers and Full-Service Community Schools:
Improving Urban Education and African American Student Outcomes**

Accepted for publication in *The Journal of Negro Education*

**Revised title: “It’s a great partnership!” A Mixed-Methods Case Study of an African
American Teacher in an Urban Full-Service Community School**

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Research provides clear and compelling evidence of the positive short and long-term effects that African American teachers have on African American students’ educational experiences and outcomes (see, for example, Egalite et al., 2015; Gershenson et al., 2017, Klopfenstein, 2005; Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Redding 2019). Likewise, full-service community schools (FSCSs) are a promising strategy to transform education for African American students in underserved communities (Galindo & Sanders, 2019). FSCSs are characterized by culturally and community responsive learning opportunities, partnerships with students’ families and communities, integrated social welfare and health services, community development, and an inclusive, equity approach to school leadership (Blank et al., 2003; Oakes et al., 2017). These characteristics align with the empirically identified values and attributes of African American teachers (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016). To explore this alignment, the present study draws on survey, observation, and interview data collected from an effective African American female teacher in an award-winning urban FSC high school. It addresses the following research questions: How do the focal teacher’s values and attributes align with the defining principles of FSCSs, and how has the FSC high school affected her professional growth and praxis? Implications of the study’s

findings for expanding the knowledge base on African American teachers, FSCSs, and African American students' development and educational success are discussed.

Review of the Literature

While African American student achievement trends have improved over the past fifty years (Hansen et al., 2018), significant gaps in educational opportunities and academic attainment persist (Sparks, 2019). Reasons for these gaps are complex. However, they are clearly associated with structural and systemic racism and its many manifestations, including a disproportionate number of African American children who are poor (Murphey et al., 2018) and attend under-resourced schools (Garcia, 2020), as well as a growing racial gap between students and teachers (Boser, 2011; Hrabowski & Sanders, 2015). These issues often converge in urban schools, resulting in higher than average suspension rates and lower than average achievement, attendance, and graduation rates (Noguera, 2003; Moore III & Lewis, 2012). Research suggests that African American teachers and FSCSs can help to reverse these trends and improve the educational experiences of African American students.

The Values and Attributes of African American Teachers

A growing number of studies indicate that African American teachers bring unique values and attributes to the teaching profession (Acosta et al., 2018; Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). While such studies do not support the simplistic notion that only (or all) African American teachers possess the attributes necessary to be effective with African American students, they highlight the cultural, spiritual, and political roles that same race teachers play in improving African American students' educational experiences and outcomes (Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Howard, 2001). Collectively, these studies indicate that while they share an interest in children and a desire to contribute to society like their White counterparts, African American

pre-service and in-service teachers possess a deeper understanding of the inequity embedded in the educational system and its impact on students' achievement and attainment (McKinney de Royston, 2020). Accordingly, they often view teaching as a means to give back to their communities and have a strong commitment to educational reform. In a study of teacher candidates in a one-year certification/master's degree program in education, for instance, Su (1996) reported, that the "Black students were the most conscious about social justice" (p.125). Kohli and Pizarro (2016) conducted a similar study with similar results. Specifically, they found that African American teachers had a strong commitment to teaching in and developing the communities where they grew up. They defined these teachers as "community oriented" or "those who feel a relationality and relational accountability to their communities" (p. 75). Other studies corroborate these findings. For example, Acosta (2018) found that African American teachers enter the profession with a unique sense of urgency based on an understanding of the role of education in Black liberation, the miseducation of Black children, and the operation of anti-Blackness in schools. For the study's participants, teaching was more than just a means to promote learning; it was a strategy for social transformation.

The social justice, community orientation of many African American teachers is reflected in their professional practices. When compared to non-Black teachers, studies have shown that African American teachers have higher academic and behavioral expectations for African American students (Gershenson et al., 2016; Griffin & Tackie, 2017), and a pedagogical approach that is more responsive to their learning needs and preferences (Acosta et al., 2018). Many African American teachers also serve as cultural interpreters, using their understanding of Black students' style, language, dress, and backgrounds to help them navigate school expectations, rules, and processes (Farinde-Wu, 2018). Others serve as protectors, shielding

African American students from individual and institutional acts of racism and symbolic violence (McKinney de Royston et al., 2020). Additionally, Kohli and Pizarro (2016) reported that African American teachers' community orientation enables them to work effectively with students' families. Foster (1991) referred to this attribute as connectedness," noting that African American teachers' "depth and quality of relationships with students and the ability to develop mutual trust with parents are present regardless of grade level, geographic location, or place of birth" (p. 240). It is likely such practices are associated with the positive influence of African American teachers on the educational experiences and outcomes of same race students.

Specifically, African American teachers have been shown to positively affect African American students' academic achievement (Egalite et al., 2015; Redding, 2019), placement in gifted and talented programs (Grissom & Redding, 2016), and mathematics course selection (Klopfenstein, 2005). Same race teachers have also been linked to positive behavioral outcomes for African American students. For example, Downey and Pribesh (2004) found that African American teachers were more likely than their White counterparts to favorably rate younger and older African American students' behavior. Mashburn et al. (2006) similarly found that male African American students in pre-K classrooms had fewer behavior problems when they were paired with a Black rather than non-Black teacher. Furthermore, Lindsay and Hart (2017) found that exposure to same-race teachers is associated with reduced rates of exclusionary discipline for Black students across grade levels, gender, and socioeconomic status. These positive effects appear to be long term. According to Gershenson et al. (2016), assigning an African American male student to an African American teacher in grades three to five significantly increases the likelihood that the student will graduate from high school, especially for the most economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, they found that having at least one African American

teacher in grades three to five increases the likelihood that persistently low-income African American students of both sexes aspire to attend a four-year college (Gershenson et al., 2016).

However, African American teachers' special contributions to their classrooms and schools are often not valued by their colleagues and administrators (D'Amico et al., 2017; Kohli, 2018; Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Stanley, 2020). Indeed, Kohli (2018) found that community oriented African American teachers in her study were often frustrated by restrictions placed on their practices and the lack of support they received at their schools. Many questioned if teaching was the right field for them to achieve their goals for racial equity and reported feeling isolated. Capturing this sense of marginalization in many traditional urban schools, Kohli (2018) concluded:

[U]rban schools—despite serving majority students of Color—operate as hostile racial climates. Color blindness and racial microaggressions manifest as macro and micro forms of racism and take a toll on the professional growth and retention of teachers of Color. (p. 1; also see Pitts, 2019)

Such experiences may explain in part why African American teachers leave the profession at higher rates than their White counterparts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Given their defining principles, FSCSs may welcome and nurture the unique values and attributes of African American teachers, thereby contributing to their retention and impact in the field.

Full-Service Community Schools

FSCSs are a strategy to create more socially just and equitable learning environments for students in underserved communities (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019; Galindo & Sanders, 2019; Oakes et al., 2017). Defining pillars of FSCSs include:

- culturally and community responsive in and out-of-school time learning opportunities for students,
- coordinated health, mental health, and social welfare (e.g., food, housing, employment, childcare) services and resources for students, families, and community members,
- school, family, and community partnerships focused on students' learning and development, and
- collaborative school decision making (Blank et al., 2003).

As such, FSCSs (currently over 5,000 in 150 communities in the United States, Blank & Villareal, 2015) rely on a network of relationships to address structural and institutional barriers to students' learning. However, because they are designed to respond to the needs and assets of their students, families, and surrounding communities, no two FSCSs are the same.

The FSCS strategy has garnered more attention over the last three decades, but it is not a new reform (Sanders & Galindo, 2019). Several iterations have occurred in communities throughout the United States since the late 19th century (Benson et al., 2009). Although often forgotten in historical accounts of FSCSs, they have a tradition in the African American community. Richardson (2009) aptly captured this legacy in her case study of the James Adams Community School (JACS) operated in Coatesville, Pennsylvania between 1943 and 1956.

Led by principal, T.J. Anderson, and his wife, Anita, JACS was the hub of the community and a vital source of social capital for students, teachers, families, and partners. When describing the school, Richardson (2009) noted

...[B]y day rigorous and creative curricula were implemented and every weeknight classes and activities were available to students, their parents, and members of the community at large, free of charge (e.g., tax preparation, literacy,

and vocational classes). ...JACS served minority children with limited resources and was located in a high-need community. (pp. 2 & 4)

Richardson (2009) attributed the success of JACS to its principal leadership, well developed network of partnerships among key stakeholders including students' families, and its organizational capacity, including teachers. The African American teachers at JACS embodied the values and attributes described in the extant literature. They were highly qualified, hardworking, and committed to racial uplift. Without these teachers' high expectations for students' success, engagement with families, and participation in school decision making and partnership development and sustainability, JACS would not have been able to realize its goals as a community school.

The Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School (OCS), operating from 1973 to 1982 in East Oakland, California, is another example of the tradition of FSCSs in the African American community. The OCS, which served over 150 students at its peak, provided culturally relevant and community responsive instruction. Its instructional emphasis was an outgrowth of Point 5 in the Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Platform, which stated:

We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of the self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and in the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

The OCS also provided students three meals per day, out of school time learning activities that included meditation and martial arts, and opportunities to settle conflicts through restorative justice committees. Students also engaged in other Black Panther Party programs to promote community development and Black liberation (Ealey, 2016).

Critical to the effectiveness of the OCS were its Black faculty, who were accomplished and community oriented. They served as role models for students, countering prevailing stereotypes about Black men and women. Describing their significance, Rosenblum (2016) wrote, "...[O]ne aspect of the school sticks out to former students and teachers alike: the powerful presence of Black teachers. ...[H]aving teachers who were mostly Black created an atmosphere of pride, confidence and understanding that was infectious." Thus, effective FSCSs, generally and specifically those serving African American students, have relied on teachers who share their defining principles and goals (Daniel et al., 2019; Sanders & Galindo, 2020; Sanders et al., 2018).

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, this study draws on McKinney de Royston and Nasir's (2017) Framework for Children's Learning and Development (FCLD) (see Figure 1). The multilevel FCLD builds on ecological theories emphasizing the nested systems that interact to affect learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) and Critical Race Theory, which underscores the enduring impact of white supremacy and racialized narratives on students' educational opportunities and outcomes (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). Specifically, the FCLD highlights how race is enacted through cultural, institutional, social, and individual interactions that, in turn, affect the environments in which students learn and develop, most often reproducing racial and class hierarchies and inequities. However, the FCLD also captures "the resistant and disruptive forces that can emerge from the bottom to challenge the status quo and instigate personal and social change" (McKinney de Royston & Madkins, 2019, p. 249); it therefore emphasizes the importance of individual and institutional decisions and actions.

When applied to FSCSs (McKinney de Royston & Nasir, 2017; McKinney de Royston & Madkins, 2019), the FCLD underscores the necessity of key school actors' beliefs aligning with the foundational principles of the reform strategy as well as their sociopolitical clarity about the larger forces of power (e.g., racism, classism, and sexism) that intersect to produce inequities in and outside of schools. Without such alignment and clarity, especially among teachers, the reform strategy will be reduced to service provision and nominal school, family, and community collaboration while failing to achieve its transformative goals for students broadly and African American students specifically. From this perspective, one of the greatest threats to realizing the promise of FSCSs is colorblindness. This ideology ignores the racialized structures impacting students, families, and communities, thereby preventing the essential disruption of narratives that cast African Americans as deficient and "problems" rather than as agents of positive change (McKinney de Royston & Nasir, 2017).

Building on the FCLD and existing research on the unique attributes of African American teachers, the present study contends that they may be uniquely suited for FSCSs. In turn, FSCSs may provide African American teachers with opportunities to pursue and fully realize an equity-based approach to students' learning and development and serve as models for non-Black teachers who are committed to social justice. To explore this contention, the current study examines the role of an effective African American teacher in a contemporary urban FSC high school.

(Insert Fig. 1 here)

Methods

Data for this study were collected as part of a larger mixed-methods case study on the role of teachers in an award-winning FSC high school in an urban district in the northeastern

United States. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods provides a breadth and depth of insights into a given phenomenon that is more difficult to achieve when relying on a single approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Similarly, case study research, a multi-vocal, triangulated inquiry strategy, facilitates a holistic understanding of a complex “system of action” (Tellis, 1997, p.1). The larger study included survey data for 40 (97.6%) teachers at the case high school, principal evaluations of teachers’ effectiveness, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews for a subset of 12 teachers, qualitative surveys for administrators and staff, and student focus groups. (For a detailed description of the methods and instruments used in the larger study, see Sanders & Galindo, 2020.)

Setting and Participants

The case school serves nearly 460 low-income, racially and ethnically diverse students (44% African American, 32% Hispanic/Latinx, 23% White, and 1% Asian). Formerly a “failing” junior high school, the case school was converted to a FSC high school in 2010. The 2012 academic year was the first in which the school was fully populated, serving students in grades 9-12. When comparing data from 2012 and 2014 (after which the state assessment changed), the school’s attendance increased from 74% to 80%; student mobility declined from 60% to 40%; and state high school assessment pass rates in English/Language Arts increased from 59% to 67%, while pass rates on the Algebra high school assessments increased to 71%. Additionally, since becoming a FSCS, the case high school and its 60 reported partners have provided a variety of services to students, families, and community members including GED classes, employment referrals, housing stability services, an on-site childcare center, a food pantry, and counseling services for students and families. These partnerships were coordinated by the FSCS Center,

located in a suite of offices in the school. Because of the case school's accomplishments, in 2015, it was selected for national recognition.

The focal teacher, Anisha (a pseudonym), was one of the 41 ethnically and racially diverse teachers (52.5% White, 32.5% African American, 15% Latinx, Asian, or multiracial) at the case high school, and is featured because of her distinctive alignment with the FSCS strategy and sociopolitical clarity. She is an African American woman with a master's degree in urban education policy. At the time of the study, she was in her first year of teaching. Her resident teaching certification was through an alternative program.

Data Collection

Data for the larger study were collected over a 9-month period (November 2016-August 2017). Using an instrument that was designed and validated for the study, teachers at the FSC high school were surveyed about their backgrounds, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. Specifically, the teacher survey, with structured and open-ended questions, gathered information on teachers' demographic characteristics, preparation, and experience. It also included items measuring teachers' academic optimism (Hoy et al., 2006), defined as their belief in their ability to influence students' learning outcomes (self-efficacy), trust in students and families, and academic emphasis. Teachers could choose one of six options from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) on nine items. The higher a teacher's score, the higher her self-rating of academic optimism. In addition, the survey included questions to assess teachers' support for the FSCS strategy (see relevant scales in Appendix A). Forty teachers (97.6%), including Anisha, completed the survey during a professional development day at the school. Teachers received honorariums of \$40 for their participation.

To supplement the survey data and gain deeper understanding of teaching practices at the case school, 12 teachers were observed and interviewed. These teachers were purposively selected to ensure racial/ethnic, content area, gender, and age diversity. Eight of these teachers taught core academic subjects; Anisha was one of the eight and the only African American woman. A modified version of the classroom protocol developed by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University (Annenberg Institute, 2004) was used for the observations. Protocol scores could range from 0, classrooms characterized by noncompliant and disengaged students, to 4, classrooms characterized by student-directed inquiry and academic rigor (see protocol coding scheme in Appendix B). Interview questions focused on teachers' backgrounds, and perceptions of the school, students, administrative team, FSCS strategy, and their teaching effectiveness (see Appendix C). Teachers participating in Phase II of the study received an honorarium of \$70.00.

Additional data collection included the principal and administrative team's assessment of teachers' effectiveness using an evaluation instrument with items corresponding to the observation protocol previously described. The administrative team was asked to "select the category (i.e., not effective -- 1 to highly effective -- 4) that best describes the instructional quality delivered most of the time" for each teacher.

This paper draws on survey, observation, and interview data collected from Anisha as well as the administrative team's evaluation of her effectiveness. The author observed Anisha teach a 90-minute class. Her students were racially and ethnically diverse (seven African American, six Latinx, and five White students were present the day of the observation) and from low-income communities. After the observation, the author conducted two follow-up interviews – one lasting 30 minutes and the other 60 minutes. Data triangulation helped to ensure the

credibility of the study's findings and provided multiple opportunities for the author to engage in member checking with Anisha and other participants at the school site (Mathison, 1988). As an African American woman and former secondary school teacher, the author was able to establish an immediate rapport with the participant. Aware of this affinity, the author was careful to analyze each data source for confirming and disconfirming evidence (Berger, 2015).

Data Analysis

Teacher survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency. Open-ended survey, and interview data were transcribed as Word documents and imported into Ethnograph 6.0, a qualitative data analysis software package, for coding and thematic analysis. Through deductive and inductive strategies, the researcher identified codes for initial data categorization. This process generated 10 primary and 38 secondary codes (see Table 1). For this paper, coded data for Anisha were reread to identify broader themes regarding her background, attitudes, beliefs, and professional practices. Moving between the data, conceptual framework, literature on African American teachers and FSCSs, and research questions, the author sought to identify associations between Anisha's contributions to the case school and the school's impact on her satisfaction and praxis. Data analysis included intentional efforts to corroborate emerging themes from different sources. Findings generated through this process are reported in the following section.

Insert Table 1 here.

Findings

Anisha embodied values and attributes that have been empirically associated with African American teachers and are clearly aligned with the FSCS strategy. Specifically, her reasons for teaching, professional attitudes and beliefs, pedagogical strategies, relationships with

students, and engagement with families and community partners reflected a sociopolitical clarity and social justice orientation that correspond to the defining principles of FSCSs. The case FSCS also provided Anisha the support she needed to realize her goals as a teacher in a predominantly African American urban high school. These findings are described in detail below.

Becoming a Teacher

Anisha's mother is an experienced educator who founded a charter school and operated an early childcare center, providing Anisha many opportunities to interact with young children and "play teacher." Her mother believed that she would pursue a career in education, but Anisha's decision to become a teacher evolved over time. It was influenced by the inequities in educational opportunities she observed while conducting research as an undergraduate student, her degree programs in American studies and urban education, and her growing activism in the African American community. Anisha explained:

I fell in love with research, but I specifically recognized the inequalities in the education system. ...Then I started getting into activism. I was co-founder of Black Lives Matter in [city name] and things started coming full circle. I thought I was going to go straight into a PhD program. Then, I was like, "Actually, I should teach first." ...So, long story short, that's why I ended up teaching... and I chose [city name] because I wanted to teach Black kids.

Hence, Anisha became a teacher to improve educational experiences and outcomes for underserved students, specifically African American students. Seeking to address the educational inequities revealed through her research experiences, she chose to teach in a high poverty, urban school, although she had attended private schools most of her life.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Anisha's reported self-efficacy and academic emphasis were similar to the school averages, which were relatively high at the award-winning FSC high school. Specifically, the average rating for teacher self-efficacy was 4.8/6; Anisha's average was 4.6/6. The teacher average for academic emphasis was 5.1/6; Anisha's was 5.0/6. Her lower self-ratings for these measures might reflect her limited time teaching at the school. Where Anisha differed most significantly from her colleagues, however, were on the items measuring "trust of students and parents" and "beliefs about FSCSs." While the teacher average for the trust items was 4.4/6; Anisha's rating was 5.0/6. Regarding beliefs about FSCSs, the school average was 4.9/6; Anisha's was 5.7/6. Capturing her enthusiasm for the FSCS strategy, Anisha wrote in the open-ended section of the survey:

The mental health services provided by the school allow my students to be supported in ways that ultimately improve their academics. I know that when my students need support, I can call on people who can do so and not assume all the responsibility. The FSCS Center staff consult with me and together we support students in a phenomenal way. It's a great partnership!

Thus, survey results indicated that Anisha believed in her ability to facilitate students' learning (self-efficacy) through high expectations and challenging course work (academic emphasis), although as a first-year teacher she may not have been as confident in her abilities as her more experienced colleagues. She also brought unique attributes to the case school. In particular, her trust in students and families as partners in the educational process was notably higher than the teacher average at the case FSC high school. Recognizing the significant barriers many students faced, she also reported a stronger than average belief in the importance of the

FSCS strategy for improving students' educational opportunities. These attributes were evident in her instructional and relational practices.

Teacher Effectiveness and Pedagogical Approach

Anisha received a 3.75 out of 4 on her classroom observation (the average researcher rating for the subset of 12 teachers was 3.22) and was rated a 3 out of 4 by the school principal and administrative team (their average rating for teachers in the case high school was 2.4). These scores suggest that although a first-year teacher, Anisha was effective in supporting students' learning. Observation data provide evidence of her effectiveness in three areas – classroom environment, instruction, and management. Interview data highlight key aspects of her pedagogical approach.

Classroom Environment

Anisha purchased materials to create a cozy and inviting classroom environment. A plush pink carpet was in one corner of the large room surrounded by bookshelves and beanbags for comfortable reading. Students' work lined the walls in an orderly arrangement. Although winter, the classroom was warm due to a small space heater. The class "helper" used names in a colorful bucket to call on students when prompted by Anisha.

Classroom Instruction

Anisha taught an engaging class on the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The class started immediately, was fast paced, and lasted 90 minutes. It included a variety of learning activities such as a writing prompt (i.e., "How does your skin color and/or how much money you have impact what people think about you?"), paired sharing, whole class discussion, oral reading, and completion of a worksheet, as well as innovative strategies to scaffold students' learning. For example, Anisha would break up oral reading with "Stop and Jots" – requiring students to

analyze the text by answering questions such as “Why do you think Tom Robinson is bound to be in trouble no matter what?” Through their responses, students demonstrated thoughtful analysis as captured in the following exchange:

Teacher: Who was the “lower class” in the novel?

Multiple students: Blacks.

Latino student: Not just Blacks.

Teacher: Good, who else?

Multiple students: Poor people...

Classroom Management

The classroom was well managed, with high levels of student participation and no discipline issues. Anisha used a timer to keep everyone on task; she tackled knotty social issues with ease, helping students to understand the social context of the novel. She walked around the classroom, redirecting students who were off task, answering questions, and offering positive behavioral feedback to establish class standards and norms. For instance, she observed, “Jeffrey [pseudonym] is doing a good job of writing in complete sentences – make sure you do as well.” She also used positive terms like “scholars” to refer to the students. Because students had earned sufficient good behavior points during the grading period, they had pizza for lunch directly after class.

Teacher Reflection

When describing her pedagogical approach, Anisha emphasized her desire to provide culturally relevant content to her students as a means to empower them as change agents. She explained:

I try to make sure that most of the things we do are based in social justice. So, making sure that my kids understand how race and gender and classism play roles in our society is a thread throughout nearly everything that we do. ...[A]ll of these things that we are talking about in this book [*To Kill a Mockingbird*] are still occurring today and if you don't recognize how systems work you cannot dismantle them.

Additionally, Anisha described the importance of providing appropriate scaffolding to support students' mastery of the content and assigned tasks. She was intentional about developing her instructional skills to do so, meeting regularly with four mentors (one in the language arts department, one at the school but outside the department, and two from the alternative certification program). Anisha reported having experienced significant growth since the beginning of the school year and described what this meant for students' learning. She explained:

...[A]t the beginning of the year, my kids had to write an essay for the first quarter. I did not do what I should have done to prep them for that essay. It was a lesson that I had to learn. When it was time for them to pull quotes from the book, we could have been doing that all along. They could have been writing it down in specific sections but I didn't do it. So, it was very difficult with them writing an essay because they didn't have the supporting material.

Having learned from this early error, Anisha subsequently structured lessons and class assignments to help students organize their thoughts and supporting evidence for essays. She indicated that the essays and students' confidence in completing them were stronger as a result.

Relationships with Students

Anisha attributed much of her success in the classroom, especially classroom management, to the relationships she had developed with students. Survey results indicated that Anisha trusted her students. She believed students reciprocated this trust, which was critical for their learning and persistence even when the work was challenging. She observed:

It's because they know that I believe in them. I tell them they are smart. I tell them they are wonderful. I tell them they are brilliant.... We wouldn't get to the quality of teaching part if there was not a foundation of relationship. Now that the foundation is there, my kids will perform if they are held to the standard of doing it. I just increase the rigor consistently and they consistently rise to the occasion.

Thus, Anisha's trusting relationships with her students helped them to reach the high expectations she held for them.

Family and Community Engagement

Interview and survey data from the larger study indicated that teacher outreach to families was not prevalent at the case school despite it being a defining principle of FSCSs (Sanders & Galindo, 2020). Anisha was one of the few teachers reporting regular communication with families about students' school performance. She stated:

...Ninety-five percent of the students that I teach, I have their parents' phone numbers and text them regularly. I'm texting their parents literally right there in the class because if I don't I may forget about it, or I'm calling the parents updating them on their kids. ... I try to make sure that I have this balance of when your child is doing really well -- I am texting, 'Hey, just so you know, Cameron is on track and he's doing really great,' or 'Just so you know I am concerned

because so and so has fallen behind.’ There is not a week that passes that I am not texting or calling parents.

Anisha’s efforts to engage with families reflect best practices in the field including providing immediate feedback, using convenient and accessible forms of communication, and regularly sharing positive news with families about their children’s behavior and academic progress (Epstein et al., 2018).

Anisha also partnered with the FSCS Center to identify speakers and resources for the “girls club” she and a colleague started as an after-school activity. The goals of the club were to provide girls at the school a space to meet, discuss critical issues in their lives, and share strategies to promote health and well-being. The FSCS Center Director assisted with the club’s “meditation slash yoga” event, helping Anisha to “connect it to mental wellness and performance in the classroom.” Thus, although a first-year teacher at the case high school, Anisha’s “community orientation” was visible in her engagement with families and community partners to support students’ success in and out of school.

The FSCS Strategy

Anisha’s community-oriented professional approach was welcomed and valued at the case school, where relationships between and among key stakeholders was a central part of its vision. The principal of the school hired teachers based on their “relational capacity” and provided teachers with professional development to deepen their school-based relationships. The school climate reflected these efforts. Anisha explained, “The atmosphere that is promoted at our school is one of loving and caring ... like on the announcements every morning we tell the kids that we love them. It is what it means for us to be a school that is more restorative than punitive.”

In addition to its restorative, relational approach, the case FSC high school provided a variety of services for students and their families. Anisha viewed these services as a critical means of supporting students' success and reducing teachers' stress that was not available to her "friends that teach at other schools in the City." She observed, "I will say that the amount of support that my kids have is definitely contributing to their ability to be their best in the classroom." Anisha's success and love of her job were largely due to the support she received at the case FSC high school and the alignment of her values and attributes with the FSCS strategy. Below, I discuss these findings and their implications for research and practice.

Discussion

The extant literature shows that African American teachers enter the profession with values and attributes that distinguish them from their non-African American counterparts (Acosta et al., 2018; Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019). African American teachers come to the profession with a deeper understanding of racism and educational inequities, a commitment to improving African American students' educational experiences and outcomes, and a desire to promote a more socially just society through transformative educational practices (Acosta, 2018; Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Su, 1996). Anisha, the focal teacher in this study, embodied the unique attributes of African American teachers.

Specifically, Anisha entered the field to address the inequities faced by low-income Black students in urban communities. She became aware of these inequities through the research she conducted as an undergraduate student and sought to extend her activism into schools as a teacher. Hence, like many African American teachers, Anisha's decision to enter education was grounded in a community orientation. She brought these attributes to the case high school, reporting a trust in students and parents as partners in the educational process and support for the

FSCS strategy that significantly surpassed the school averages. She also received above average ratings for effective instruction by the researcher and the school's administrative team.

The FCLD elucidates the significance of Anisha's practices for realizing the transformative potential of FSCSs. FSCSs require teachers whose values align with the reform strategy and who possess the sociopolitical clarity necessary to counter racial stereotypes that cast historically underserved students and their families as deficient. Moreover, FSCSs require teachers who can help students understand how to disrupt systemic forces of oppression and serve as agents of positive change in their families, communities, and the larger society (McKinney de Royston & Nasir, 2017). Thus, African American teachers like Anisha may be uniquely qualified to achieve the promise of FSCSs.

Likewise, FSCSs may provide African American teachers like Anisha opportunities to fully express their commitment to educational equity for African American students. Rather than feeling frustrated, undervalued, and marginalized as reported by many African American teachers in urban schools (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Kohli, 2018; Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Pitts, 2019), Anisha felt supported, successful, and connected to colleagues, students, administrators, FSCS Center staff, and families at the case school. FSCSs' focus on culturally responsive instruction, family engagement, community development, and service coordination and provision may provide a context that values and enhances the attributes empirically associated with African American teachers. The study's findings have implications for future research and practice.

In particular, this study suggests the need for more research exploring the sociopolitical alignment (McKinney de Royston, 2020; McKinney de Royston & Nasir, 2017; McKinney de Royston & Madkins, 2019) between African American teachers and the FSCS strategy, and its effects for African American teachers, FSCSs, and African American students. The reemergence

of FSCSs and their growth in urban communities serving large populations of African American students (Galindo & Sanders, 2019) presents an opportunity for such studies (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). For example, large scale, quantitative research could compare retention, satisfaction, and effectiveness rates between African American teachers in urban FSCSs and those in traditional urban schools. Such designs would allow researchers to test the hypothesis that FSCSs provide a more beneficial context for African American teachers.

Additionally, smaller qualitative case studies of effective African American male and female teachers in FSCSs are needed to document and provide insights into practices such as building trusting relationships with students' families and communities and utilizing culturally relevant teaching strategies that can help FSCSs fully achieve their goals for African American and other underserved student populations. These studies would also showcase the unique contributions of African American teachers in contemporary FSCSs. Lastly, future research might investigate the effects of African American teachers in FSCSs on African American student outcomes. Outcome measures should not only focus on educational achievement and attainment, but also students' racial identity development, academic self-concept, and self-efficacy – equally important indicators of African American students' success and well-being (Sanders, 1997) and the effectiveness of FSCSs (McKinney de Royston & Madkins, 2019).

Limitations

This exploratory case study highlights the sociopolitical alignment between an African American teacher and a FSC high school in an urban community. While the study provides new insights, it is not without limitations. In particular, it is a case study of one teacher. While data were collected from multiple sources to contribute to the credibility and transferability of the

study's findings, the design of the study limits its generalizability. Moreover, the focal teacher is an African American woman; the experiences and contributions of African American men may differ. The focal teacher was also in her twenties and in her first year of teaching; the experiences and attributes of older and more experienced teachers may be different. Finally, an award-winning FSCS was selected as the case for this study to increase opportunities to observe and isolate the potential influences of teachers and avoid confounding findings that are beyond teacher influence and control. The study's findings are therefore limited to high performing FSCSs; lower performing FSCSs may yield different results. Research that includes a larger population of African American teachers in FSCSs at different stages of implementation and levels of performance is needed to fully explore the extent to which the study's findings apply more generally.

Conclusion

African American teachers and FSCSs hold promise for improved learning experiences and outcomes for the most educationally vulnerable students in the United States. The proliferation of FSCSs in predominantly urban districts where large numbers of African American students are enrolled provide researchers and practitioners the opportunity to test this claim. This is an important endeavor for those who are “unhopeful” yet not “hopeless” (DuBois, 1903) regarding the possibilities of education reform and equity for African American students.

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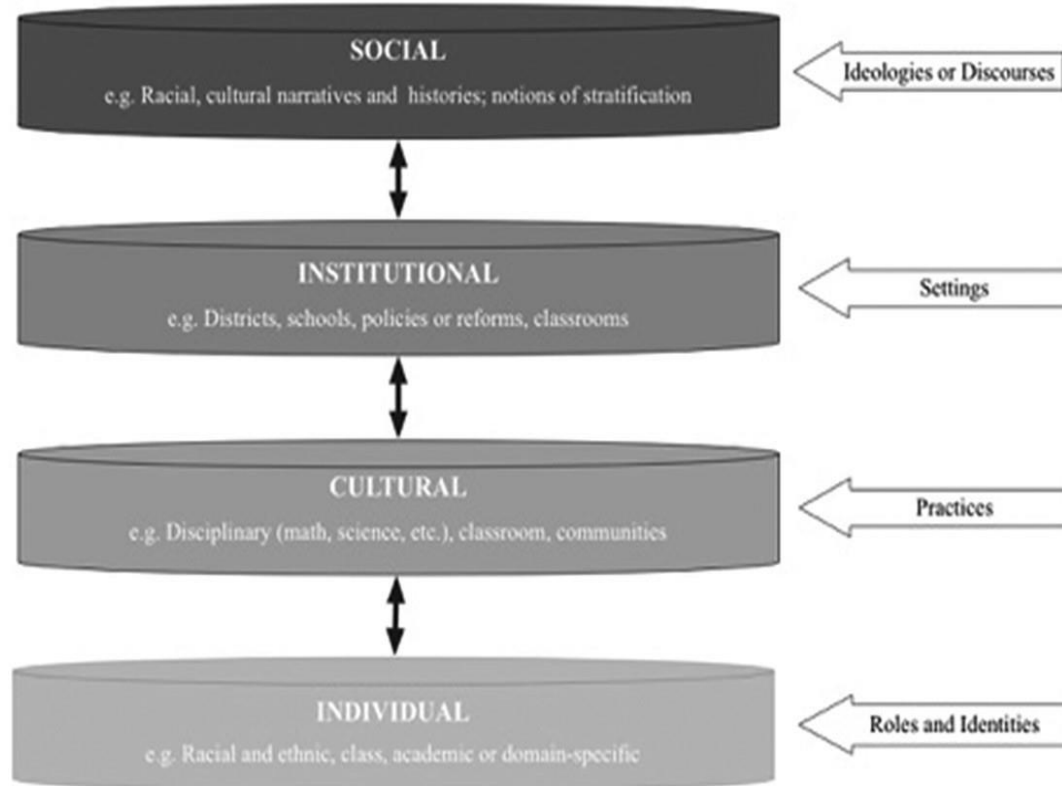
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Figure 1

Multilevel framework for children's learning and development



Note: Multi-level framework for children's learning and development. Reprinted from "Racialized learning ecologies: Understanding race as a key feature of learning and developmental processes in schools," by M. McKinney de Royston & N. Nasir, 2017, Cambridge University Press. In *New perspectives on human development* (pp. 258–286). Reprinted with permission.

Table 1*Primary and Secondary Codes*

Primary Codes	Secondary Codes
1. Academic Optimism	Teacher Self-Efficacy Teacher Trust in Students/Parents Teacher Academic Focus
2. Community	Community Outreach Community Partners Neighborhood
3. Families/Parents	Family Outreach Deficit Framing
4. Full-Service Community Schools	Definition Services Effectiveness Leadership District Support
5. Principal	Leadership Support Accessibility
6. Relationships	Communication Respect Care
7. School Characteristics	Class Size Climate Effectiveness Rigor
8. Students	Student Advice Student Learning English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
9. Teachers	Teacher Awareness of CS Principles Teacher Barriers Teachers as Bridges to CS Services Teacher Effectiveness Teacher Preparation Teacher Engagement in CS Activities Teacher Professional Experience Teacher Professional Needs Teacher Professional Development Teacher Roles in CSs
10. Transformation	Progress Challenges

Appendix A

Teacher Survey Scales Measuring Academic Optimism and Beliefs about FSCSs

About Your Beliefs (Modified *Teacher Academic Optimism Scale* developed by Fahy, Wu, and Hoy (2010)¹)

Directions: Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your perceptions. Choose only one.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I can motivate my students who show low interest in school work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2. I can get students to believe they will do well in school.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
3. I can get students to follow classroom rules.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
4. Most of my students are honest.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
5. My students' parents are reliable.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
6. I trust my students.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
7. I press my students to achieve academically.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
8. I give my students challenging work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
9. I set high, but attainable goals for my students.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

About Full-Service Community Schools (Developed for use in this study. See: Sanders & Galindo, 2020²)

Directions: Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your perceptions. Choose only one.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Full-service community schools help students to succeed.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2. Families need the support provided by full-service community schools.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
3. Full-service community schools DO NOT provide families and students with too many resources.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
4. Full-service community schools create more positive learning environments for students.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
5. Full-service community schools DO NOT divert attention away from the primary function of schools.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
6. Community school coordinators play a vital role in helping these schools realize student learning goals.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

¹ Fahy, P., Wu, H., & Hoy, W. (2010). Individual academic optimism of secondary teachers: A new concept and its measure. In W. Hoy & M. DiPaola (Eds.), *Analyzing school contexts: Influences of principals and teachers in the service of students* (pp. 209–227). Information Age Publishing.

² Sanders, M. & Galindo, C. (2020). The role of teachers in transforming an urban full-service community high school: Exploring processes of change. In M. Sanders & C. Galindo (Eds.), *Reviewing the success of full-service community schools in the US* (pp. 98-127). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003010388-5>

Appendix B

Coding Scheme for Student and Teacher Observations: Criteria for Coding Learning Activities

Score	Student Observation	Teacher Observation
	Observer codes student engagement at 2-minute intervals for 20 minutes	Observer codes teacher's use of instructional time at 2-minute intervals for 20 minutes
4	<u>Student-Directed Inquiry/Academic Rigor</u> Student infers, problem solves Student analyzes, synthesizes; student forges a connection to another lesson or content area Student makes authentic connections independently Student applies high levels of thinking and understanding Student raises questions/discusses rigorous content with teacher/peer	<u>Teacher facilitates authentic, student-directed learning</u> Teacher bridges content to real world Teacher provides subject matter in a holistic context Teacher gives responsibility of learning to students Teacher develops ideas in a systematic way Teacher differentiates instruction to challenge all students
3	<u>Student Engaged in Learning</u> Student checks understanding of assignment or expectations Student works actively on assigned task, follows directions as given Student performs manipulation of appropriate materials consistent with the assignment Student reads assigned text, answers questions from text/teacher; demonstrates basic level of understanding Student responds as part of a group or individually to teacher prompts that require basic comprehension of the assigned or taught content but little extension or innovation	<u>Teacher engages students in the learning process</u> There is evidence of collective sharing of ideas (ex. Teacher asks a question and student interchange takes place) Teacher articulates subject matter in a coherent, focused manner, though not student-directed Teacher makes a specific attempt to help students see the relevance of the work Teacher checks for collective understanding of new concept Teacher allows time for students to grasp and ask questions about new material Teacher refers to previous lessons to bridge new material Teacher groups students appropriately to task
2	<u>Student On Task</u> Student practices task or routine already modeled or highly familiar Student does oral summary/review work Student writes notes as teacher directs (copies from board, overhead, etc.) Student reads text as teacher directs; listens to teacher reading	<u>Teacher keeps students on task</u> (Skills addressed are lower order, rote in nature) Teacher directs small-group work or discussion on a familiar topic Teacher directs whole-group work or discussion on a familiar topic Teacher assigns individual review and practice (reviewing and correcting homework, fill-in-the blank, etc.) Teacher prompts students to recite/recall previously learned knowledge Teacher reads to students Teacher orally reviews material
1	<u>Student obeys, not engaged in new learning</u> Student opens book as directed, organizes materials Student listens as teacher gives familiar directives – how to line up, how to behave going to lunch Student moves desk, gets in line	<u>Teacher manages classroom – no academic content</u> Teacher rearranges furniture Teacher tells students to get books, copy homework
0	<u>Non-compliant/disengaged</u> Student not doing work as assigned Student not following teacher directives Student has finished work and has no other assignment to do	<u>Noise</u> No explicitly assigned activity; students settling down Announcement on PA Discipline (whole group) – negative episode that absorbs instructional time

Appendix C

Teacher Interview Protocol

- 1) How long have you been teaching and why did you choose the profession? When did you begin teaching at the FSCS?
- 2) How would you describe this school, the principal, faculty, and your students and families?
- 3) What attracted you to this school? What do you like most and least about teaching here?
- 4) How would you describe your teaching approach? Has it changed since coming to this school?
- 5) How would you describe your effectiveness as a teacher? What factors impact your effectiveness most?
- 6) How would you describe the FSCS Center? Do you utilize any of the resources provided by the Center in your teaching or engagement with students?
- 7) What factor(s) do you think have the greatest impact on students' learning? What are your goals for students at this school?
- 8) Is there anything else you would like to share about teaching in a FSCS like this?